

would require, under the statutes and regulations defining what grade A is, that it not be put under grade A.

Again, I say we operate by law and regulation.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. One of our responsibilities is to change laws and to exert an influence to change regulations, and these events today may lead to those things taking place; but isn't it a fact that you lower the eating quality of the turkey by freezing and refreezing a few times?

Dr. MEHREN. Whatever "eating quality" is, this is the judgment of our own people who have done most of the work in temperature-time relationships to quality attributes. It does not by any means mean that the specific thawing and refreezing and time involved here would so have altered the product as to require the removal of a grade A stamp. This is a matter in which I can't speak, because I didn't do the grading.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Let's establish one thing. There is no question about it that thawing and refreezing lowers the quality of the product.

Dr. MEHREN. I think there are two facts fairly well established. One, that there is a deterioration in quality attributes as a function of time—of time without rethawing. It is apparently established that freezing, thawing, refreezing, does adversely affect quality attributes which may or may not be sufficient to lower the USDA grade.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. There isn't any question about it. The answer to the question is "Yes", because all the material I have from your shop says the refreezing may result in very low quality.

Dr. MEHREN. Yes. It may or may not.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. At any rate, this housewife who bought these turkeys in Buffalo, N.Y., obviously for the Christmas period of 1967, thought she was getting a bird that, because it said grade A, was a first-rate, high-quality, top-notch, high-priced turkey, and the fact is she was getting a good deal less than that.

Dr. MEHREN. The fact is not necessarily so at all. You buy green peas—if you will read, Mr. Chairman, the materials that were prepared in the Albany Laboratory of U.S. Department of Agriculture, you will find that quality changes may be totally nondetectable, depending upon the time and the level of thawing prior to refreezing, the speed at which the refreezing occurs, and the level to which the freezing goes, so that the word quality is a most difficult one, and it does not lead to any reasonable basis that mere thawing and refreezing has so altered the quality, whatever that may be, to justify a grade B.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. I don't know whether it justifies—you are not suggesting that the freezing and refreezing a few times improves the quality?

Dr. MEHREN. Certainly not, but I am also saying that with respect to such things as cranberries, green peas, frozen meats, frozen meals, it is standard practice to thaw, prepare, and process, and refreeze, and that is not necessarily deceptive to a consumer either, is it?

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Let me read for the record so those people who read this record long after I'm gone will understand I wasn't making some of this up. I'm reading from a booklet published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Home and Garden Book, Bulletin No. 70, published by U.S. Government Printing Office, January 1967. It says on page 5: