

Hog Prices Up 45 Per Cent; Supplies Down 16 Per Cent

Minneapolis Minnesota — A marketing specialist said today market supplies of hogs thus far in 1957 have been about 16 per cent below a year ago, while hog prices are up around 45 per cent.

Speaking on the Eleventh Annual Farm Forum at the Leamington Hotel, J. Russell Ives, Associate Director of Marketing of the American Meat Institute, Chicago, said, this change supply and price situation reflects the free play of supply and demand conditions. He added:

"One of the outstanding features of this industry is that it is highly competitive. There are several reasons why this is true. There are nearly four thousand meat processing plants in this country, for example, and these figures do not include the several thousand additional small butchers and locker plants which are primarily local in character"

In addition he said, there is competition for the consumer's dollar from the many items for sale on the American market as well as from the different kinds of foods. He cited a recent survey of consumer indebtedness which showed 71 per cent of the families had some indebtedness, either for homes, cars, television sets, and so forth or to financing companies and other lending institutions

Another competitive phase of the industry is, he said, that meat packers have no control over the volume of raw materials which they process. Meat animals are produced for market by some four million farmers and ranchers, each operating independently with respect to the animals produced and the time when they are marketed"

He pointed out that the meat packing industry is set up to operate at the peak seasonal volume of marketings but that there are many weeks in a year when the capacity of the meat packing industry greatly exceeds the volume of livestock being marketed.

He pointed out that during several weeks in the summer the dressings of hogs will be only about half of the volume in the late fall and winter, and 80 per cent of the year hog dressings are less than three-fourths of the peak volume.

Since the packing plant operates most efficiently at its peak capacity, a strong demand for livestock is created throughout most of the year, he added.

A further competitive factor is found in the perishability of meat, he noted, since it cannot be stored economically for a very long period and thus when the dressing process begins, the meat products must be moved steadily along the way into final consumption.

"This is quite different from other manufactured products which can be stored indefinitely without fear of spoilage," Ives emphasized.

In addition, the situation in the meat packing industry is made more competitive because of the freedom of new enterprises to start in the industry. He noted that in the first six months of last year there were about one hundred plant changes — either new firms being formed or existing facilities being expanded

That farmers have freedom to market where they please tends also to make the livestock and meat industry competitive, with the packers and processors having to bid for their supplies where they can find them. More transportation and communication facilities permit the farmer to know with considerable certainty what his livestock are worth and to select the market which he will patronize on very short notice.

"A compilation which we made recently showed that in Iowa no farmer is more than two hours' drive by truck from several alternative markets," Ives stated.

He added that more than forty radio stations blanket the state with market news reports.



Elvin M. Landis, R5 Lancaster, (left) holds the 25-year membership award which was presented to him at the annual meeting of the District Seven Inter-State Milk Producers Cooperative Tuesday in Leola. Other Lancaster County farmers to receive the

25-year awards were Lester L. Groff, Leacock, (center) and Arthur C. Diem, R2 Ephrata. Landis and Groff have been members for the past 25 years while Diem is continuing membership began by his father, Oscar Diem.

Quarter of Timber Cut Unused, Foresters Say

About a fourth of the timber cut each year in this country is not used for any purpose, according to the USDA's Forest Service.

They point out that of the timber cut for lumber, about 34 per cent is not used, either for fuel or any other purpose.

On the other hand, only four per cent of the timber cut for pulpwood is not used. Some resi-

dues are of course inevitable in logging and in wood manufacturing. However, although great strides have been made in efficient use of the timber that is cut, too much is still being left in the woods and unused in the mill.

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