

USDA gives meat, poultry processors more flexibility

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Effective Aug. 6, meat and poultry processors will have increased flexibility in the placement of official establishment numbers on their products.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture assigns the establishment number to help federal and public health officials identify the source of products, said Donald L. Houston, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service. "The new regulation will also make it less confusing for consumers to find the establishment number on the

product," he said. "Current requirements differ considerably for various meat and poultry products," Houston said. "The revision will assure identical, simplified requirements for all processors."

Under the action, meat and poultry operators will have four options for the placement of an official establishment number:

—Within the official inspection mark;

—Outside the inspection mark but elsewhere on the exterior of the container or its labeling — for example, the lid of a can;

—Off the exterior of the container, when a statement of its location in printed contiguous to the official inspection mark — for example, "EST. No. on Metal Clip," or "EST. No. on Pan."

—On an insert label placed under a transparent covering, if clearly visible and legible and accompanied by the prefix "EST."

"Previously, the regulations generally required the establishment number on meat products to be part of the USDA inspection mark which must be on the label," Houston said. "However, poultry regulations

permitted the establishment number to be omitted from the inspection mark if it was in close proximity to the inspection mark and clearly visible on the exterior of the container."

On canned products, the meat inspection regulations required the establishment number to be on both the lid of the can and the label, while the poultry regulations

allowed the use of the number on either the can lid or the label.

On July 28, 1981, USDA published a proposed regulation to eliminate the inconsistencies between the meat and poultry inspection regulations. USDA received 11 comments on that proposal from meat and poultry processors and trade associations, generally supporting the proposal.



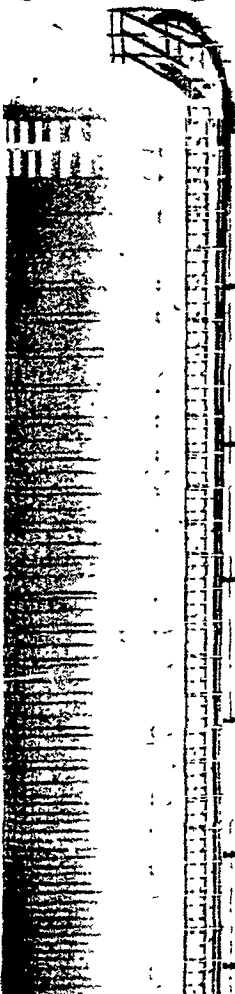
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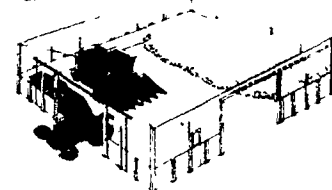
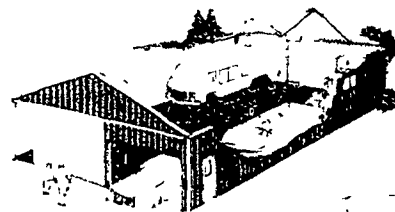
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