



USDA Amends Refrigeration, Labeling Requirements For Officially ID'd Shell Eggs

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The USDA has revised its regulations governing the voluntary shell egg grading program by amending the refrigeration and labeling requirements for eggs identified with an official USDA consumer grade.

"These actions will allow Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) graders to ensure that cartons of eggs with the shield-shaped grademark have been continuously stored under refrigeration no greater than 45 degrees Fahrenheit," said Kathleen Merrigan, AMS administrator. "AMS will also ensure that egg cartons with grademarks are labeled to indicate that refrigeration is required."

Refrigeration is a major factor in maintaining the quality of shell eggs. AMS believes that these actions will promote the preservation of quality eggs. Consumers should look for the official USDA grademark on the carton for quality assurance when purchasing shell eggs.

Amendments to regulations by USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) mandated that egg handlers store

shell eggs destined for the ultimate consumer at no greater than 45 degrees F. To ensure that officially graded eggs are refrigerated at temperatures that conform to FSIS' mandatory requirements, AMS changed its maximum storage temperature requirement to 45 degrees F.

The amendments were published as an interim final rule, with request for comments, in the Oct. 22 issue of the Federal Register. Prior to that time, AMS required that officially graded eggs be refrigerated at temperatures no greater than 60 degrees F.

The five comments received stated general understanding of and agreement with the need for AMS regulations to conform to the FSIS regulations. Other suggestions and concerns expressed in the comments either have or will be addressed by the agency. Therefore, the agency affirms the provisions of the interim rule as a final rule without change, effective June 30, 2000.

The amendments may be viewed electronically at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/poultry/regulations>.

Wil-Rich Unveils New Disc V-Ripper

WAHPETON, N.D. — The new V957 DDR Ripper from Wil-Rich Manufacturing makes short work of tough fall tillage.

Available in five- or seven-shank models with 30-inch spacing, or a nine-shank model with 24-inch spacing, the V957 features hydraulically controlled disk gangs.

Built especially for use with tough residue, the new disc ripper boasts 28-inch x 5/16-inch notched blades mounted on a two 3/16-inch gang shaft. The blades are spaced on 15-inch with a 7 1/2-inch cut between the front and rear gangs. The V957 also has auto-reset shanks with 5,000-pound trip pressure and 16-inch trip clearance.

Wil-Rich has engineered the V957 ripper to withstand tough use under a wide range of field conditions. Its frame and level-



The new V957 DDR Ripper from Wil-Rich Manufacturing makes short work of tough fall tillage.

lift tongue are rugged 7-inch x 5-inch tubular steel.

Standard on the unit are a heavy-duty 4-inch x 4-inch pole jack, a walking tandem axle, and 12.5L-15 12-ply tires. An optional heavy-duty three-bar harrow is available for a rear leveling attachment.

Barenbrug's Perennial Ryegrass For The USA Details Its Success

OGDENSBURG, N.J. — Barenbrug's Perennial Ryegrass is proving to be successful throughout the U.S.A. Barenbrug now offers an informative brochure about its perennial ryegrass, which educates the farmer about the specie's winter hardiness, available varieties for specific needs, and compatible mixes.

To obtain a free copy of "Perennial Ryegrass For The USA," call 1-800-435-5296. Barenbrug will also send along a free copy of its new Forage Catalog free of charge.

Barenbrug's Perennial Ryegrass is a cool-season grass with a decided advantage over other varieties — it has a second growth spurt in the fall. It is also high in sugars and its cell walls

are highly digestible, making it high in both protein and energy.

Perennial ryegrass is also very palatable, further increasing the energy intake of animals. These increased levels allow for improved milk production, animal weight gain, improved body condition scores, and better animal health.

A Barenbrug Perennial Ryegrass pasture can last as long as ten years, lowering the farmer's cost of production. Improved pastures are higher in production and easier to manage.

Barenbrug's new winter-hardy perennial originates from The Netherlands and has already proven to thrive for more than six years at numerous locations throughout the Midwest and Northeast.

NCFC Concerned EPA Sulfur Diesel Proposal Could Jeopardize Farmer-Owned Petroleum System

WASHINGTON, D.C. — David Graves, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives (NCFC) president and CEO, expressed deep concern that the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed sulfur diesel rule will move too far too fast if it includes a standard significantly below 50 ppm.

"We have been working with EPA, and we appreciate the agency's recognition of the unique structure and challenges of farmer-owned cooperative refiners, as well as compliance flexibility proposals we understand may be in the proposed rule," Graves said. "However, we remain concerned that an overly stringent sulfur diesel standard could unnecessarily harm U.S. agriculture and rural America, particularly during a time of continuing economic hardship that threatens the survival of many farmers and ranchers."

The co-op leader pointed out that farm and other off-road uses will be impacted by the new highway standard since most of the distribution system can handle only one grade of diesel fuel.

NCFC is urging that a final

rule establish an on-road sulfur diesel fuel cap of about 50 ppm, a 90 percent reduction from the current level and provide maximum compliance flexibility.

An ultralow standard could lead to unintended harm to American agriculture and rural America by jeopardizing the economic viability of farmer-owned cooperative refiners and creating conditions for fuel supply disruptions and excessively higher prices for farmers for both on-farm and highway fuels. Graves distributed copies of a May 9 letter to EPA Administrator Carol Browner which was signed by 24 agricultural organizations that expressed similar concerns.

"We look forward to working with the agency to achieve a final rule that is compatible with continued economic viability in American agriculture and environmental progress. Just as our constituents need and want cleaner air, they also require reliable and affordable fuel supplies," Graves said.

American agriculture is vitally dependent in carrying out its food, natural fiber, renewable energy, and other missions upon a reliable and affordable supply of diesel fuel. Though less than 2

percent of the refining industry, farmer cooperatives account for about 40 percent of all the on-farm fuel use in the U.S. and are unique in that the customer is also the owner, according to the NCFC. Farmer cooperatives also supply much of the highway diesel and home heating oil needs in rural America.

An ultra-low sulfur diesel standard could increase the threat of supply disruptions, particularly in rural America, by effectively reducing refinery capacity; force many refiners to produce more costly ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel for farm and other off-highway uses due to distribution limitations, particularly in the agricultural heartland; and jeopardize the economic viability of farmer-owned refineries, NCFC noted. Costs for farmers and other rural consumers could range from a 5 cents per gallon increase if sulfur levels are set at 50 ppm to 10 cents or more at 15 ppm. Supply disruptions would cause much larger price spikes.

NCFC is a nationwide association of cooperative businesses owned and controlled by farmers. Additional information about NCFC can be found at the Website, www.ncfc.org.

Corn Growers Welcome Passage Of Crop Insurance Package

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Agricultural Risk Protection Act (H.R. 2559), passed by both houses of Congress, will provide welcome short-term relief for struggling farmers while taking important steps toward ensuring the future health of the farm economy.

"The National Corn Growers Association has long maintained that reform of the federal crop insurance program is vital to long-term economic stability in agriculture," said NCGA President Lynn Jensen of Lake Preston, S.D. "This bill addresses many of our concerns about the current program and will increase affordable risk manage-

ment options for all farmers."

Jensen outlined some of the NCGA-supported crop insurance provisions of the bill.

"It increases premium subsidies at all levels of coverage and extends the subsidy to revenue products. It includes a subsidy structure that should encourage producers to consider higher levels of coverage. It provides relief for producers whose insurable yields have fallen due to unusual weather patterns. It encourages private development of new risk management products. And it strengthens provisions to reduce fraud, waste and abuse," he said.

Corn growers also welcomed the inclusion of approximately

\$7.1 billion in farm assistance funds. "The farm assistance portion of the bill is significant not only in that it provides \$5.5 billion in direct payments to farmers this fiscal year, but also includes funding in the upcoming 2001 fiscal year for a number of forward-thinking initiatives that will improve farmers' profitability and self-sufficiency," Jensen said.

Among these initiatives is a \$15 million program providing competitive grants for producers and processors of value-added agricultural commodities and products. "The move toward value-added agriculture is one of the keys to revitalizing rural communities and stabilizing farmers' incomes," Jensen said.

"Of course, ethanol is one of the most important value-added markets for corn," he said. "Thus, NCGA is particularly pleased that this bill includes \$14 million for construction of a corn-based ethanol research pilot plant in Illinois. This pilot plant will enable researchers to improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of ethanol production, increasing corn grind and resulting in much wider use of renewable, environmentally friendly ethanol fuel."

In a related vein, the bill also authorizes an NCGA-backed initiative to promote innovative research on bio-based products and biofuels. Such products, made from renewable materials such as crops, trees and agricultural waste, provide a safe, sustainable alternative to replace petroleum-based fuels and chemicals. "This is another important endeavor that will not only boost farm income, but yield benefits for all of society," Jensen said.

In addition to these measures, the final crop insurance bill includes funding for a variety of other NCGA-supported programs in critical areas such as conservation and research.

Fold-Up Outlet Drop Standard On Feeder

MILFORD, Ind. — Chore-Time offers a unique fold-up outlet drop on its E-Z Start™ Chick Feeder.

When it is not in use, the new drop folds up compactly under the feeder line away from dust and dirt until it is needed again. As it is folded, the unit shuts off the feed flow and then locks in the closed position.

The E-Z Start Outlet Drop snaps together from four plastic pieces and attaches to the feeder line with a single bolt. Feeder line tubes are available from Chore-Time with holes pre-punched for the chick feeder. The feeder can also be added to an existing feeding system by drilling additional feed openings in the feeder line.

Chore-Time's complete feeder consists of four plastic components: the new outlet drop, a feed cone, a feed cone starter sleeve, and a specially-shaped, heavy-duty feeder tray. The feed cone and sleeve interlock in one of three easy-to-select positions to pre-set the feed level for each feeder.



Chore-Time offers a unique fold-up outlet drop on its E-Z Start™ Chick Feeder.

Located in the center of the E-Z Start's feeder tray, the feed cone and sleeve are designed to place feed in a "pan-shaped" ring area where it will attract chicks. The border of the feeding ring helps conserve feed and helps train chicks to eat around a feeder's perimeter, preparing them for transition to the nearby pan feeders.