

USDA Responds To Missouri Producers' Concerns

WASHINGTON, Aug. 26, 1999 -- Rapid response teams from the U.S. Department of Agriculture will be in Missouri to respond to livestock producers' concerns that packers may violate the Federal Packers and Stockyards Act when Missouri's new mandatory livestock price reporting law is enacted on August 28.

The teams, which are being dispatched by Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Michael V. Dunn, are designed to deal with high priority investigations that require fast action to prevent or minimize major competitive or financial harm caused by violations of the Act.

"Any indication that Missouri producers are being treated illegally will be promptly and vigorously investigated," said Dunn. "Our teams will be out there, on the ground, talking to producers, to help us determine if violations of the Packers and Stockyards Act are taking place."

"USDA's Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration is responsible for enforcing the Act," said James R. Baker, administrator of GIPSA. "We will use all resources available to respond to the concerns of producers. If we uncover any evidence that Missouri sellers are being boycotted, we will investigate immediately and thoroughly."

GIPSA's rapid response teams will be in Kirksville, Marshall, Maryville, and Mexico, Mo., to talk with producers on an individual basis. Producers can meet with USDA officials on September 8 at the Super 8 in Marshall and the Best Western in Mexico; and on September 9 at the Microtel Inn in Maryville and the Best Western Shamrock Inn in Kirksville. Officials will be available from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Producers who have complaints are encouraged to meet privately with these government officials, and to bring documentation and any pertinent information along with them to support their allegations.

For more information, call GIPSA's Des Moines regional office at (515) 323-2579.

GIPSA Release #50-99

Dana Stewart (202) 720-5091
dstewart@fgis.usda.gov