

Reg Penna Dept Agri really means something

Patz

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MARVIN J. HORST

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HARRISBURG — A notation printed on a package of cookies, "Reg. Penna. Dept. Agri.", can be a bit confusing, especially if the cookies are baked in California, sold in Minnesota and bought by a tourist from Connecticut.

Inevitably, someone becomes curious about the notation and writes a letter asking how Pennsylvania fits into the picture.

The explanation is really quite simple, according to

State Agriculture Secretary Penrose Hallowell.

The notation concerns one of the many phases of consumer protection efforts conducted by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. It means that the bakery where the cookies were made is regularly inspected, meets specified standards and is licensed — or registered — to sell its products in the Commonwealth.

That explanation usually

prompts another question, "Why does the notation appear on packages sold in other states, and even in other nations?" Again, the answer is simple.

Hallowell says bakers find it doesn't cost much to have the notation printed on all packages, rather than printing special labels for products shipped exclusively to Pennsylvania. The notation may have some marketing benefit as well, because consumers

recognize its significance.

In the early 20th century, bakeries were usually neighborhood businesses. But as modern transportation and marketing broadened the scope of bakery businesses to a national and international level, it became necessary to provide some form of consumer reassurance, and the Pennsylvania Bakery Law was enacted in 1933.

The law requires that bakers — including those who make macaroni and spaghetti, pretzels and potato chips, and snacks made from cornmeal — must be licensed to sell their products in Pennsylvania.

The legend on their packages, "Registered, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture", assures consumers that the bakery meets standards and that the weight of the product is listed accurately.

To qualify for licensing, plants must be inspected annually for cleanliness and all employees must undergo annual medical examinations.

This law applies to all bakery goods in Pennsylvania, regardless of the location of the plant where they are produced. As a result, numerous bakeries in Canada and other foreign nations are licensed and their products are marked with the "Reg. Penna. Dept. Agri." on the package.

It would be impossible for food inspectors from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture to inspect plants outside the state. But the Department's Bureau of Foods and Chemistry maintains working agreements with the agriculture departments in other states and foreign countries where the licensed bakeries are located.

Inspections and examinations are made for the Department, and reports are submitted for all new license and annual renewals.

Registration, however, does not imply approval of the product itself. State Agriculture Secretary Hallowell notes, "The label may reassure the consumer that the bakery's plant and employees meet the specified standards that permit the baker to sell his goods in the state."

QUALITY PRODUCTS



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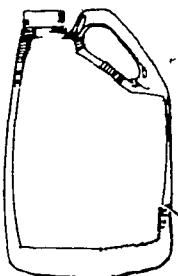
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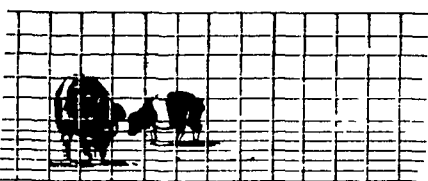


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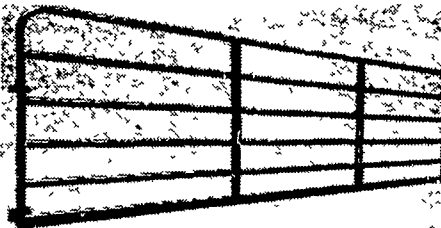


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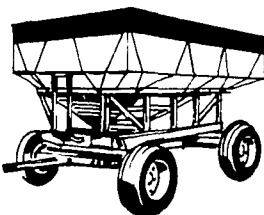
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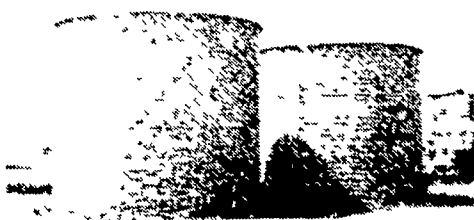
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with Hooks

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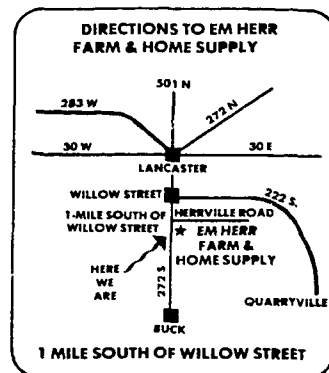


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