

USDA says bacon free of cancer-causing chemicals

WASHINGTON, D.C. — After one year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's nitrosamine testing program — an effort to reduce the presence of cancer-causing nitrosamines in bacon — has been "overwhelmingly successful," said Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Carol Tucker Foreman.

"The American consumer can be assured that virtually all bacon pumped with a nitrite cure is free from confirmable levels of nitrosamines," Foreman said.

"To date, all major bacon-producing plants have been checked several times and are producing bacon in compliance with USDA regulations," Foreman said.

"Only a few of the smaller plants remain to be monitored, and we expect that our cumulative knowledge will assist these plants in making any necessary adjustments," she said.

In December 1978, USDA's Food Safety and Quality Service began monitoring bacon samples to determine

if industry was meeting USDA's regulation that there be no confirmable levels of nitrosamines in pumped bacon. Nitrosamines are carcinogens that can form during when nitrites used to cure bacon, combine with amines which occur naturally in meat. The lowest level at which nitrosamines can be confirmed on a general basis is 10 parts per billion.

"Not only has the program been successful in reducing nitrosamines, but it has also stemmed industry fears that enforcement of USDA regulations would cause large numbers of bacon manufacturers to go out of business," Foreman said.

"Those fears have not materialized, primarily because USDA provided technical assistance to help manufacturers meet the regulatory standard. FSQS hired a number of consultants who were available free of charge to help manufacturers alter bacon processing procedures to

reduce nitrosamine formation.

"The USDA program has shown that when government assists industry in meeting regulation requirements, public safety can be served without substantial negative impact on the industry," Foreman said.

"With this continued assistance to industry, we hope to be as successful in reducing nitrosamines if they occur in other products."

During the first year of monitoring, FSQS tested more than 1000 samples of pumped bacon from commercial plants selected at random. Bacon with confirmable levels of nitrosamines came from only 12 of the 355 plants tested. These plants produce less than one percent of the bacon made annually by pumping a nitrite cure into pork bellies.

Today, the testing program monitors only pumped bacon. More than 90

percent of the bacon produced in this country is pumped bacon.

In the monitoring program, when preliminary screening tests indicate a potential nitrosamine violation, the plants can alter their production procedures. After changes are made and further tests show the bacon is acceptable, the plant is returned to routine monitoring.

If plant management does not correct the nitrosamine problem, FSQS performs a precise confirmatory test. A plant producing bacon with confirmed nitrosamines is placed "in retention". All bacon is retained and released only after further testing shows that individual lots are free of confirmable nitrosamines. Results of nitrosamine tests are made public weekly through the FSQS Information Office.

Currently, four plants are "in retention" and 10 are having their bacon undergo confirmation tests.

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SHORT NOTICE

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1979
at 11:30 A.M.

For Steve Nemeth Jr., in New Jersey on the Hope Blairstown Rd. (Rt. 521) 1½ mi. south of Blairstown, N.J. 3 mi. North of Hope, N.J., Arrows Posted.

11:30 surge milkers, Jamesway water cups, some Patz cleaner parts, misc. items, 12 Noon Tractors — Oliver 1850 DL, Ford 6000 DL, Oliver 88 gas. Case 530 CK Backhoe loader DL, Ford C700 truck w/20 ft. hay body, IHC dump truck. New Holland Equip — 354 grinder mixer A-1, 469 haybine, 275 baler w/kicker, Super 717 field chopper w/corn hd A-1, 2 chuck wagons, Oliver 4 btm 16" semi mtd. plows, 3-kicker hay wagons, J.D. 12 ft. hyd disc, Case 8 ft. disc, M.F. 35 hay baler, N.I. hay rake, Oliver grain drill, Kingwise 24 ft. elevator, Brady corn stalk cutter, A.C. blower w/motor, field sprayer, harrows, IHC 4 row corn planter. Stud pony. May be some ear corn and oats.

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Centaur's 4-H horse club meets

FLEMINGTON, N.J. — The last meeting of the Centaur's 4-H Horse Club was on December 3, 1979 at the home of Mrs. Spencer, Club Leader.

Shelley Kephart gave a demonstration on the Morgan Horse.

Mrs. Spencer announced that she reserved June 8, 1980 for the club's 1980 Horse Show.

The club discussed a Christmas Roller Skating Party was held December 19 at the Whitehouse Roller Rink from 7:30-9:30 p.m.

The guest speaker for the night was Jay Mickle who is a farrier (blacksmith), who talked about problems of the horse's foot. This talk was illustrated by slides he had taken.

The next meeting will be on January 7 at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Mrs. Spencer. The guest speaker will be a representative from the U.S. Equestrian Team.


Reported by Shelley Kephart, Club Reporter.

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