



Have You Heard?

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Review Of Terms For Easter Ham

With all the terminology used, it is no wonder consumers become confused when they try to select just the right ham. Do you know what all these terms mean -- whole, halves, portions, end slices, butt, shank, fully-cooked, semi-boneless, boneless, shankless, skinned, canned, perishable, water added, country-style?

A "ham" is the upper portion of a hog's hind leg. A fresh ham is an uncured ham, more similar to a fresh pork roast than a cured ham. Hams are generally cured by injection of a brine solution. Most hams are also smoked after curing, although they may not be labeled as such. About 90 percent of all hams are "fully cooked." That is, the ham has been cooked by the packer and need only to be reheated to an internal temperature of 140 degrees F. The National Livestock and Meat Board recommends 15 to 18 minutes per pound at 325 degrees F. For best results use a meat thermometer. Do not overcook or you will end

up with a lot of unnecessary shrinkage.

Ham may be purchased whole or in halves, portions, ends or slices. If ham is labeled as a half, it must not have any of the center slices removed. Once the choice center slices have been removed the remainder must be labeled as butt, shank portions, or ends.

Ham may be sold semi-boneless, bonless or shankless. A semi-boneless ham has the leg bone remaining, but the aitch (pronounced H) bone and usually the shank have been removed. A shankless ham has the shank removed. A semi-boneless ham is usually partially skinned and defatted.

A boneless ham may be rolled, shaped or canned. Most have been fully cooked. Read the label to make sure. Some canned hams have the term "perishable" on the label. These hams have been cooked to 150 degrees F during processing and must be stored in your refrigerator. A nonperishable ham is a small canned ham (usually 3 pounds or less) which has been cooked to an internal temperature of at least 250 degrees F during processing. It can be stored in

your pantry without refrigeration.

A term that sometimes confuses shoppers is "water added." A curing solution of salt, sugar and water is injected into the ham during processing to produce the meat's familiar color and flavor. Most of this added moisture is subsequently lost during curing and cooking. If some moisture, not more than 10% of the ham's original or "green" weight is retained, the ham must be rework-

ed into another product or labeled with the exact amount of water, such as "ham with 20 percent water added."

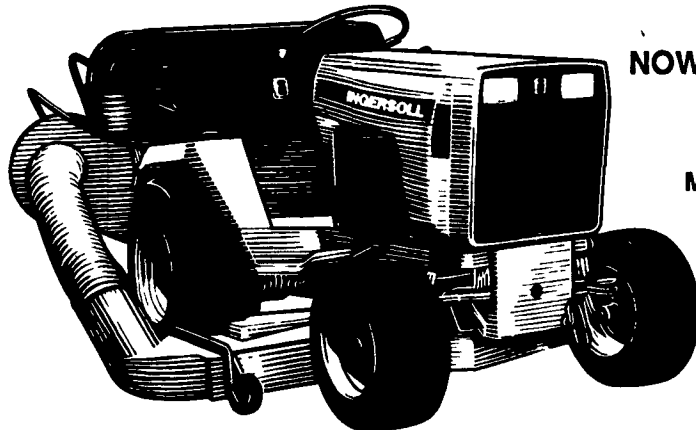
Dry cured hams are rubbed with salt and other dry curing agents, then slowly smoked and dried. These hams are usually very salty and require soaking and simmering before baking. They are commonly referred to as country hams or they may bear the name of a specific locality like Virginia,

Tennessee, Kentucky or Smithfield. If they are labeled "country style" or "Virginia-style" they are produced outside that locality but use similar methods. Dry cured hams are generally whole, untrimmed, and include the skin, fat and bone.

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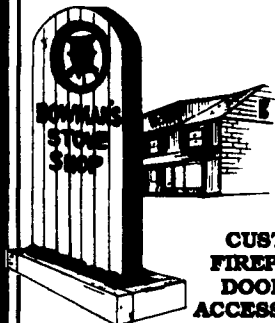
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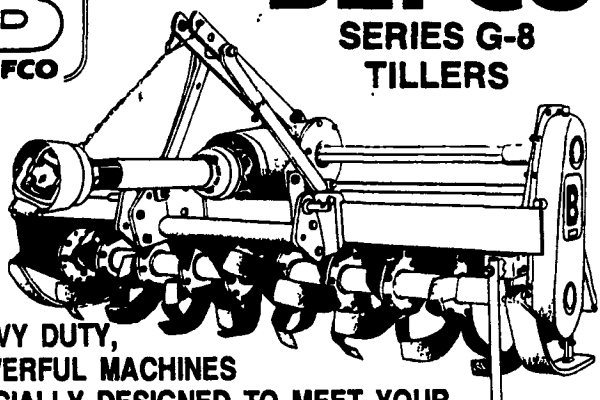
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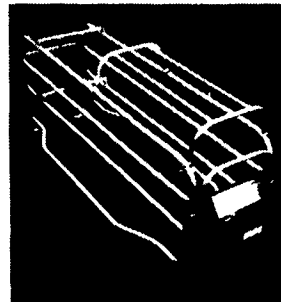
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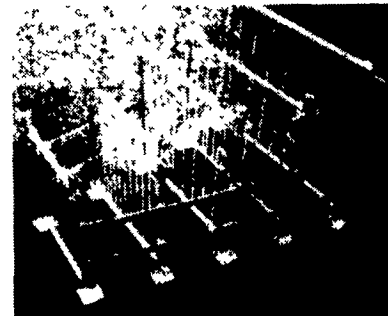
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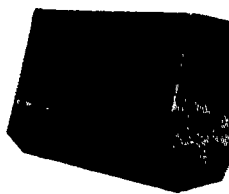
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