

These "pull-dates" (according to current thinking) would be mandatory for foods with a normal shelf-life of six months or less — the so-called perishable foods. And one would assume the "pull-date" could be spotted even on casual examination of the package.

When is open date-marking coming? The Consumer and Corporate Affairs Department wants to work out the best way to do the job in conjunction with what is practical. This involves talking to manufacturers as well as consumer associations. So the answer to the question of "when" is one we can't answer now. Government thinking, however, is "the sooner the better".

SOVIET POLLUTION CONTROL STUDIED

A five-member delegation of Canadian government and industrial representatives is visiting the U.S.S.R. to study pollution control in that country's forest-based industries. Environment Canada, which is co-ordinating the visit, announced that the pollution-control study group would spend about two weeks visiting various pulp-and-paper installations.

Included in the tour now in progress are visits to the All Union Scientific Research Institute in Leningrad, to pulp-mills at Kotlas and Lake Baikal and to the Siberian Institute for Pulp and Paper Mill Design in Irkutsk. The delegation will conclude its tour with talks with the Ministry of Pulp and Paper in Moscow.

The visit was arranged by an international working group on forest-based industries set up under the auspices of the Canada-U.S.S.R. Mixed Commission on Co-operation in the Industrial Application of Science and Technology.

USE OF LIVESTOCK DRUG SUSPENDED

Health Minister John Munro and Agriculture Minister H.A. (Bud) Olson have jointly announced that, effective January 1, 1973, the Federal Government will suspend use of the drug diethylstilbestrol (DES) as a growth-promotant in livestock production, pending acquisition of additional experimental evidence that it is safe. DES is widely used for this purpose in beef cattle. The suspension will apply to use of DES both as a feed additive and as an implant.

Mr. Munro explained that he had received a report on the effects of DES on human health, prepared by an expert advisory committee of non-governmental medical experts. The committee unanimously concluded that, while there was no evidence that DES had harmed the health of Canadians, the possibility

of harm from its use existed. The committee considered that, if the use of DES was to be continued, additional experimental data bearing on its safety should be developed.

As a result of the recommendations of the advisory committee and the advice of scientific advisers, the two Ministers had decided, in the interest of public health, to suspend the use of DES in livestock production. The suspension was to remain in force until the additional scientific evidence identified as necessary by the advisory committee had been obtained and evaluated. At that point, a final decision as to the status of DES could be made, Mr. Olson explained.

NWT FIGHTS FOREST FIRES

The new policy of the Northwest Lands and Forest Service of basing permanent eight-man fire-fighting crews throughout the Northwest Territories has already proved to be a major success, G.B. Armstrong, Regional Director of Resources for the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, said in Yellowknife recently.

With a total of 330 fires, 1971 proved to be the worst forest-fire season in the history of the Northwest Territories.

"However, because of the increased speed and flexibility provided by the permanent crews, this year's fires have burned only 250,000 acres compared to more than 525,000 at this time last year," Mr. Armstrong said. He was referring to a decision earlier this spring to establish nine eight-man fire-fighting crews in key centres along the Mackenzie Valley, in Yellowknife and south of Great Slave Lake.

The crews, which are fully equipped with fire-fighting gear and helicopters, are based at each point to move the men to new outbreaks. They can be backed up by *Canso* water-bombers (helicopters equipped with water-drop buckets), *Twin Otter* supply aircraft and single-engine *Birdog* planes.

Mr. Armstrong claimed the sharp drop in burned acreage was a direct result of having the men and the mobility to get at fires in their early stages and to contain or quell them before they become a major hazard. "This has by no means eliminated the need for volunteer firefighters for major outbreaks," Mr. Armstrong said, noting that 325 men were needed before the major fire in the Rae-Edzo area in July was brought under control. "But it does provide the opportunity to better concentrate the available manpower and to better utilize the funds available for forest protection," he added.