

Livestock marketers ask hearing on P&S review

KANSAS CITY, MO. — Livestock Marketing Association has called for public hearings on the issues raised by a proposed review of existing regulations and policy statements under the Packers and Stockyards Act. Specifically, the Kansas

City-based trade organization said it wants hearings on existing regulations and administrative decisions which: Prohibit a dealer or marketing business from having an ownership in, or to participate in the manage-

ment of, a meat packing or processing business;

Prevent a custom feedlot from being part of a meat packing or processing business;

Create "doubt and confusion" over legitimate business conduct in livestock production, feeding and marketing which "U.S. Department of Agriculture officials like to generally stamp as 'conflicts of interest' that are illegal."

LMA's comments came in response to a "plan for review" of existing Packers and Stockyards regulations and policy statements which was announced by USDA last December.

In that announcement, regulations and policy statements were placed into three categories: sections "which are not believed to need review at this time;" sections proposed for deletion, and sections proposed for complete review.

However, LMA's statement filed with the Department said the trade group does "not accept as valid or conclusive the three categories ... these are no more than self-serving assumptions of the agency. LMA pointed out the federal Office of Management and Budget "prompted and directed" a review of all existing regulations and policy statements.

LMA went on to note that its "Freedom in Livestock Marketing" campaign "is in sharp contrast to controls, regulations and restrictions," and called upon USDA to adopt "a realistic policy of freedom, self-determination and independence throughout all elements of the livestock marketing sector."

Such a policy should be implemented, the statement said, "by cancellation of those devices, regulations

and policy statements which impose the restrictions they do on diversification, multiple ownership and marketing enterprise throughout the entire livestock and meat industry."

The "Freedom" campaign was instrumental in the 1978 deregulation of livestock marketing rates and tariffs. This year the campaign has endorsed legislation dealing with livestock marketing fraud that has been passed by committees of both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.

LMA's Washington Executive Counsel and its Kansas City law firm are also filing statements on the proposed review.

Noting that the proposed review "is of deep and far-reaching industry importance and significance," LMA said it hoped the proposal would "not submerge in a sea of administrative platitudes and inane self-serving meaningless statements, with results in the same vein."

Public hearings are necessary "to fairly and equitably resolve the issues raised "on a fully democratic basis," the statement said.

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Mechanical tomato pickers show profit

WOOSTER, Oh. — The economics of mechanically harvesting processing tomatoes continues to be very favorable, according to Dale Kretchman, of the Ohio State University's horticulture department.

Recent technology changes in the use of ripening materials, better varieties, bedding practices, and machine adaptations have caused the economic feasibility of mechanical harvesters to continually improve.


Some of the negatives expressed by people involved relate to the high cost

of machines, the potential risk of leaving acres unharvested in case of a wet season, the need for a minimum of acres or tons for spreading overhead costs and the need for lengthening the harvest period.

An extensive economic feasibility study was conducted in 1970 and 1971 by the Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology Department of Ohio State University. It was determined then that the machines could make a profit.

Since that time interested farmers, processors and researchers alike have kept a keen eye on the objective of continued improvement in management practices, Kretchman concluded.

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