

Pork Packer Lists Half Dozen Steps to Restore Consumer Favor

Two meat company executives in the pork business today reported on progress with six major steps to restore pork to its former favor with consumers.

They were Roy Melchior, president of Agar Packing Co., and Roy Edwards, general manager of the Pork Division of Wilson & Co., Inc., who appeared on the opening program of the 52nd annual convention of the American Meat Institute at the Palmer House in Chicago.

Melchior noted that "consumer demand for pork has declined drastically" during the last 10 years. Retail sales of pork per person have dropped from 3.1 per cent of the national disposable income in 1947 to 1.7 per cent last year, a decrease of 45 per cent, he pointed out.

Consumer surveys found, said Melchior, that the big objection in people's thinking is that pork is too fat and is fattening, another way of saying that the industry is producing the wrong kind of hogs and pork.

He outlined the six steps being taken to overcome such objections as:

1. Increasing production of the "meat-type" hog, one with less fat and a larger percentage of lean meat.

2. A leaner trim in the meat processing plant, with as much external fat removed before the pork goes into distribution.

3. Eradication of VE disease and hog cholera from the country, since 13 countries ban American pork imports because some of each still exists in parts of the United States.

4. Reduction of consumer over labeling of smoked hams and other smoked pork products by having but two types, smoke-processed to a minimum internal temperature of 137 degrees, and "fully-cooked" — "ready-to-eat" — "ready-to-serve" types processed to an internal temperature of not less than 150 degrees.

5. Multiple farrowing of sows to produce a more level flow of pig births and therefore hog marketings, to reduce seasonal fluctuations of pork supplies and prices.

6. Merit-buying of hogs, the newest program of the industry, designed to sort out the best hogs for the best price, rather than, as in the past, having hogs sold and bought in lots and droves regardless of weight and grade values.

Edwards defined the expression. "Merit buying is the buying of hogs according to their worth or true market value."

"In order to encourage and hasten the production of meat-type hogs," Edwards explained, "it is most important that we expend the energy necessary to physically sort and grade hogs to register these value differences with the producer."

"It will not be necessary to inaugurate radical, elaborate and expensive changes in our buying procedures in order to effect a more selective system of buying."

He said there were good reasons to believe that the production of meat-type hogs will expand at an increasing rate, "such as economic advantage to the producer, highly heritable carcass characteristics such as length, backfat thickness, yield of lean cuts and loin eye area, and rapid and multiple reproduction."

Edwards said it is somewhat premature to judge the merit buying program, which was recommended by the Institute less than three months ago, but that an initial survey of a few packing houses showed between 70 and 80 per cent are now buying various percentages sorted for weight and grade.

"It is clear," said Edwards, "that economic necessity dictates to each of us associated with the hog and pork industry that we must regain the demand for pork. It consumers had spent only the same proportion of their incomes for pork last year as they did five short years ago, hog slaughter could have been 44 per cent larger than it actually was last year, with hog prices and margins still maintained at 1956 levels."

Stated another way, he said, if consumers had spent the same proportion of their incomes for pork last year as in 1951 for the same number of pork animals as were marketed last year, hog buyers could have paid farmers about \$10.70 a hundred pounds more live weight, still maintaining the same margin between live hog prices and the retail price for pork.

Pink Poultry Good To Eat

If your roasted chicken or turkey appears pink and you're sure you've cooked it long enough, don't be alarmed. It's not harmful nor does the color mean undercooking.

The reason for this pink color, states Mrs. Sandra M. Eaton, Assistant Extension Home Economist, Chester County, is basically the same as the reason for pinkness in cured ham and redness in beef. Meat processors make considerable effort to achieve this effect.

The increase in occurrence of pinkness is connected with changes in today's marketing. More and more high quality, young, thin-skinned birds are being sold. The young thin-skinned bird develops more pinkness while an older bird with thicker skin develops little or no color.

This color — when it appears — is not a defect. It's a normal color development that occurs when poultry or other meats are exposed to smoke or oven roasting temperatures. The amount of color formed is related to the thickness of the skin layer. Therefore, younger birds may have more pink color than will the more mature birds.

Pair of Herefords Sweep Top Honors At American Royal Stock Show

A pair of sleek Hereford steers from Iowa and Texas swept both grand and reserve grand championship honors at the 59th annual American Royal Stock Show.

Top honors in one of the finest

steer shows at the Royal in recent years went to 17-year-old Gary Minish, son of Mr. & Mrs. John Minish, Hereford breeders of Dysart, Iowa.

Gary's steer was selected as the grand champion of the junior show Saturday and emerged victorious over the best in the open competition at the final go-around Monday afternoon. His 1,070 lb Hereford, named Tom, was given the climatic pat on the back by Judge Robert A. Long of the University of Georgia.

Reserve championship honors went to a 1,130 lb Whiteface exhibited by Joe Weedon of Grosvonor, Texas, veteran Hereford breeder.

Both Minish and Weedon scored their championship victories on their first competition at the Royal with steers. Both the Minish grand champion and the Weedon reserve champion were purebred Minish's winner, sired by U Royal Mixer 287 and was purchased from breeder Tom Field of Gunnison, Colo. The reserve champion was Prince Bonny, sired by M. Baca Prince 9th.

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