

## Department of Agriculture



Mike Fisher was the speaker at the Treynor Optimist Club on January 18. He is a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine working for the Department of Agriculture. He is also a retired Army Colonel. He retires in 42 days.

Mike said that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms inspects spirits, but the Food and Drug Administration inspects beer and wine. He talked extensively about required labels on food items.

Labels on food items include a brand name, manufacturer, name of the product, weight, ingredients listed by weight, list of allergens, nutrition facts, country of origin, and other information. The FDA ensures that the product is safe to eat and the label is not misleading. The FDA requires some items to be printed in a designated minimum font size.

President Carter started the move to convert to the metric system, so most items today contain metric and ounce measurements. There are eight food ingredients that are known allergens and need to be listed on the label if they are present. The weight is required on the label, and the country of origin is also required. Nutrition facts are required for baby foods, but are only a consumer expectation for other products.

Many food items include a "best used by" date. This is the last date that the manufacturer will guarantee the product will be 100% of the listed nutrition. Most items are still good to eat long after that date.