

conflict of interest. At a minimum, such measures should insure:

(1) That feedlot customers are fully advised of the common ties between the feedlot and the packer, and of their rights and options with respect to the marketing of their livestock;

(2) That all feedlot customers are treated equally by the packer/custom feedlot in connection with the marketing of fed livestock; and

(3) That marketing decisions rest solely with the feedlot customer unless otherwise expressly agreed.

(c) Packer ownership or operation of custom feedlots may also give rise to competitive problems in some situations. Packers contemplating or engaging in the business of operating a custom feedlot should carefully review their operations to assure that no restriction of competition exists or is likely to occur.

(d) The Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (Packers and Stockyards Programs) does not consider the existence of packer/custom feedlot relationships, by itself, to constitute a violation of the Act. In the event it appears that a packer/custom feedlot arrangement gives rise to a violation of the Act, an investigation will be made on a case-by-case basis, and, where warranted, appropriate action will be taken.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 0580-0015)

(7 U.S.C. 203, 204, 207, 217a, 222 and 228)

[49 FR 33004, Aug. 20, 1984, as amended at 68 FR 75388, Dec. 31, 2003]

**§ 203.19 Statement with respect to packers engaging in the business of livestock dealers or buying agencies.**

(a) In its administration of the Packers and Stockyards Act, the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (Packers and Stockyards Programs) has sought to prevent conflicts of interest and to maintain open and fair competition in the livestock and meat packing industries. The ownership or operation of livestock dealers or buying agencies by packers, under some circumstances, may result in violations of the Packers and Stockyards Act.

(b) Traditionally, livestock dealers and buying agencies purchase livestock for resale or to fill orders for farmers, ranchers, producers, other livestock firms and packers. When a livestock dealer or buying agency is owned or operated by a packer, and when such packer is also buying livestock for its own operational requirements, there is a potential conflict of interest. Furthermore, the purchase and sale of livestock by meat packers may result in control of markets and prices which could adversely affect both livestock producers, competing packers, and consumers.

(c) Arrangements between packers and dealers or buying agencies which do not normally create a conflict of interest or result in a restraint of competition include:

(1) Operations utilizing different species or classes of livestock; (2) operations where the business activities are widely separated geographically; and (3) operations where tie-in purchases or sales are not involved. Packers contemplating engaging in the business of a livestock dealer or a buying agency are encouraged to consult with the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (Packers and Stockyards Programs) prior to the commencement of such activities.

(d) In the event a packer/dealer or a packer/buying agency arrangement appears to give rise to a violation of the Act, an investigation will be made on a case-by-case basis and, where warranted, appropriate action will be taken.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 0580-0015)

(7 U.S.C. 228, 228b, 222, 15 U.S.C. 46)

[49 FR 32845, Aug. 17, 1984; 54 FR 26349, June 23, 1989, as amended at 68 FR 75388, Dec. 31, 2003]

## PART 204—ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS

### PUBLIC INFORMATION

Sec.

- 204.1 Introduction.
- 204.2 Organization.
- 204.3 Delegation of authority.
- 204.4 Public inspection and copying.
- 204.5 Indexes.
- 204.6 Requests for records.