

Meat Processors, Others Have Until June 5 To Testify

VERNON ACHENBACH JR.
Lancaster Farming Staff
READING (Berks Co.) — A special public hearing on proposed federal regulations for the meat slaughtering and processing industry was held last week at the Berks Campus of Pennsylvania State University, near Reading.

The meeting was a coordinated effort between U.S. Rep. Tim Holden, of St. Clair, Clyde Myers with the sponsoring Berks County Penn State Extension Service, Dr. William Henning, Penn State extension meat specialist, and William Smith, the acting assistant deputy administrator for the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Inspection Management Program.

Although the meeting was announced as an informational

meeting, it was really the last formal public hearing on a set of regulations proposed by the FSIS that would create a mandatory operational control and testing program for each slaughtering and meat processing operation.

The proposal is that every commercial slaughterer and meat processor adopt "science-based process control systems, called Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)," according to a USDA press release that was part of a background package of information distributed at the hearing.

The regulations were proposed when published in the Feb. 3, 1995 issue of the Federal Register. About six public hearings were held across the country, and comments can still be made until June

5, by mailing them to: Diane Moore, Docket Clerk, Room 3171 South Building, Food Safety and Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington DC 20250.

Those attending last week's meeting/hearing were slaughterers and processors from a wide region of southern, central and eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey, according to those testifying. About 30 people in all attended the meeting, held in the auditorium of the Berks Campus Perkins Student Center from 2 p.m. to past the 4 p.m. scheduled ending.

A private meeting was held earlier in the day between Rep. Holden and those who received a special invitation to attend. That meeting was held to discuss some of the details of the proposal and what problems might be associated with the proposed regulations.

The regulations, in brief, would require slaughterers and meat processors to address seven major principles in setting up an operational control system.

Those seven principles were created by the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological

Criteria for Foods, according to a USDA published report.

They are: 1. Conduct a hazard analysis; 2. identify the critical control points in the process; 3. establish critical limits for preventive measures associated with each identified critical control point; 4. establish critical control point monitoring requirements; 5. establish corrective action;

6. establish effective recordkeeping procedures; and 7. establish procedures for verifying that the HACCP system is working correctly.

In effect, the attempt by those proposing regulations is that all commercial butchering operations and any groundmeat producing

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Snyder County Auction To Open

ANDY ANDREWS

Lancaster Farming Staff
PORT TREVORTON (Snyder Co.) — Vegetable growers in the central part of Pennsylvania have something to smile about — there's a produce auction about to open nearby.

The Snyder County Produce Outlet is located two miles south of Port Trevorton on Rt. 11/15, and 35 miles north of Harrisburg. The outlet will open on Thursday, June

1 and resume on Monday, June 5, at noon. Days will be added as needed.

The first sales will include bedding plant and vegetable sales.

The auction is managed by Roger A. Lauer, Selingsgrove, auctioneer. The outlet has signed up 75 growers, about 80 percent of which are located within five miles of the auction, according to Eathan Martin, auction assistant.

"We've been in the wholesale produce business since 1983," said Martin. "We began with about three growers and built on from there."

Martin said that the wholesaling business grew to the point that enough growers were interested in the idea of the auction.

The auction will operate two days a week in June and move to four days mid- to late-season. Initially, the auction will conduct bedding plant sales and provide produce from Eastern Shore farmers and other southern produce.

Approximately 50 buyers are signed up for the auction, representing grocery stores to restaurants. The auction charges a commission of 9 percent. Checks will be sent out to growers on a two-week basis.

Many buyers are from central Pennsylvania, New York, and western parts of Pennsylvania.

The building for the auction, located right off of Rt. 11/15, measures about 8,000 square feet and has room for loading from many size vehicles. According to Martin, an additional 4,000 square feet is planned with 100 foot more of dock space.

According to Roger A. Lauer, auctioneer, "I am looking forward to it all and plan on working full-time at the facilities in season. I worked with produce and greenhouses part-time and always enjoyed it."

For more information about the auction and to register to buy or sell, contact the Snyder County Produce Outlet, P.O. Box 96, Port Trevorton, PA 17864, (717) 374-0284.

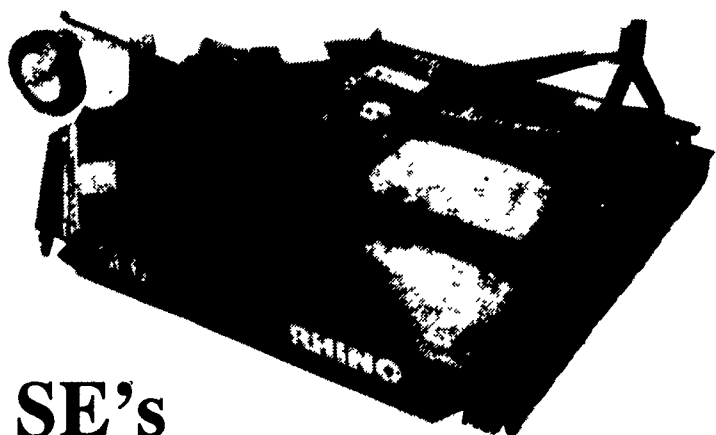
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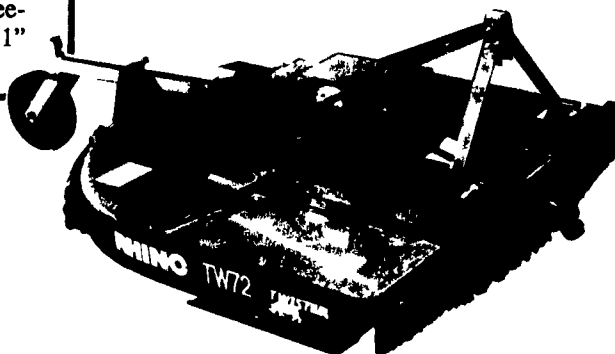
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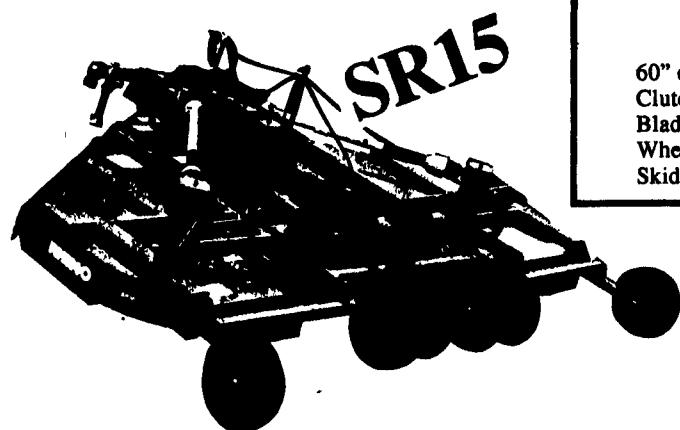
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