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Warnings on Treated Seed

The Maryland Department of Agriculture is warning growers and buyers of grain and soybean not to mix treated seed with lots of these commodities intended for market.

M. H. "Gus" Day, Chief of the agency's Turf and Seed Section, warns that grain or soybean shipments containing even minute quantities of treated seed will be faced with condemnation under Federal law. "One or more treated seed found in a carload of soybeans or cereals at a terminal market will result in the destruction and loss of the entire load," he said.

Treated seeds, intended for planting purposes, contain a variety of toxic substances including

mercury compounds. The risk to human life is so great, Day emphasized, that the U. S. Food and Drug Administration has established a zero tolerance level for grains or soybeans. And anyone caught dumping or shipping loads contaminated with treated seed is subject to legal action.

Detecting the presence of treated seed is relatively simple. Grain dealers are advised to sample carefully each load as it is dumped, and before it is mixed with other lots in the bin, holding tank or rail car. All grains and soybeans, upon arrival at a terminal center are passed under an ultraviolet light to detect for treated seeds. If FDA officials discover the presence of

such seeds, the entire load is rejected and must be destroyed. Day said that several local grain dealers recently experienced this problem when one or more farmers put treated seed in a shipment for market. As a result, several trailer truckloads of soybeans had to be destroyed, without compensation.

Feed mills buying grains or soybeans are also required to test for the presence of treated seed before grinding takes place. There have been instances where entire flocks of chickens had to be destroyed when feed being used was

tested and found to contain treated seed.

Day further advised that farmers raising soybeans face the problem of pokeberry stain on their crops. Beans discolored by pokeberries, though not harmful, are frequently held up at market until tests determine that the stain does not contain any toxic substance. He advised that pokeberries should be controlled by the use of an appropriate herbicide well before harvest to avoid the stain problem.

Grain elevators and collectors are advised to keep pokeberry-stained beans apart from regular stocks to reduce the possibility of contamination.

Milk Support Price Increased to \$7.24

Secretary of Agriculture Earl L. Butz announced last week that the support price for manufacturing milk will be increased from \$6.57 to \$7.24 per hundredweight. The increase is effective immediately and will remain in effect through this marketing year and the next marketing year which ends

March 31, 1976. The new level of support is 80 percent of parity, based on the most current parity data, compiled as of Dec. 15, 1974.

Butz said this action is necessary because farm milk prices have declined while costs have remained at high levels. The prices farmers received for milk were substantially lower in December than in November, the first monthly decline since last summer. Without this action, the Secretary said prices would have dropped even further in the next month or two, the very time when producers must feed greater quantities of grain and high priced commercially prepared concentrate feeds. Under these conditions, many producers would have left dairying and the future production of milk and dairy products would have declined.

The action by Butz came on the heels of a veto by President Ford of a bill which would have given dairy farmers an increase in milk price supports to 85 percent of parity. Present law calls for a minimum support price equal to 75 percent of parity. That law also requires the secretary of agriculture to set a support price by April 1 of each year.

Federal Order 4 producers could expect to receive about \$10.13 for Class 1 milk if the Minnesota-Wisconsin price series responds to the mandated support price. The blend price, if Class 1 utilization were 67 percent, would be about \$9.18.

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Farm Youth Calendar

Tuesday, January 21
Ice Skating Party at the John Nissley Farm. If ice is not thick enough, a roller skating party will be held at Overlook. Please call the extension office before going either place **March 12-15**
4-H Expo to be held at Par City Shopping Mall. Preparations are now being made for booth exhibits and demonstrations.

Specialized care of the expectant mother with various health problems can improve the outcome of her pregnancy, reports the March of Dimes.