

EEC Hurting American Farm Market

By CARL HARTMAN
Of the Associated Press

BRUSSELS — Western Europe's Common Market, fostered by Uncle Sam, has grown into a self-assertive teenager who has the old man worried. The Common Market's system of customs duties threatens the market for American farm products in Western Europe. Its members, especially France, want to produce more of these products instead of buying them abroad.

In 1961 the United States shipped \$1.6 billion worth of farm goods to the Common Market countries—France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg. Preliminary figures indicate the total was even higher in 1962.

Present plans of the Common Market authorities could up this by a third or more.

Sales of American cotton and tobacco are not much threatened. Common Market members produce little of these.

Poultry Hard Hit

Sales of American poultry have been hard-hit and grain may be next on the list.

After World War II Americans were saying that Europe could get out of its vicious circle of poverty and war only if it broke down old trade barriers at national frontiers. Europeans, it was argued, should be brought into one big market so European businessmen could give the consumer mass-produced goods at low prices. It would be economical for European countries, with their smaller farm area and many tiny plots of ground, to concentrate on dairy and meat production. Grains could be bought much more cheaply abroad.

These ideas appealed to many Europeans, and the Common Market is now formed and moving toward unity in many ways. But when it comes to farming, things are not working out as the United States might have liked.

Farmers in Western Europe pull a lot of political weight. In the United States only 8 per cent of the working population is engaged in farming. In West Germany the figure is 15 per cent and in France 23 per cent. France, West Germany and Italy-dominant countries in the Common Market—are ruled by conservative parties which make a strong appeal to the farmer.

Protection System

The Common Market authorities have figured out an overall system to protect their farmers.

A series of variable levies can make any farm import sell a little higher—or, if desired, a whole lot higher—than the home-grown variety.

Chicken used to be a luxury in Europe. Ordinary folks ate it rarely, and with the feeling that they were doing something festive—the way Americans used to feel a generation ago. Then in 1958 the West German government began allowing the spending of foreign currency for poultry.

Within four years, the United States was selling 155 million pounds of chicken a year to West Germany. The price was well below the red meat, despite a duty of five cents a pound.

German domestic producers and exporters in Denmark and Holland also stepped up sales. Chicken became a common item on the German workingman's table.

Exports Drop

Last summer the new Common Market levies went into effect on chicken. Entrance fees for American poultry shot up 250 per cent, to 12.5 cents a pound. American exports dropped off.

West German housewives now pay about 44 cents a pound for chicken. The American product could be sold for 25 per cent less if it were not for the levies.

European consumers are being denied a bargain but the Common Market chicken farmers are cleaning up. American chicken farmers face the loss of \$50 million of business a year.

Even more money is involved in U.S. exports of grain and grain products to the Common Market—\$389 million in 1961. Here too the levies have begun to be felt. Eggs and pork are also affected.

American farmers are putting pressure on their government to retaliate against the poultry levy by way of warning. One suggestion is to slap a really heavy tariff on some kinds of French champagne entering the United States.

President Kennedy's advisers are resisting this pressure. They feel that one retaliatory pressure brings another, and they want to cut tariffs—not to increase them.

Postal Aide Dies

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