

Rancher's Report

By BILL DECKER

Hog producers should read the USDA Pig Crop Report to be released on December 20, and then "stop, look and think" regarding the increase in spring farrowings.

If history is any guide to the future, note these examples:

In 1954, when the spring pig crop went up 10 per cent hog prices to farmers that fall went down 23 per cent.

In 1955, a further rise of nine per cent in the spring pig crop brought another decline of 29 per cent to hog producers that fall.

In 1956, it was the other way around. The spring pig crop went down eight per cent and hog prices paid to producers went up 25 per cent.

Enough said!

Lower feed costs have brought the cost of feeding cattle down below a year ago, reports National Livestock Producer. However, the drop in feeding costs only partly offsets higher replacement costs.

Therefore, it is essential to select feeder cattle for profitable weight gains and for protection against seasonal price trends. Better grades of cattle that can make maximum use of roughage will be ready for market during next summer and early fall when prices are generally highest for these kinds of cattle.

Compared with other meats, beef will hold a favorable position for the next six months. However, some downturn in consumer purchasing power is expected and a general shift to other meats by consumers. The prospective pork supply is being increased and bunched for the winter market. Less accumulation of beef by packers of beef this fall will be down.

Market trends show a large supply of fed cattle made the summer price spread unusually narrow. During the summer, there were extensive feedlot replacements, particularly in the Western Corn Belt and in commercial cattle feeding areas. The net result has been an accumulation of cattle for the late fall and winter markets.

Weight watchers who omit meat from the diet to restrict the calorie count are only shortchanging themselves in safe, satisfying nutrients.

Ruth Klippstein, Oregon State College extension nutritionist, points to a national livestock and meat board financed study in

which it was reported that meat produced and eaten today has more protein, fewer calories and less fat.

As a result of the study conducted by Dr. Ruth Leverton at the University of Oklahoma, old food composition tables are being revised for meats. Old tables included only a limited number of meat cuts and the value of meat was figured on an uncooked basis only. Caloric values were out of proportion and many diets were not adequate in protein.

Production of meat has changed in the last 30 years, the home economist noted, as a result of consumers' meat eating habits. Surveys have shown that when usually all eaten, the lean and marbled portion eaten by most people, and in most cases the exterior or visible fat is left on the plate.

To meet the demand for leaner meat, producers are raising more meat-type animals. Processors and meat packers have also trimmed meat so that today's lean pork chop for instance contains about 15 grams protein and about 80 fewer calories.

Food needs of today's families are much different today than they were in the 1920's, the home economist says. Today's farm, factory or office workers use fewer calories than their fathers did. With today's labor saving devices, women do not have to expend as many calories as they did in grandmother's day either.

Although men and women today need fewer calories, they still need ample amounts of protein, vitamins and minerals, Mrs. Klippstein points out. They help the body to function properly and help the body resist infections and diseases.

Thirty years ago, nutrition was of little interest or concern to most Americans, Mrs. Klippstein explains. The science of nutrition was new and few people were aware of the relationship of nutrition to health. Meat was not considered one of the best foods. Research has shown, however, that meat is an excellent source of bodybuilding protein.

BULL-BAITER

The bulldog was not so named because it looks like a bull, but because it was bred to fight or bait bulls. The English bulldog bit into the bull's nose and usually held on until the bull was exhausted from tossing his tormentor around.

'Dehydrofreezing' Processes Lower Cost On Several Foods

The food-preservation process known as dehydrofreezing can lower packaging, storage, and transportation costs for several foods, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The process, which involves partial drying followed by freezing, eliminates about half the bulk and weight of many fruits and vegetables.

Dehydrofrozen products combine the advantages of both frozen and dehydrated foods. They are lighter and less bulky than frozen foods, produce less drip upon thawing, and permit better control of moisture in the final product, which is important to canners and other food processors.

Dehydrofrozen foods are easier to restore to normal moisture content than dried foods, and generally have superior flavor, texture, and color. Researchers found that the irreversible changes in texture which often take place when foods are fully dehydrated were prevented in most foods by stopping the drying cycle when the food was reduced 50 per cent in weight.

Studies by Agricultural Research Service scientists indicate dehydrofrozen peas will have an economic advantage over frozen ones. Because of the bulk and weight reduction due to partial drying, the storage, transportation, and packaging costs for the dehydrofrozen product are lower.

Storage costs for peas are large, because they are usually packed during a short season, then stored for as long as a year. Savings in transportation are also important, as three-fourths of all frozen peas are packed in the West, and the biggest markets are east of Chicago. Savings in packaging, however, will probably be significant only to bulk packers for institutional and food processing uses, where packing twice as many peas in the usual size of containers will be practical.

In a marketing study reported recently by the Agricultural Marketing Service, dehydrofrozen peas were judged highly acceptable for use in restaurants. Restaurant operators in the experiment said the peas were easy to prepare, saved storage space, and maintained freshness, flavor, and appearance after a considerable time on the stem table.

A uniform moisture level within each piece of food, as well as among the different pieces, is essential in producing a dehydrofrozen product of consistently high quality.

Within the past two years, USDA researchers have developed

the belt-through drier, a continuous dehydrator that gives uniform drying and is capable of handling a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. In July the first vegetable dehydration plant basing its major operations on this

type of dryer was opened in California.

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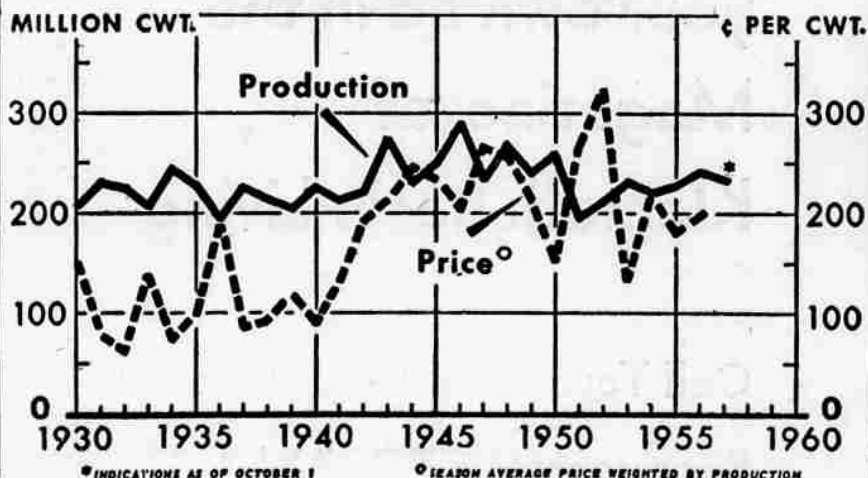
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POTATOES: PRODUCTION AND FARM PRICE



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

REG. 414-37(10) AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

PRODUCTION OF FALL POTATOES is down nine per cent from a year ago, and indications are that winter production will be smaller. With supplies of potatoes at more manageable levels, prices received by growers into the spring are expected to average substantially above the low levels of a year earlier.