

In accordance with the policy of the Food Administration since its foundation to consult representative men in the agricultural industry on occasions of importance to special branches of the industry, on October 24 there was convened in Washington a meeting of the Live Stock Subcommittee of the Agricultural Advisory Board and the special members representing the swine industry to consider the situation in the hog market.

The conference lasted for three days, and during this time met with the executive committee of the fifty packing firms participating in foreign orders for pork products and with the members of the Food Administration directing foreign pork purchases.

The conclusions of the conference were as follows:

The entire marketing situation has so changed since the September joint conference as to necessitate an entire alteration in the plans of price stabilization. The current peace talk has alarmed the holders of corn, and there has been a price decline of from 25 cents to 40 cents per bushel. The fact that the accumulations of low priced corn in the Argentine and South Africa would, upon the advent of peace and liberated shipping, become available to the European market has created a great deal of apprehension on the part of corn holders. This decline has spread fear among swine growers that a similar reduction in the prices of hogs would naturally follow. Moreover, the lower range of corn prices would, if incorporated in a 13-to-1 ratio, obviously result in a continuously falling price for live hogs. In view of these changed conditions many swine producers anticipated lower prices and as a result rushed their hogs to market in large numbers, and this overshipment has added to and aggravated the decline.

The information of the Department of Agriculture indicates that the supply of hogs has increased about 8 per cent., while the highest unofficial estimate does not exceed 15 per cent. increased production over last year. On the other hand, the arrival of hogs during the last three weeks in the seven great markets has been 27 per cent. more than last year, during the corresponding period, demonstrating the unusually heavy marketing of the available supply. In the face of the excessive receipts some packers have not maintained the price agreed last month. On the other hand, many of the packers have paid over the price offered to them in an endeavor to maintain the agreed price. The result in any event has been a failure to maintain the October price basis determined upon at the September conference and undertaken by the packers. Another factor contributing to the break in prices during the month has been the influenza epidemic; it has sharply curtailed consumption of pork products and temporarily decreased the labor staff of the packers about 25 per cent.

The exports of 130,000,000 pounds of pork products for October compared with about 52,000,000 pounds in October a year ago, and the export orders placeable by the Food Administration for November, amount to 170,000,000 pounds as contrasted with the lesser exports of 98,000,000 for November, 1917. The increased demands of the allies are continuing, and are in themselves proof of the necessity for the large production for which the Food Administration asked. The increase in export demands appears to be amply sufficient to take up the increase in hog production, but unfavorable market conditions existing in October afford no fair index of the aggregate supply and demand.

It must be evident that the enormous shortage in fats in the Central Empires and neutral countries would immediately upon peace result in additional demands for pork products which, on top of the heavy shipments to the Allies, would tend materially to increase the American exports. Inasmuch as no considerable reservoir of supplies exists outside of the United States. It seems probable that the present prospective supplies would be inadequate to meet this world demand with the return to peace. So far as it is possible to interpret this fact, it appears that there should be even a stronger demand for pork products after the war, and therefore any alarm of hog producers as to the effect of peace is unwarranted by the outlook.

In the light of these circumstances it is the conclusion of the conference that attempts to hold the price of hogs to the price of corn may work out to the disadvantage of pork producers. It is the conclusion that any interpretation of the former should be a broad gauged policy applied over a long period. It is the opinion of the conference that in substitution of the previous plans of stabilization the Live Stock Subcommittee of the Agricultural Advisory Board, together with the specially invited swine representatives, should accept the invitation of the Food Administration to join with the Administration and the packers in determining the prices at which controlled export orders are to be placed. This will be regularly done. The influence of these orders will be directed to the maintenance of the common object—namely, the stabilization of the price of live hogs so as to secure as far as it is possible fair returns to the

producer and the insurance of an adequate future supply.

These foreign orders are placed upon the basis of cost of hogs to the packers.

As the result of long negotiations between this body and the Packers' Committee, representing the 45 to 50 packers participating in foreign orders, together with the Allied buyers, all under the Chairmanship of the Food Administration, the following undertaking has been given by the packers:

In view of the undertakings on the part of the Food Administration with regard to the co-ordinated purchases of pork products, covered in the attached, it is agreed that the packers participating in these orders will undertake not to purchase hogs for less than the following agreed minimums for the month of November, that is a daily minimum of \$17.50 per hundred pounds on average of packers' droves, excluding throw-outs. "Throw-outs" to be defined as pigs under 130 pounds, stags, boars, thin sows and skips. Further that no hogs of any kind shall be bought, except throw-outs, at less than \$16.50 per hundred pounds. The average of packers' droves to be construed as the average of the total sales in the market of all hogs for a given day. All the above to be based on Chicago.

We agree that a committee shall be appointed by the Food Administration to check the daily operations in the various markets with a view to supervision and demonstration of the carrying out of the above.

The ability of the packers to carry out this arrangement will depend on there being a normal marketing of hogs based upon the proportionate increase over the receipts of last year. The increase in production appears to be a maximum of about 15 per cent. and we can handle such an increase.

If the producers of hogs should, as they have in the past few weeks, prematurely market hogs in such increasing numbers over the above it is entirely beyond the ability of the packers to maintain these minimums, and therefore we must have the co-operation of the producer himself to maintain these results. It is a physical impossibility for the capacity of the packing houses to handle a similar over-flood of hogs and to find a market for the output. The packers are anxious to co-operate with the producers in maintaining a stabilization of price and to see that producers receive a fair price for their products.

(Signed) THOS. E. WILSON,  
Chairman Packers' Committee.

The plan embodied above was adopted by the conference.

The Food Administrator has appointed a committee, comprising Mr. Thomas E. Wilson, chairman of the Packers' Committee; Mr. Everett Brown, president of the Chicago Livestock Exchange; Major Roy of the Food Administration, Mr. Louis D. Hall of the Bureau of Markets, to undertake the supervision of the execution of the plan in the various markets. Commission men are asked to co-operate in carrying out the plan embodied in the packers' agreement. It must be evident that offers by commission men to sell hogs below the minimum established above is not fair, either to the producer or the participating packers. Mr. Brown has undertaken on behalf of the commission men in the United States that they will loyally support the plan.

It is believed by the conference that this new plan, based as it is upon a positive minimum basis, will bring better results to the producer than average prices for the month. It does not limit top prices and should narrow the margins necessary to country buyers in more variable markets. It is believed that the plan should work out close to \$18 average.

Swine producers of the country will contribute to their own interest by not flooding the market, for it must be evident that if an excessive over percentage of hogs is marketed in any one month price stabilization and control cannot succeed, and it is certain that producers themselves can contribute materially to the efforts of the conferences if they will do their marketing in as normal a way as possible.

The whole situation as existing at present demands a frank and explicit assurance from the conferees represented—namely, that every possible effort will be made to maintain a live hog price commensurate with swine production costs and reasonable selling values in execution of the declared policy of the Food Administration to use every agency in its control to secure justice to the farmer.

The stabilization methods adopted for November represent the best efforts of the conference, concurred in by the Food Administration and the

Livestock Subcommittee of the Agricultural Advisory Board, together with special swine members and the representatives of the packers, to improve the present unsatisfactory situation, which has unfortunately resulted because of the injection of uncontrollable factors.

We ask the producer to co-operate with us in a most difficult task.

The members of the Conference were:

Producers—H. C. Stuart, Elk Garden, Va., Chairman Agricultural Advisory Board; W. M. McFadden, Chicago, Ill.; A. Sykes, Ida Grove, Ia.; John M. Evvard, Ames, Ia.; J. H. Mercer, Live Stock Commission for Kansas; J. G. Brown, Monon, Ind.; E. C. Brown, President Chicago Livestock Exchange; N. H. Gentry, Sedalia, Mo.; John Grattan Broomfield, Colo.; Eugene Funk, Bloomington, Ill.; Isaac Lincoln, Aberdeen, S. D.; C. W. Hunt, Logan, Ia.; C. E. Yancey, W. R. Dodson.

Food Administration—Herbert Hoover, F. S. Snyder, Major E. L. Roy, G. H. Powell.

Department of Agriculture—Louis D. Hall, F. R. Marshall.

The packers present and others sharing in foreign orders were represented by the elected packers' committee. Those represented were:

Packers—Armour & Co., Chicago, Ill.; Cudahy Packing Co., Chicago, Ill.; Morris & Co., Chicago, Ill.; Swift & Co., Chicago, Ill.; Wilson & Co., Chicago, Ill.; John Agar Co., Chicago, Ill.; Armstrong Packing Co., Dallas, Tex.; Boyd Dunham & Co., Chicago, Ill.; Brennan Packing Co., Chicago, Ill.; Cincinnati Abattoir Co., Cincinnati, O.; Cleveland Provisions Co., Cleveland, O.; Cudahy Bros. Co., Cudahy, Wis.; J. Dold Packing Co., Buffalo, N. Y.; Dunlevy Packing Co., Pittsburg, Pa.; J. E. Decker & Sons, Mason City, Ia.; Evansville Packing Co., Evansville, Ind.; East Side Packing Co., East St. Louis, Ill.; Hammond Standish & Co., Detroit, Mich.; G. A. Hormel & Co., Austin, Minn.; Home Packing & Ice Co., Terre Haute, Ind.; Independent Packing Co., Chicago, Ill.; Indianapolis Abattoir Co., Indianapolis, Ind.; International Provision Co., Brooklyn, N. Y.; Interstate Packing Co., Winona, Minn.; Iowa Packing Co., Des Moines, Ia.; Powers Begg Co., Jacksonville, Ill.; Kingan & Co., Indianapolis, Ind.; Krey Packing Co., St. Louis, Mo.; Lake Erie Provision Co., Cleveland, O.; Layton Co., Milwaukee, Wis.; Oscar Mayer & Bro., Sedgewick and Beethoven streets, Chicago, Ill.; J. T. McMillan Co., St. Paul, Minn.; Miller & Hart, Chicago, Ill.; J. Morrell & Co., Ottumwa, Ia.; Nuckolls Packing Co., Pueblo, Colo.; Ogden Packing and Provision Co., Ogden, Utah; Ohio Provision Co., Cleveland, O.; Parker Webb & Co., Detroit, Mich.; Pittsburg Packing and Provision Co., Pittsburg, Pa.; Rath Packing Co., Waterloo, Ia.; Roberts & Oake, Chicago, Ill.; Rohe & Bros., New York City; W. C. Routh & Co., Logansport, Ind.; St. Louis Ind. Packing Co., St. Louis, Mo.; Sinclair & Co., T. M. Cedar Rapids, Ia.; Sullivan & Co., Detroit, Mich.; Theurer-Norton Provision

Co., Cleveland, O.; Wilson Provision Co., Peoria, Ill.; Western Packing and Provision Co., Chicago, Ill.; Charles Wolff Packing Co., Topeka, Kan.

## Much Red Cross Work Yet To Do

Because peace is here, so many of our Red Cross workers are of the opinion that the work of this great organization is finished. This is an absolutely wrong impression.

Millions of American boys are still under arms. Thousands of them are sick or wounded. Owing to the shortage in shipping, it may take a year or more to bring our boys home from France. But, whatever the time, our protecting arms must be about them and their families over the whole period which must elapse before the normal life of peace can be resumed. Our soldiers and sailors are enlisted until the Commander-in-Chief tells them there is no more work for them to do in the war. Let every Red Cross member, and worker, show our returning soldiers and sailors that to care for their health, welfare and happiness, we are enlisted for no less a period than they are.

The cessation of the war will reveal a picture of misery such as the world has never seen before, especially in the many countries which cannot help themselves. The American people will expect the Red Cross to continue to act as their agent in repairing broken spirits and broken bodies. Peace terms and peace conditions will determine how we may best minister to the vast stricken areas which have been harrowed by war, and in this great act of mercy the heart and spirit of the American people must continue to be mobilized through the American Red Cross.

On behalf of the War Council, we accordingly ask each member of our splendid body of workers, throughout the land, to bear in mind the solemn obligation which rests upon each one to "carry on". We can not abate one instant in our efforts, or in our spirit, there will be an abundance of work to do, and specific advices will be given, but even

at the moment of peace let no Red Cross worker falter.

Our spirits must now call us to show that it is not the roar of cannon, or the blood of our own, alone that directs our activities, but that a great people will continue to respond, greatly and freely, to its obligation and opportunity to serve mankind.

## Still Going For the Gopher

"Polk County can be cleared of gophers within six months if all the farmers will work together, abandon the slow trapping method of the past, and adopt the poisoning method now used in practically all the eastern states", concluded Mr. Theodore Scheffer of the U. S. Biological Survey in an address before a meeting of farmers interested in rodent control. Poisoning is cheap, effective and easily administered. In other counties where it has been tried, the cost has been as low as ten cents per acre. A man can kill as many as 250 gophers a day.

One of the essential factors in the new method is the poison used. The old gas method, (carbon bisulphid) has been abandoned because of its expensiveness and general inefficiency and in its place strychnine alkaloid has been substituted. It is the most effective poison known. Mix one ounce with from one tenth to one eighth ounce of saccharin to sweeten the bait and disguise the bitter taste of the strychnine. Sprinkle the mixture over the prepared bait and stir well in a basin or pail to make sure that the total surface is covered. Gophers prefer in order, dandelion roots, sweet potatoes, carrots, parsnips and Irish potatoes. Care should be taken to cut the bait sufficiently large so that the gopher will be obliged to cut it in pieces to get it in his pocket. This is the critical part in the whole poisoning process. These animals store several times more food than they consume, hence if the bait is small enough so they can carry it away without tasting it, the gopher will

Continued on next page

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