

# FEDERAL NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY



## AGRICULTURE

### USDA'S MEAT AND POULTRY HOTLINE: MORE THAN 1 MILLION SERVED

■(WASHINGTON) From novice cooks wondering how long to roast a chicken to more experienced bakers unsure about what kind of cutting board to use, the home economists on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Meat and Poultry Hotline have heard it all — one million times.

This month, the Hotline answered its one-millionth call, a milestone for the toll-free service providing food safety information to consumers.

"Since its beginning in 1985, the Hotline has provided cooks across the country with help providing meals — safely — for their families," said Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman. "The Hotline is a vital part of USDA's consumer food safety education efforts and this one-millionth call is a milestone that celebrates these efforts and honors the talented, dedicated staff."

Calls to Hotline have changed through the years, according to Susan Conley, Food Safety and Inspection Service's Education and Communications Staff Director. Conley, one of the first home economists answering calls when the Hotline was established in 1985, said that in the mid-eighties, calls were more general in nature concerning safe handling of food. Today, kitchen sanitation is a frequent topic with callers more familiar with specific foodborne bacteria and technology.

The Meat and Poultry Hotline operates year-round, Mon.-Fri. from 10 am to 4 pm, Eastern Time. The Hotline staff also handle caller's last minute concerns on Thanksgiving Day from 8 am to 2 pm ET. Recorded messages on a wide variety of food safety topics are available 24 hours a day. The toll-free number is 1-800-535-4555 and is TDD-accessible.

—U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE  
11/21/96

## AWARDS

### OSHA, OTHERS COMMENDED FOR DEVELOPING EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

■(WASHINGTON) A plan that improves responses to oil spills and hazardous chemical releases received special recognition from the Clinton Administration.

Vice President Gore's prestigious Hammer Award was presented to representatives of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and other federal and state agencies and private organizations on Monday in ceremonies at the Dow Chemical Co. facility in Freeport, Texas.

The Integrated Contingency Plan is a guide for reacting to spills and releases under existing federal laws and regulations. It was developed under the auspices of the National Response Team (NRT), a federal inter-agency group with responsibility for establishing national policies and procedures to prepare and respond to emergencies in-

volving oil and hazardous chemicals. The integrated plan is designed to consolidate various agency response requirements, improve coordination, avoid duplication, and simplify response planning.

Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Joseph A. Dear, said, "The new plan makes it easier for businesses and government agencies to do what is necessary to deal with emergencies involving oil spills and the release of hazardous chemicals. Implementation of this plan will save lives. It is another example of how federal reinvention efforts benefit the public."

In addition to OSHA personnel, staff members from the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Department of Interior, the Department of Transportation, General Services Administration, the Department of Energy, the Department of Defense, the Department of Agriculture, the Federal Emergency Management Association, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the State of Texas received Hammer Awards for their participation in developing the plan.

Hammer Awards also were presented to representatives of Dow Chemical, Phillips Petroleum Co., International Bird Rescue, Phillip Cartner Co., Inc., the Inner City Fund, and Ecology and Environment, the private sector organizations that assisted in the plan.

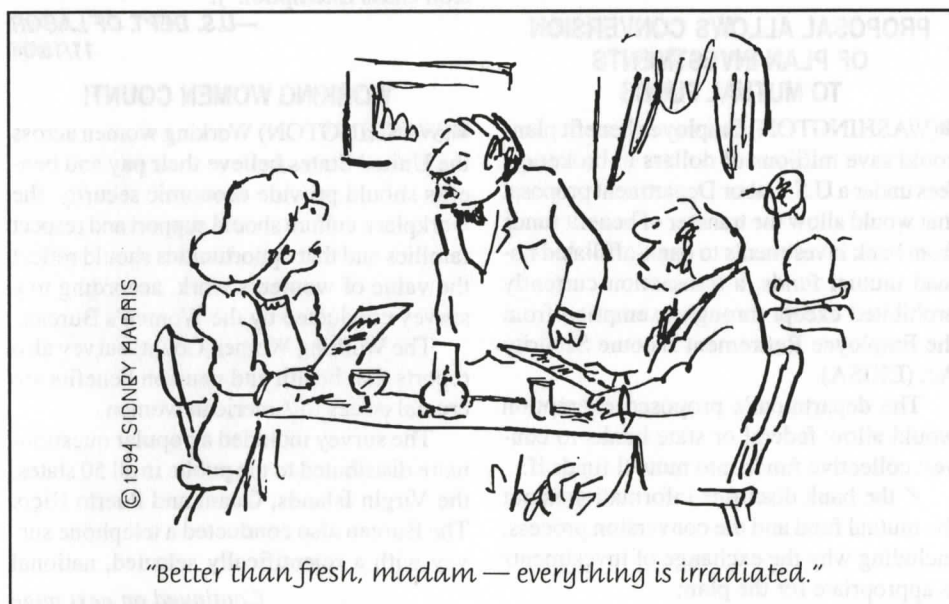
—U.S. DEPT. OF LABOR  
11/18/96

### EPA RECEIVES VICE-PRESIDENTIAL "HAMMER" AWARD

■(WASHINGTON) On Nov. 18, the Environmental Protection Agency received a Vice-Presidential "Hammer" Award which recognizes teams or individuals for contributions to building a government that works better and costs less.

The Hammer went to EPA's Use and Exposure Team in the Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances, for establishing a partnership with the chemical industry in which up-to-date chemical data are provided to EPA voluntarily, eliminating the need for information collection regulations and improving EPA's ability to assess and act on potential chemical risks to human health and the environment. Over 100 companies have provided new data on 40 chemicals of concern.

—ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
11/19/96



"Better than fresh, madam — everything is irradiated."