

USDA okays pork irradiation for control of trichina

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Agriculture will permit low-dose irradiation of fresh pork to control trichina if products are properly labeled, a USDA official said.

"Only a small amount of the nation's fresh pork is likely to be irradiated in the near future," said Donald L. Houston, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service. "One company has applied for approval and has received technical assistance, but has not yet satisfied the full range of USDA inspection requirements."

"Irradiation does not make food radioactive," said Houston. "Irradiation at a federally inspected plant, within the approved dose range, would sterilize any trichinae that might be present, preventing them from reproducing inside the human body to cause trichinosis even if they survived cooking."

Houston cautioned that the approved radiation dose is not strong enough to inactivate

common bacteria that may be present on fresh pork and in the home environment. Therefore, careful handling—using clean hands and utensils—and thorough cooking will still be necessary to prevent foodborne illness other than trichinosis.

"USDA believes that consumers should be fully informed when food has been irradiated," Houston said. "Therefore, USDA plans to require appropriate labeling on irradiated fresh pork and on meat and poultry products that contain irradiated pork."

Labels will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, according to Houston. USDA plans to approve labeling terms such as "irradiated" or "treated with ionizing radiation," he said. USDA also may allow an irradiation logo to supplement required labeling statements.

Although food irradiation is technically a process, it is legally a food additive, explained Houston. Thus, its use on fresh pork had to be approved by first and the Food

and Drug Administration and then by USDA.

"Some consumers have been expressed concern about the chemical safety of irradiated foods," Houston said. "In July 1985, FDA approved 0.3 to 1.0 kiloGray—30 to 100 kilorads—of gamma irradiation to control the trichina parasite. At that time, FDA reiterated that at doses of 100 krad and below, the difference between an irradiated food and a comparable non-irradiated food is so small as to make the foods indistinguishable with respect to safety. This action enabled USDA

to consider the issue. USDA agrees with FDA findings."

The new regulation responds to an industry petition. It allows low-dose irradiation of fresh pork carcasses and cuts, such as pork roasts and pork chops. It does not allow irradiation of processed products since these products were not considered by FDA in its approval of irradiation as a food additive. At this time it cannot be used as an alternate to curing, canning, or commercial freezing of fresh pork for trichina destruction, although USDA intends to consider such use in the future.

USDA-approved quality control programs will be required to assure that fresh pork receives the proper dose of gamma irradiation and is not re-irradiated.

Comments on the final regulation should be identified as responses to Docket 85-016F and sent, in duplicate, within 60 days to FSIS Hearing Clerk, USDA, Room 3803-S, Washington, D.C. 20250.

The regulation has been published in the Jan. 15 Federal Register. Background materials are available from USDA, FSIS Information Office, Room 1160-S, Washington, D.C. 20250.

Jersey Cattle Club reports record year

COLUMBUS, OH — The American Jersey Cattle Club (AJCC) and its marketing arm, National All-Jersey Inc., (NAJ), recorded all-time high participation in nearly all breed programs in 1985, according to AJCC-NAJ Executive Secretary Maurice E. Core.

Core reports 70,042 applications for registration were received in 1985, the most for any year since 1966. There were 65,357 registrations actually recorded, the most since 1958.

There were 24,387 registration transfer applications received by the AJCC in 1985, again the most for any year since 1966.

There were 756 Jersey herds representing 48,260 cows enrolled in the Total Performance Evaluation (TPE) and Dairy Herd Improvement Registry (DHIR) programs in 1985, the most herds and cows enrolled in these performance programs in the 117 year history of the AJCC.

Another encouraging new program has been the sale of

Jersey Pride Cheese through NAJ. Sales in 1985 reached 155,000 lbs., a 55% increase over 1984, which was the first full year for the program.

Core credits several factors for this high level of Jersey activity. Foremost is the ever-increasing number of milk markets recognizing the value of high solids milk, giving Jersey breeders extra income during these difficult times in the dairy business.

Also, Jersey breeders have long taken an active part in the marketing of their product, through programs like All-Jersey Milk and Jersey Pride Cheese. These efforts are now paying dividends.

The Genetic Recovery Program, which began in 1975, allows for the identification of the unregistered, purebred Jerseys and the eventual registration of their offspring by Registered Jersey bulls. Core credits this program with expanding the base of Registered Jerseys in this country and increasing the numbers of breeders who participate in other programs.

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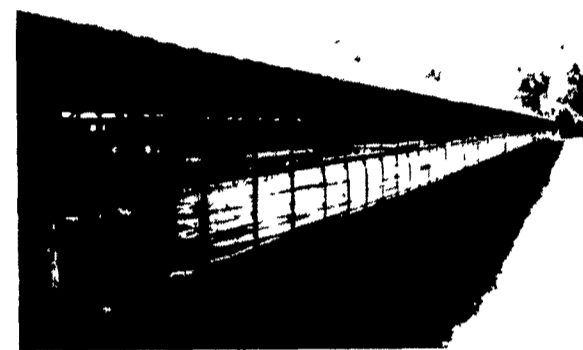
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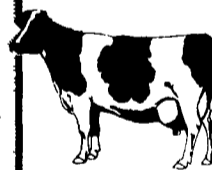
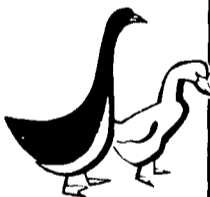
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