

Independence Avenue, S.W.,
Washington, D.C., room 2525-South
Building.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will become a matter of public record.

Dated: June 17, 1999.

Robert C. Keeney,

Deputy Administrator, Fruit and Vegetable Programs.

[FR Doc. 99-16509 Filed 6-28-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-02-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

[PY-99-005]

United States Grade Standards for Shell Eggs

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is soliciting comments on its proposal to change the United States Grade Standards for Shell Eggs. Specifically, AMS proposes to delete the general term "Inedible eggs" and its definition, revise the definition of the general term "Loss" eggs by including examples of inedible eggs, revise the term descriptive of an A quality white, and delete specifications for packaging materials. These changes would simplify and clarify the terminology used and would remove information that is no longer of value to the industry.

The current United States Grade Standards for Shell Eggs, along with the proposed changes, are available by contacting the address below or by visiting the AMS Internet site at: www.ams.usda.gov/poultry/standards.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before August 30, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Douglas C. Bailey, Chief, Standardization Branch, Poultry Programs, AMS, USDA, Room 3944-South Bldg., STOP 0259, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0259. Comments may also be faxed to (202) 690-0941.

State that your comments refer to Notice number PY-99-005 and include the date and page number of this issue of the **Federal Register**.

Comments received may be inspected at the above location between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, except holidays.

Comments will also be posted on the Internet at www.ams.usda.gov/poultry/standards.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Douglas C. Bailey at (202) 720-3506.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (AMA), as amended (7 U.S.C. 1621 *et seq.*) authorizes the establishment of U.S. standards and grades for shell eggs. These standards and grades are maintained by AMS for use as a common language of trade among those buying and selling shell eggs. The standards are used by shell egg processors, wholesale traders, institutions, Federal and State governments, and retailers that sell eggs to the ultimate consumer. AMS also administers a voluntary grading program for shell eggs under the AMA. Any interested person, commercial firm, or government agency can, for a fee, have AMS monitor processing operations and verify that the grade and size of eggs being packaged meet the requirements of the U.S. grade standards and weight classes. Eggs meeting the requirements can be packaged into cartons or other containers bearing the USDA grade shield.

Currently, the definition of "Loss" eggs includes inedible eggs. There is also a separate definition for "Inedible eggs" that includes examples of such eggs. When applying the grade tolerances of the standard, there is no need to separately identify inedible eggs from loss eggs. Therefore, AMS proposes to delete the general term "Inedible eggs" and to add the examples of inedible eggs to the definition of "Loss" eggs. This would clarify that eggs with rots, green whites, stuck yolks, blood rings, or free yolk in the white are to be classed as "Loss" eggs when applying grade tolerances.

Candling is the process of using light to help determine the quality of an egg. Automated mass scanning equipment is used by most egg packers to detect eggs with cracked shells and interior defects. Hand-candling is done to spot-check and determine accuracy in grading. The breakout method of determining interior quality enables graders and students to calibrate their grading skills against an objective standard. In this method, a micrometer measures the height of the thick white of a broken-out egg and gives a direct reading in Haugh units. Currently, there is a Haugh unit range of "60 to 72" for A quality and "72 or higher" for AA quality. Because these values appear to overlap, AMS proposes to revise the description for A quality to read "60 up to, but not including, 72." This would clarify the wording and

make it consistent with the intent of the description.

Specifications for packaging materials are provided as examples of quality packaging, but do not appear to be of any recognized value to today's industry. Therefore, AMS is proposing to delete this section entirely.

The complete text of the proposed revisions to the grade standards can be obtained from the Internet at www.ams.usda.gov/poultry/standards. A copy can also be obtained by writing to the address above, calling (202) 720-3506, faxing (202) 690-0641, or e-mailing Douglas.Bailey@usda.gov.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 1621-1627.

Dated: June 23, 1999.

Enrique E. Figueroa,

Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FR Doc. 99-16451 Filed 6-28-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 99-045-1]

Draft Guideline on Good Clinical Practices, VICH Topic GL9

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability and request for comments.

SUMMARY: We are requesting comments on a draft document titled "Guideline on Good Clinical Practices" that has been developed by the International Cooperation on Harmonization of Technical Requirements for Registration of Veterinary Medicinal Products (VICH). The guideline is intended to be an international ethical and scientific quality standard for designing, conducting, monitoring, recording, auditing, analyzing, and reporting clinical studies evaluating veterinary products. Because the guideline would apply to veterinary biological products regulated by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service under the Virus-Serum-Toxin Act, we are requesting comments on its provisions so that we may include any relevant public input on the draft in the Agency's comments to the VICH Steering Committee.

DATES: To ensure that your comments are considered, we must receive them by August 13, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Please send your comment and three copies to: Docket No. 99-045-1, Regulatory Analysis and