

Another Khapra infestation confirmed in New Jersey

LANCASTER — Another infestation of khapra beetles—the world's most destructive pest of stored grains and cereal products—has been confirmed, this time at two military warehouses in Bayonne, N.J., according to an official of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"This infestation, which brings the total to 19 found during recent months, was found during continuing routine inspections at the Military Ocean Terminal warehouses," said Don Woodham, technical coordinator for USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

The empty warehouses, owned by the Department of the Army, are each about 2.5 million cubic

feet. They are used primarily for "stripping" or cleaning military goods returning from countries in the Far East.

During stripping, equipment being shipped is inspected for the presence of any "hitchhiking" pest hazardous to the health of humans, animals or plants, Woodham said.

"The Army is considering fumigating the premises," he said.

Of the 18 confirmed khapra beetle infestations found during the ongoing APHIS khapra beetle program, 15 sites have been treated, one business is in the process of being treated with a high pressure insecticide spray, and two facilities have not yet been treated until a course of action is

decided by the owners, Woodham said.

"The three untreated businesses, in Lancaster, Pa, Brooklyn, N.Y., and in

Mechanicsburg, Pa., all remain under strict quarantine," he said.

The khapra beetle, which is native to India, causes millions of

dollars of damage to stored grains and cereal products annually world-wide. It was first detected recently in a New Jersey spice company in October 1980.

USDA seeks changes in shell egg standards

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking comments until June 16 on a proposal to change grade standards for shell eggs.

"We evaluated how effective grade standards are in today's marketplace," said Donald L. Houston, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Quality Service. "We found the standards for shell eggs need to be changed to reflect present technology in the industry, to make the grading system easier and to make the grade standards more uniform."

One of the changes would raise the maximum permissible percentage of "checks" - cracked shells - in shell eggs at retail stores

"This change would merely align the tolerance for 'checks' to

more accurately reflect what is already happening under today's egg production and marketing practices," Houston said. "Although 'checks' have cracked shells, the shell membranes are intact and the contents do not leak."

Another change would increase the minimum percent of "A" quality eggs required for eggs to be labeled "U.S. Grade A" at both shipping point and retail store. The percent would be true for "AA" grade at shipping point, but the percent would be adjusted downward at destination to reflect normal quality loss during marketing

Other changes would eliminate the C quality classification for eggs, the Fresh Fancy quality and Grade A quality control programs, the two U.S. Procurement Grades and the three lower U.S. wholesale

grades. "These five grades would be dropped because they're obsolete," Houston said.

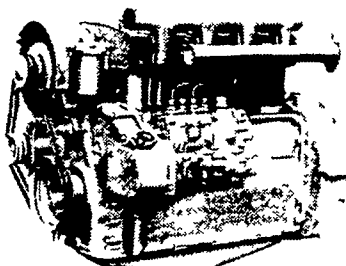
The changes being proposed are basically the same as those proposed May 27, 1980, except USDA has decided not to eliminate U.S. Grade AA because of comments received, Houston said.

The proposal was published in the April 17 Federal Register, available in local libraries. Copies are being distributed to about 500 retail representatives, state and local agriculture and consumer affairs officials and consumer representatives as well as industry trade associations and packers operating under USDA's voluntary shell egg grading program.

Comments in duplicate may be sent until June 16 to Regulations Coordination Division, Attn: Annie Johnson, rm. 2637-S, Food Safety and Quality Service, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

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