



WELCOME TO THE BIRDFEEDER

It's late February and we're starting to see hints of spring. Winter will no doubt have a few more haymakers to send our way but he is definitely on the ropes. (There are two boxing references in that last sentence and that is the combined total amount of knowledge I have about the sport.)

Of course it was Valentine's Day awhile back. The guys at the farm spare no expense when it comes to showing their timeless affection for their wives/girlfriends/it's complicated. (Actually they averaged \$13.73 per gift but that was before taxes.)

Full Disclosure: Mahlon really set the bar high next year for the guys when he purchased a [scooping shovel](#) with the deluxe ash wood and a D-handle for his wife. She had mentioned that they weren't spending enough time together and he bought her a shovel so they could muck out the barn together. At dawn. Okay, maybe he didn't set the bar that high.

Let's see what else is going on at the farm:

Rob is Thinking 'Bout: Fresh Seed

Using the term *Fresh Seed* in the bird food market can be tricky. While using the term Fresh Seed in the animal husbandry business is just plain icky.

In the Seed biz, almost all grains are harvested once a year and then stored in someone's bin until next year's new crop. That's nice if you're in the grain storage business but not so nice if you're in the sell-good-seed-to-good-people business.

Rob is Thinking 'Bout: Fresh Seed (cont'd)

Your customers should be filling their feeders with freshly packed seed.

So tell your customers that your seed was packed just a week or two before you received it. It really cuts down on the problems that can occur. You vets of the Seed biz know what I am talking about. Ever pull little mealy worms off the collar of a \$60 sweatshirt. Enough said. (Editor's note: Thing 1: That's gross. Thing 2: Who the heck spends 60 bucks on a sweatshirt?)

Mahlon, when he is not ubering his wife to a nice restaurant to make up for a certain V-day gift, subscribes to the just-in-time model of handling raw ingredients. Get it in, get it mixed, and get it out. (You should see his work on Margarita Night at the VFW hall.)

Fresh seed is a big advantage for your store when you are competing with big box stores or retailers that buy seed from distributors instead of the manufacturer.

Boring Operational Issues

Sticking on the topic of freshness, here a boring operational issue for you. We date all product the day we package it. You can use that date stamp to check the freshy of your seedy.

All products go out with a 5 digit number. The first 2 numbers are the year. The 2nd 3 numbers are the day of the year. So January 01, 2016 would be 16001. January 02, 2016 is 16002 and so on. (Note to self: Remember to create labels dated 16366, it's a leap year.) (Note to self: If you are bagging seed on New Year's Day you need to get out more. A lot more.)

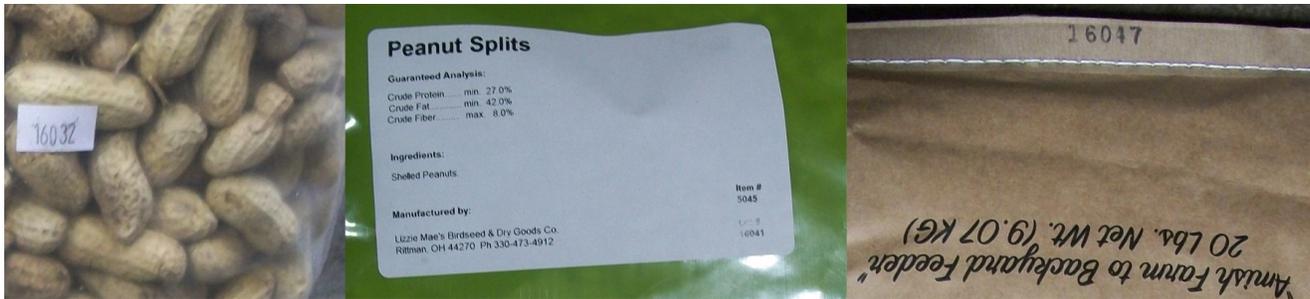
Boring Operational Issues (cont'd)

Paper Bags: Date code is on the bottom of the crepe tape where the bag is sewn shut

Poly Bags: White sticker on back of bags

Clear Poly Bags: Look for black and white label on lower right hand

corner of label
Cylinders and Cakes: Look on the white price gun label on back.



Here's an example of a white sticker on a poly bag. There's already been 46 days in 2016. No judgement if you still have your Christmas lights up. (Okay, a little judgement.)

IN SUMMARY

So the sun's out and the snow piles are melting away. Our little feathered friends are definitely thinking about taking the auto train to Sarasota earlier next year. I know I am. Be nice to each other - and don't let a whole year go by without letting your Valentine know how you feel.
