

Second hearing for water program slated

By KATHLEEN MONJE
Of the Emerald

OSPIRG concerned

The Oregon Department of Water Resources (DWR) has scheduled a second public hearing, Jan. 26, for discussion of the proposed operating rules that will govern the water development loan program.

The rules will implement the Water Development Act of 1977, passed by voters as Ballot Measure No. 1 in November. The Oregon Public Interest Research Group (OSPIRG) had criticized the department for inadequate public notice before the December proposed rule hearing.

"The notice of public hearing was sent to OSPIRG on Dec. 2 and was received on

Dec. 5," Jan Sokol, OSPIRG staff member told DWR officials. "That left OSPIRG with only eight days to prepare for this hearing."

Bill Van Dyke of the Portland OSPIRG office said the organization could claim partial credit for the second hearing. "When we got notice of the hearing, we contacted other groups — it was a cooperative effort."

OSPIRG is concerned that large out-of-state farming corporations may qualify for loan money under the Water Development Act. The group wants the DWR to adopt rules to guarantee that Oregon independent and family farmers will benefit from the loan program. Passage of the act made

available \$658.5 million for irrigation, drainage and other water projects, ostensibly for small Oregon farmers.

Areas that OSPIRG particularly wants the rules to address include a mechanism for evaluating the social and environmental impacts of water development projects, procedures for involving citizens and other public agencies in the loan application decision-making process and planned allocation of water resources.

"A general problem in the state is that we don't know how much water has been taken from any given source," Van Dyke said.

Because allocation records haven't been

kept, he said, it is possible for rivers to be over-allocated. When this happens, the last person to receive water rights loses them.

"This could put the state in the position of making a loan for water development and then discovering that the water source is over-allocated, with the choice of either degrading the water source by continuing over-use, or taking away the repayment (water) resource for the loan, by removing the borrower's water rights," said Van Dyke.

OSPIRG, the Oregon State Grange and other farming and environmental groups are expected to testify at the January hearing, which will be held at 7:30 p.m. in hearing room "C" at the State Capitol Bldg. in Salem.

Breakfast foods increase costs of '78 grocery bills

By the
Associated Press Writer

Increases in the prices of breakfast foods — eggs, frozen orange juice and sugar — contributed to

higher grocery bills at the start of 1978, according to The Associated Press marketbasket survey.

But the monthly analysis also

indicated that coffee drinkers got a break as the retail price of the beverage held or declined.

The survey showed that the prices of 14 commonly purchased food and non-food items rose an average of 2.3 percent in December. That brought the year's increase to 11.7 percent. The average overall increase a year earlier was 3.5 percent.

The figures are based on an AP survey that began March 1, 1973. The news service drew up a random list of 15 commonly purchased grocery items and checked the price at one supermarket in each of 13 cities. The list has been rechecked on or about the start of each succeeding month.

One item — chocolate chip cookies — had to be dropped from

the list at the end of November because the manufacturer discontinued the package size used in the survey.

The government had projected a 6 percent rise in food prices in 1977. But a spokesman for the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicated that through October — the latest national survey available — the price of food purchased for the home had increased 7 percent. Figures for the year will not be available for several weeks, he said.

Between Jan. 1, 1977, and the start of 1978, the AP marketbasket bill went up at the checklist stores in all 13 cities. When coffee — which soared in price after the crop-killing freeze in Brazil in 1975 — was removed from the list, the bills in all stores still showed increases.

But the year's average increase, without coffee, was 6.7 percent — 5 percentage points lower than the average including the beverage.

The annual total was boosted by a relatively steep rise in prices in December, some of them seasonal.

The AP survey showed that the marketbasket bill increased last month in 11 cities and decreased in only two. The average increase was 3 percent, the average decrease about 2 percent. The overall average increase of 2.3 percent compared with a 0.4 percent increase a month earlier.

Coffee was not among the items contributing to the December upswing. Only one city — New York — reported an increase in the price of a pound of coffee,

four showed decreases, seven stayed the same and one did not have the required brand.

Rising prices for sugar, eggs and frozen orange juice did contribute to the December rise. Price increases also were reported in five cities for chopped chuck and center-cut pork chops and in six for all-beef franks.

Sugar prices are reflecting government price supports instituted for processors early in November, a spokesman for the U.S. Department of Agriculture said.

The consumers' cost for sugar increased in December in 10 checklist stores, held steady in two and dropped in only one.

Increases in meat prices were, in general, small or balanced by decreases. William Cathcart, an agricultural economist, said this was because "feed prices leveled off this year" and there was "little change in supply, overall."

A look at all the items in the AP survey showed more increases — and fewer decreases — in price in December than in November.

The items on the AP checklist are: chopped chuck, center cut pork chops, frozen orange juice concentrate, coffee, paper towels, butter, Grade A medium white eggs, creamy peanut butter, laundry detergent, fabric softener, tomato sauce, milk, frankfurters and granulated sugar.

The cities checked were: Albuquerque, N.M., Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Detroit, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, Providence, R.I., Salt Lake City, and Seattle.

Health officials fear over a ton of bean cakes may be hepatitis carrier

PORTLAND, (AP) — Bean cakes manufactured by a Eugene firm have been recalled by the Oregon State Health Division because of possible exposure to hepatitis.

Two employees of the Surata Soy Foods Co., Eugene, have been infected by the disease and

may have contaminated some of the 3,100 pounds of the bean cakes, called "tofu," that were distributed between last Dec. 9 and Dec. 31, health officials said.

No hepatitis case has been traced to the bean cakes, officials said Tuesday.

Eight Eugene restaurants and 20 retail stores as far north as Tillamook and south as Redding, Calif., might have sold contaminated bean cakes, officials said.

State and county health officials advised those who may have eaten the bean cakes to obtain gamma globulin shots to reduce the severity of the disease if hepatitis occurs.

Hepatitis infection of the liver, can cause nausea or a jaundiced condition, and in rare cases, death. Its incubation period is a minimum of two weeks.

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