

President signs repeal of interest waiver

WASHINGTON, D.C. — On July 23, President Ronald Reagan signed into law legislation repealing an interest waiver on 1981-crop wheat placed into the farmer-owned grain reserve, according to Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block.

The bill also extends the date for conducting the 1982-crop wheat referendum from August 1 until October 15, Block said.

"As I have said previously,

repeal of the interest waiver clears the way for immediate entry of 1981-crop wheat into the reserve," Block said. "Therefore, farmers who place their 1981-crop wheat under Commodity Credit Corporation loan may enter the wheat immediately into the reserve."

Producers placing wheat in the reserve will receive annual storage payments of 26½ cents per bushel, payable in advance, Block said. While interest on the loan will

be charged during the first year the wheat is in the reserve, interest will be waived during the second and subsequent years of the reserve loan program, Block said. The current CCC loan interest rate is 14½ percent.

Under this program, farmers agree to keep their wheat in reserve until the national 5-day moving average market price for wheat is at or above the reserve trigger release level of \$4.65 per bushel, or until the 3-year reserve loan matures. When the release level is triggered, farmers may

take their grain out of the reserve without penalty.

If the market price continues above the trigger release level after the initial release period (the remainder of the month in which release is triggered plus one additional month), farmers will stop earning storage payments. Interest charges, if previously stopped, will resume.

Although the call level for 1981-crop wheat is also \$4.65 per bushel, Block said that only under an "extreme emergency" would he require farmers to take their grain

out of the reserve when the call level is reached.

Earlier crop wheat now in other farmer-held reserves may be transferred into this new wheat reserve, Block said. Wheat in these older loans may not be held in the reserve for more than five years from the date the commodity was first placed in reserve, he said.

Current legislation provides that the maximum number of bushels of wheat in all farmer-held reserve at any one time is 700 million bushels. As of July 1, reserve wheat totaled 360 million bushels.

USDA revises policy for

identifying problem meat plants

NEW YORK, N.Y. — The U.S. Department of Agriculture will no longer designate federally-inspected meat and poultry plants as "problem" or "chronic problem," according to Donald L. Houston, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service.

Houston said USDA is taking this action because there are other enforcement actions available that are sufficient to enforce inspection regulations. The other actions include regular reviews by federal meat and poultry inspectors and withdrawing inspection service.

"USDA will continue to undertake legal proceedings in those few instances where normal controls cannot achieve compliance with inspection regulations," Houston said.

Primary responsibility for in-plant enforcement lies with the inspector regularly assigned to each of the 7,000 meat and poultry plants.

"In addition, USDA compliance officers conduct nationwide reviews which will continue under the policy change," Houston said. "They are designed to measure the likelihood of individual plants distributing adulterated or misbranded products and assess

the overall effectiveness and uniformity of inspection programs nationwide."

A notice concerning the revised procedures was published in the July 28 Federal Register, available in many public libraries.



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