

## 'Country-style' meats to be standardized

WASHINGTON — The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently called for public comment on a proposal to establish a new standard of identity for pork products labeled as "country ham," "country-style pork shoulder" and similar names.

The proposed standard would establish minimum preparation requirements for these products to help maintain those characteristics traditionally associated with country-cured products officials of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) said.

Under the proposal, federal meat inspection regulations would specifically define products such as "country ham", "country-style ham", "country pork shoulder" or "country-style pork shoulder" as being uncooked, dry-cured, smoked or unsmoked products made from a solid piece of meat coming from the ham or shoulder, respectively, of a hog.

Further, these products could not be injected with, nor put up in liquid solutions.

Likewise, such products would have to be prepared in accordance with other specific requirements, including the following:

- The entire exterior of the ham or pork shoulder would have to be coated with an amount of salt or a mixture of salt and other curing agents sufficient to insure complete penetration of the cure mixture. Optional ingredients which could also be used include sucrose, dextrose, corn syrup solids, honey, pepper, spices and other approved flavorings.

- Hams would require at least 45 days for cure penetration and equalization with an additional minimum of 25 days required for the drying period. Likewise, pork shoulders would require at least 25 days for cure penetration and equalization with an additional minimum of 25 days required for the drying period.

- The finished product would have to shrink at least 18 percent from its fresh weight.

- Ham and pork shoulders would have to be treated to destroy any live trichinae.
- Products labeled as "country" or "country-style" would have to be capable of being distributed without refrigeration, and labeled as such.

The proposed standard would not differentiate between products labeled as "country" or "country-style". Rather, these terms would be considered as generic in nature when used in labeling hams and pork shoulders — as a reference to their curing characteristics rather than the geographic location where they are produced.

Officials emphasized that adoption of the new standard would not prohibit the production of products under natural climatic conditions and which are held for aging

for much longer periods — provided the safety and wholesomeness of the finished product is assured.

Years ago, it was common practice for people to prepare meat during winter months so that it would not spoil when warmer weather arrived. This involved applying salt to the meat, and removing the natural moisture through "aging". The warmer temperatures of spring and summer continued the drying process and completed the preservation — which killed any trichinae, preserved the product, and contributed to the flavor, texture and other characteristics associated with products prepared in this manner.

While refrigeration and other technological advances since then have eliminated the need for this type of preservation, many people retain a preference for such products. Therefore, USDA's proposal is designed to establish minimum requirements that will approximate those traditionally associated with country-cured products.

On two previous occasions — July 17, 1971 and July 13, 1972 — USDA has issued similar proposals to establish a standard of identity for country-cured pork products.

While comments received on those earlier proposals generally favored the establishment of such a standard, there was considerable difference of opinion on the amount of time that would be required for salting, curing and aging, as well as the maximum temperature to which such products should be subjected during drying or aging. Relevant information obtained since then has been considered and incorporated into the current proposal, APHIS officials said.

The complete text of the proposed standard was published in the Sept. 5, 1975

Federal Register. Copies of the proposal are available from APHIS, Room 1164 - South Bldg., USDA, Washington, DC 20250.

Anyone wishing to submit written comments concerning the proposed amendment are urged to do so by filing them in duplicate with the Hearing Clerk, Room 112-A, USDA, Washington, DC 20250.

Confidential material or requests for oral presen-

tations should be addressed to the Products Standards Staff, Technical Services, Meat and Poultry Inspection Program, APHIS, USDA, Washington, DC 20250.

Deadline for all comments — oral and written — is Nov. 4, 1975.

Oral and written comments will be made available for public inspection during regular hours of business in the Office of the Hearing Clerk.

## Milk output down

HARRISBURG — Milk production in Pennsylvania during August was 579 million pounds, down one percent from a year ago, according to the Crop Reporting Service. The number of milk cows in the Commonwealth during August was 685,000, unchanged from last month and a year ago.

Milk production per cow averaged 845 pounds in August, down one percent from a year earlier but two

percent above August 1973. United States milk production during August was estimated at 9,609 million pounds, 0.8 percent below a year ago. U.S. milk production per cow averaged 863 pounds, down two pounds from a year ago, but 26 pounds above August 1973. Milk cows on farms during August totaled 11,137,000 head, down 0.6 percent from a year ago. The estimated number of milk cows was 5,000 below a month ago.

## Holsteins Classified

Norman Kline, Klunedell of Schaefferstown reports that his Registered Holsteins were classified for body conformation on Sept. 16. The scoring was done by an official classifier of Holstein-Friesian Association of America, Brattleboro, Vermont.

Dairymen enrolled in this herd improvement program receive a numerical score for each animal evaluated. The True-Type Holstein represents theoretical perfection and has a value of 100 points on the classification score card. Each animal is scored, receiving a rating of Excellent (90 points or more), Very Good (85 through 89), Good Plus (80 through 84), Good (75 through 79), Fair (65 through 74) or Poor (64 points or below).

Including animals previously scored, the Klunedell herd has 3 Excellents, 17 Very Goods and 34 Good Pluses.

To provide a more complete image of each animal, the classifier also uses comparative terms to describe twelve major parts of the animal's physical characteristics. This "Word picture" serves as a guide for planning a breeding

program to improve the herd.

The information from the classification of the herd will be summarized by the Holstein Association on its high speed computer. Returned to the breeder, these reports provide useful information for selection in the herd. The data is also published and available as reference for the herd improvement programs of Holstein dairymen everywhere.

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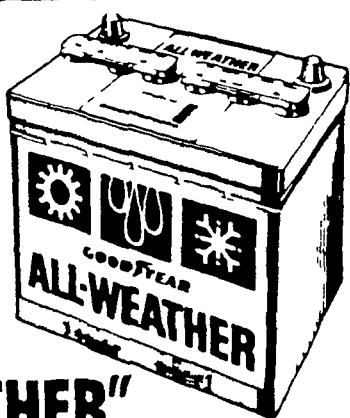
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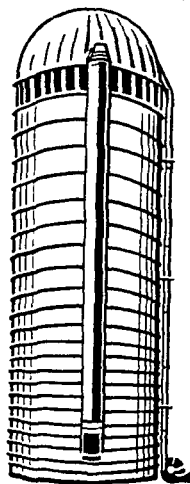
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