

Meat product labels 'deceptive'

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Products called "chicken frankfurter" and "turkey ham" are deceptive to consumers and unfairly use the hard-won reputation of traditional red meat products, the American Meat Institute has told the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Department is seeking comments on proposed standards for various poultry sausage products by Nov. 24.

Sausage products made from red meats - beef, pork, lamb and veal - have a long history of popularity through their inherent superiority and through the promotional investments made by livestock farmers, manufacturers and associations. If there is a place for poultry products in the market, the poultry industry should carry the burden of establishing consumer acceptance through its own product names, the Institute said.

The Institute summarized results of a consumer attitude study it commissioned from an independent market research firm, Homemaker Testing, Inc. Using well-established sampling procedures, this company conducted telephone interviews with the main food buyer in households during mid-September to mid-October.

Results of the survey showed that 100 per cent of the respondents view "ham" as a form of pork; 79 per cent said that "turkey ham" would be a combination of turkey and ham; 95 per cent said that hot dogs were made from beef and/or pork. In addition, while 88 per cent said that a product labeled

"chicken hot dog" would contain some form of chicken, just 28 per cent thought it would contain only chicken; 45 per cent expected a combination of ingredients and 27 per cent were so confused by the term that they didn't know what it meant.

"In conducting this preliminary study, we have undertaken to provide information of the kind that USDA traditionally has considered essential before

approving a product name. We believe that the Department needs to know more about what the various product names involved mean to consumers before it legalizes their use by manufacturers of products containing no red meat," the Institute said.

"We realize that some of these poultry sausages have been produced in recent years without benefit of published standards. In our view, the approval of these labels was a mistake, and

\$20 per acre saved by harvesting soybeans properly

Newark, Del. - Soybean growers can add as much as \$20 per acre to their returns this fall through better harvest management. Tom Williams, Extension agricultural engineer at the University of Delaware, says the average soybean grower loses as much as three bushels per acre through poor harvest management.

Here are some steps Williams recommends to assure a more profitable soybean harvest:

1. Begin harvesting when soybean seed moisture reaches 14 per cent. Shatter losses increase markedly when moisture levels drop below 11.5 per cent.
2. Harvest at an average combine speed between 2.5 and 3 miles per hour. Combines operate most efficiently at that range - and the cutter bar is allowed to ride down for maximum cut.
3. Count lost soybeans already on the ground before harvest; pre-harvest losses should not be charged against combining. Four beans per square foot indicate a bushel lost per acre.
4. Match ground speed to combine reel speed. Best speed ratio is a reel speed of 1.25 times the combine ground speed.
5. Cut soybeans as close to the ground as possible. The goal is to harvest all the pods - even the very lowest. Tests show a 10 per cent reduction in harvest losses when soybeans are cut at 2 1/2 inches.
6. Measure soybean losses from cutting, gathering and threshing operations to pinpoint necessary adjustments.
7. Continually adjust the combine to changing crop conditions.

Excessive corn harvest losses occur for several reasons: poor harvest timing, improper machine speed, poor machine adjustment and down corn. Timing in relation to kernel moisture is very important. Agricultural engineers at the University of Delaware say that a moisture content of 24 to 25 percent gives the least field loss. Losses rise sharply as corn dries further.

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To determine total field loss in a corn field, two kinds of counts are necessary: (1) a count of the number of kernels fallen and (2) a count of the number of ears left on the ground. Twenty kernels per 10 square feet equal one bushel loss per acre. Each three-quarter-pound ear left in 1-100 acre equals a bushel loss per acre.

that approval in no way should be taken as industry acquiescence in the present apparent effort to legitimize these products." The American Meat Institute is the national association of meat packers and processors.

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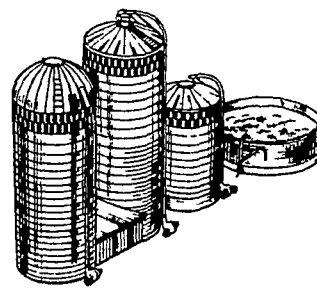
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