

USDA reorganization threatens to hit egg industry pocketbook

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Government reorganization can hit the egg industry in the pocketbook, according to James Fleming, U.E.P. vice president for government relations.

In a report to members this week, Fleming said reports of current reorganization plans within USDA indicate there will be

as many as six persons involved concerning day-to-day problems of the egg industry. Prior to reorganization, there was only one. Under the present program, which was reorganized last year, there are two officials overseeing egg regulatory programs.

"Remember, egg industry people who use federal grading services must pay

for both the problems of the egg industry. Prior to reorganization, there was only one. Under the present program, which was reorganized last year, there are two officials overseeing egg regulatory programs. "Remember, egg industry people who use federal grading services must pay for both the graders and USDA overhead in supplying those graders," Fleming said. "Currently these fees range from \$9 to \$12.50 an hour. Additional overhead could cause the rates to escalate rapidly."

In a letter to Rep. Charles Rose, (D. -N.C.), chairman of the house agriculture subcommittee on poultry and dairy, Fleming said egg producers whose customers require the federal shield on cartons, indicating federal grading, have no choice but to use the "voluntary" grading service and pay whatever price set for such services. He asked the

subcommittee chairman to seek a review of the organization plan prior to it being implemented.

Under the old "commodity" organization approach in USDA, one person was in charge of most day-to-day matters affecting eggs. The new approach is to be "functional" with one person in charge of a component, such as specifications, for several commodities. In many cases, the individual may not be familiar with the technical aspects of all of the commodities under his authority.

"We believe the commodity approach is superior to the functional," Fleming said. "At least under the commodity approach, the government official was usually well versed in the technical requirements of our product and could relate to problem areas without delay. We feel sure under the reorganization now being

studied our industry would lose both in expertise and in economics."

U.E.P. encouraged its members to voice their concern to the respective

members of the subcommittee of agriculture appropriations. The Subcommittee will be considering the fiscal 1979 budget within a few weeks.

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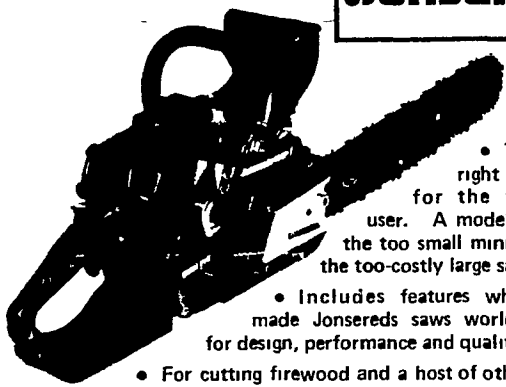
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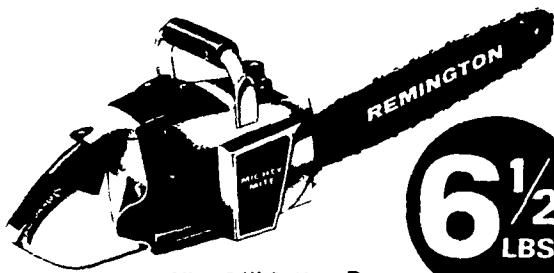
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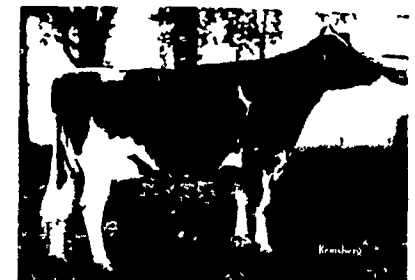
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