

# USDA Seeks Comments On Proposed Amendments To The Fluid Milk Order

WASHINGTON, D.C. (USDA) - The U.S. Department of Agriculture is inviting the public to comment on proposals to amend the Fluid Milk Promotion Order.

The proposals would modify the membership status of the National Fluid Milk Processor Promotion Board to allow individual fluid milk processors to be represented by up to three board members instead of two. The proposals would also allow board members whose fluid milk processor company affiliation has changed to serve for six months or until a successor is appointed, whichever is sooner.

The National Fluid Milk Processor Promotion Board, which administers the Fluid Milk Order, requested the proposed changes. The program is financed by a mandatory 20-cent per hundredweight assessment on all fluid milk products pro-

cessed and marketed in consumer-type packages by fluid milk processors in the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia.

Fluid milk processors who process and market more than 500,000 pounds of fluid milk products are charged the assessment, and those who process and market 500,000 pounds or less are exempted from the order.

Details of the proposed changes will be published as a proposed rule in the March 17 Federal Register. Comments, postmarked no later than April 17 may be sent to Dairy Programs, AMS, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Stop 0233, Room 2958-S, Washington, D.C. 20250-0233. Copies of the proposed rule and additional information may be obtained from David R. Jamison at that address, tel. (202) 720-6909.

PENNSTATE



College of Agricultural Sciences

From the Department of Dairy and Animal Science

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meat safety.

Scientists have much to learn about the spread of pathogens between and among animals during shipping and marketing. They have not ascertained what causes shedding and spreading of the pathogens during marketing, shipping and handling of these animals. Co-mingling of animals would seem to reduce any advantage of identifying farms or feedyards, which have worked to eliminate or reduce pathogens.

The producer is limited in practices, at the farm, which reduce the potential for contaminating a carcass with pathogens. Some educators have developed what are called "Best Management Practices". These are far short of a true HACCP

plan but are a step in getting producers to think about management practices which might affect food safety. These practices include such things as cleaning feeders and waterers regularly and preventing bird droppings from entering the feed or water supply. Keeping market cattle as clean as possible is also helpful and some packers refuse to buy excessively dirty animals.

Quality Assurance programs by the pork, beef and veal industries have been successful in addressing some food safety issues but have done very little to address pathogens.

There is some question if beef is even the main reservoir of E. coli pathogens. Preliminary work here at Penn State, funded by the PA Department of Agriculture, has led us to believe that cattle may be only intermediate hosts.

We have found levels of E. coli in whitetail deer many times higher than in cattle. One of the recent outbreaks (in the state of Washington), in which children were made ill from E. coli when swimming, showed the same serotype of E. coli was found in DUCK droppings!

Clearly, more evidence about the elimination or control of pathogens needs to be done before USDA can effectively include livestock in mandatory HACCP plans.

A great deal of improvement has been done by the meat and poultry processors, but one fact remains: there is no step to totally eliminate pathogens between the farm gate and the consumers plate, other than PROPER COOKING!

## Dairy Alliance

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of the dairy operation's size," said Bair. "Small and large farmers can benefit from any subject we address in Dairy Alliance. It should be the goal of every farmer to be more progressive and keep up with the industry."

For more information about Dairy Alliance, dairy producers can call 1-888-373-PA DAIRY or visit the web site at [www.dairyalliance.com](http://www.dairyalliance.com).

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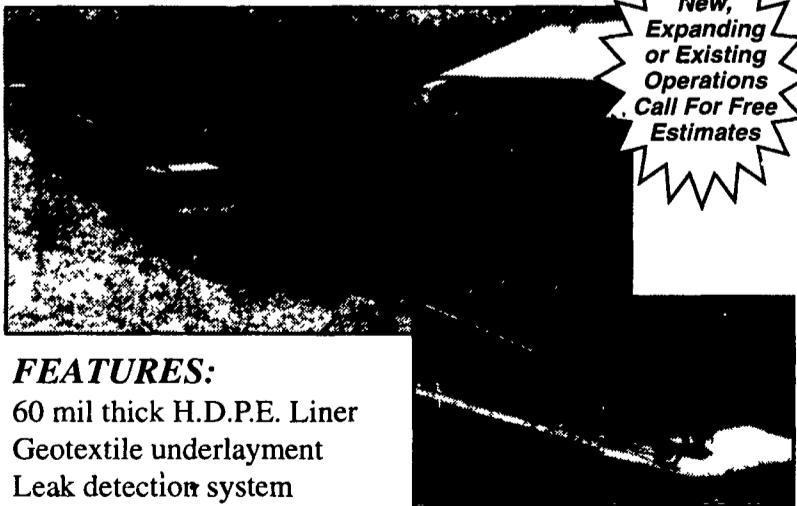
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