

USDA Proposes To Expand Identification Requirements

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Tomorrow, the U.S. Department of Agriculture will propose to require identification of all swine in interstate commerce in order to make it easier to trace the source of diseased animals or those with drug or chemical residues, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Marketing and Inspection Services Kenneth A. Gilles said.

"A nationwide identification and traceback system would lead to improvements in the safety of the food supply as well as animal health," Gilles said. "It would provide the mechanism for tracing the source of contaminated food as well as the information necessary for pinpointing and correcting animal health problems. It also would benefit pork production by enhancing disease control to reduce losses."

Gilles added that support for this concept has been broad; it includes Congress and consumer, scientific and industry organizations. The National Academy of Sciences, in

a 1985 report on federal meat inspection, listed an animal identification system as one of the components of an optimal inspection program. The concept also has been endorsed by such groups as the American Meat Institute and the National Pork Producers Council. Congress, in legislation enacted in 1986, asked USDA to evaluate livestock traceback.

Under the proposed rule, USDA would expand its requirements so that anyone handling swine in interstate commerce--from the farm to the meat plant--would have to identify the animals and maintain records on that identification for two years.

"Such a system would facilitate efforts to eradicate diseases by making it possible to trace movements of infected swine and thus locate sources of infection," Gilles said. In addition, under the proposed system, when USDA inspection of hogs at slaughter revealed a contamination problem, USDA could locate the site of the problem

and work with producers to contain and eliminate the problem.

Without a comprehensive system, investigations are time-consuming and costly to state and federal agencies. "The proposed requirements would increase efficiency and protect the public health," Gilles said.

The proposal would require that each hog be identified individually or by lot if it was raised, marketed and sent to slaughter from a farrow (birth) to finish operation. Pork producers would have to use identification methods-- such as ear tags or tatoos--included in the proposal or could seek approval of other methods from the deputy administrator of Veterinary Services in USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

According to the proposal, written records would have to be kept on all swine in interstate commerce at each site where hogs from one source are mixed with hogs from other sources. The records would have to be kept for two years and

Holstein Convention Begins Tuesday

WILLOW STREET — Final plans have been made for the 75th anniversary Pennsylvania Holstein Convention, being held this week at the Willow Valley Family Resort and Convention Center, February 23, 24 and 25.

Activities will get underway just after lunch on Tuesday with tours, and will conclude Thursday morning with an awards breakfast.

In between, there will be business, fun and entertainment, with full days for convention goers.

Tuesday night's sale will get underway with entertainment at 6:00, and the sale beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the convention center, and featuring 60 of Pennsylvania's finest cows.

Juniors will have a full day of activities, with Dairy Bowl and

Dairyman's competition taking place throughout the day.

Wednesday will feature the business meeting, the ladies program and a banquet with the singing group Re-Creation presenting the entertainment. After the banquet a benefit auction is being held to raise funds for a junior scholarship fund. Along with a painting of Osbornedale Ivanhoe by Steve Kinney, there are embryos, semen from many bull studs, paintings for the home and a quilt created by Reba Yoder and Mary Jane Stoltzfus.

Throughout the convention, there will be a dairy bar offering refreshments, and a room filled with memorabilia of the past 75 years of Holstein activities, along with commercial exhibitors.

be available to USDA officials during normal business hours.

Under the proposal, if a federally inspected slaughterhouse did

not comply with identification rules, USDA inspectors could order that swine carcasses be retained at the plant until laboratory tests confirmed the meat's wholesomeness.

In fiscal year 1986, more than 77 million hogs were slaughtered under federal inspection.

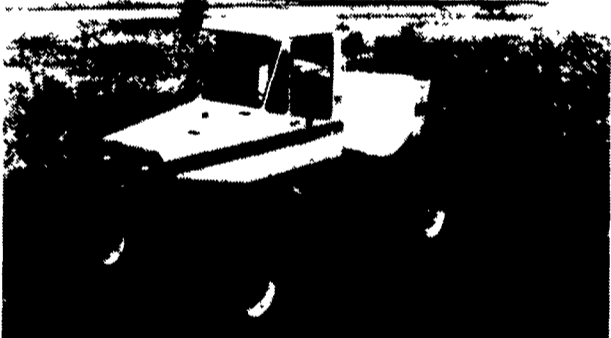
Two USDA agencies are involved with this proposal because it concerns the control of disease in farm animals, the safety of the meat supply and the transport and sale of swine. Participating agencies are the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, which is charged with preventing or controlling disease in animals raised for food, and the Food Safety and Inspection Service, which is responsible for inspecting meat and poultry to ensure safety.

The proposed rule change is scheduled to be published in the Feb. 3 Federal Register. Comments, an original and two copies, must be sent by April 4 to Steven B. Farbman, assistant director, Regulatory Coordination, APHIS, USDA, Room 728 Federal Bldg., 6505 Belcrest Rd., Hyattsville, Md., 20872.

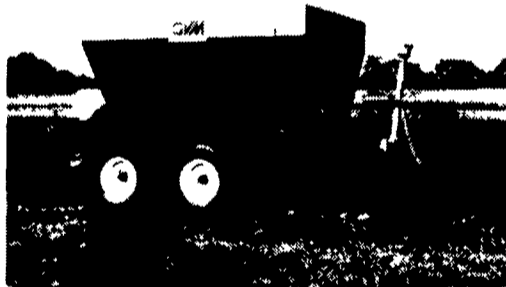


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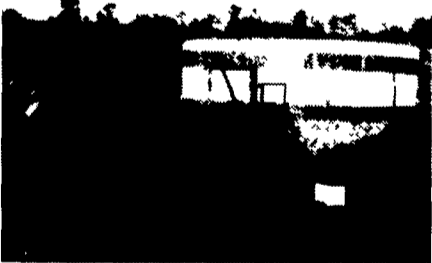
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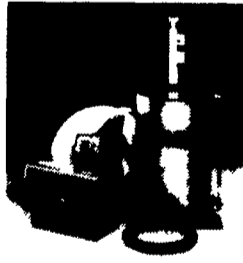
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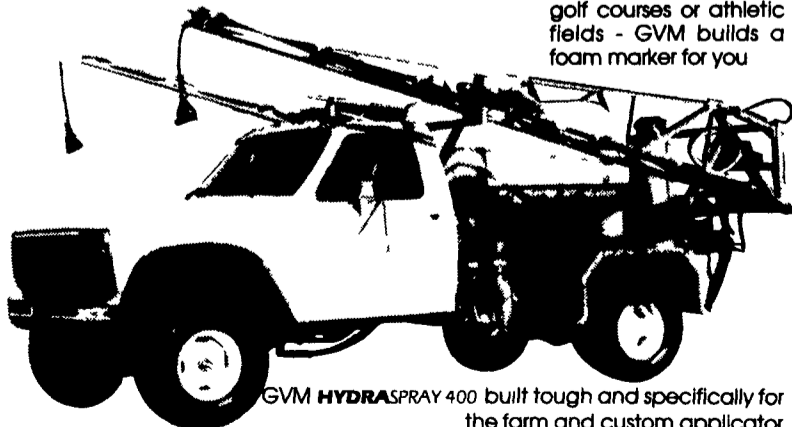
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