WHOLESALE NEAR 75c PER POUND

Hearings on Sugar Due as Prices Soar

WASHINGTON — (AP) — As sugar producers continue to increase prices, a congressional panel has scheduled hearings on "the continuing rapid rise in the price of sugar."

Within hours after the hearings were announced Friday, an additional sugar price rise was announced.

"The average price of baked goods has gone up 20-25 per cent in one year. The price of cookies in particular has risen 30-35 per cent, almost triple the inflation rate. A case of 16-ounce cans of soft drinks has gone up 97.5 cents in the last year. The price of hard candy, which is 50 per cent sugar, has risen 50 per cent in 12 months," Rep. Joseph P. Vigorito, D-Pa. said.

Hearings in December

He gave those statistics in announcing that a House agriculture subcommittee that he heads will hold hearings Dec. 3 and 5 on the soaring sugar prices.

But the most recent price increase by sugar producers, if passed on by retailers, would increase further the price of products containing sugar.

Amstar Corp., the nation's largest sugar refiner, said it was raising the price of grocery sugar by $3.80 per 100 pounds. That would bring the price of grocery sugar to $44.82 for 12 five-pound bags and $44.76 for six 10-pound packages, nearly 75 cents per pound wholesale.

National Sugar Refining Co. matched the increase. The two companies and Sucrast Corp. announced increases in the cost of industrial sugar, used in making soft drinks and bakery goods.

Meanwhile, a source close to the agriculture committee said that an attempt may be made in the remaining weeks of the congressional session to resurrect the House-killed sugar bill.

Without the bill, the 40-year-old sugar control law would expire at the end of the year.

The law allocated shares of the U.S. sugar market to Americans and friendly nations producing sugar, fixing allotments for American production and setting quotas on the amount of sugar which may come in from abroad.

The law is designed to provide a specific degree of U.S. price stability by feeding the American market predetermined amounts of sugar.

The law's defenders insist it protects American consumers and at the same time provides U.S. producers with a reasonably profitable crop. But its critics contend the law's program of quotas and price-fixing is costly and has outlived its usefulness.