

## Cattle Numbers Fail to Rise

(Continued from page seven)

bers fell slightly last year. All milk cattle combined (cows, heifers, calves) were down 658,000 or two per cent.

This reduction in milk animals accounted for all the decrease in total cattle numbers. What is commonly called (beef animals) (cows, heifers, and calves not for milk and all steers and bulls) actually went up slightly, approximately 123,000 head.

The beef cow inventory, however, was reduced. The drop of 327,000 head, or 1.3 per cent, was rather generally distributed.

Although cow slaughter was cut back sharply late in 1957 and bidding for stocker cows was active, there just was not enough beef cows to fill all demands. Only the Central Plains of Kansas, Nebraska, and South Dakota and a few Southern States reported any substantial increases in beef cow inventories on Jan. 1, 1958.

The reduction this January in milk and beef cows combined amounted to 886,000 head. This drop is highly significant.

It means that the 1958 calf crop will likely be smaller than the 1957 crop. With fewer replacements being born, cattle and calf slaughter would have to be cut back further before the current downswing in inventories can be ended. Calf slaughter, especially, would have to be reduced.

These declines in inventories and in slaughter are part of a normal cattle cycle. And yet, the changes this time are less drastic than in most cycles. The two year decrease of 2.8 million in cattle inventories is smaller than in the similar period of recent cycles.

Moreover, with range conditions good and feed supplies large, the carryover of young beef cattle has so far been maintained ex-

ceptionally well. Inventories of beef calves and heifers are up slightly this year. Those of beef steers made a big jump of 400,000 head or 4.4 per cent.

Consequently, while cattle slaughter in 1958 is expected to be below 1957 because of fewer cows and heifers slaughtered, the reduction will not be great. Calf slaughter will of course be down more.

Beef heifer numbers held up well in both feeding and range areas. However, there was variability from state to state. Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas added beef heifer herds, preparatory to expansion of cow numbers. Scattered Western and Southern states increased herds somewhat. Some other states reduced.

More steers were held on farms and ranches to utilize the abundance of feed, both range feed and grain. A few states had big increases in steer inventories—Kansas, Florida, Texas, Nebraska, Iowa, South Dakota, and Oklahoma.

Smaller inventories and the prospective moderate decrease in slaughter offer promise of well sustained prices for cattle in 1958, except for seasonal fluctuations.

Prices of grass cattle increased rather steadily during 1957, an unusual trend. One reason was the exceptional improvement in ranges and the huge feed crops harvested. It is highly unlikely that such a trend will be repeated in 1958.

More probable is an extension of recent prices for grass cattle until a seasonal high in the spring. A decline during the summer and fall seems likely.

While the outlook is for general average of 1958 cattle prices to equal or surpass last year, the strength of demand will affect actual prices. Continued unemployment would weaken demand somewhat but probably not enough to have a marked bearing on prices.

## Society 2 Gives To Manheim Cent. Loan Fund

A contribution of \$50 was given by Farm Women 2 to the Manheim Central Student Loan Fund at a meeting Saturday at the home of Mrs. Henry Hess near Manheim.

The fund which is to be administered by the Manheim banks, will provide loans to superior students wishing to attend college. The money will be repaid after the student graduates.

It was announced that a program especially for farm women will be held March 19 at the Lancaster Public Library.

Mrs. Katie Sweigart was received as a new member.

A report on the state convention in Harrisburg was given by Mrs. Andrew Low.

On April 12 Society 10 will be the guests of Society 2.

Speaker at the meeting was Miss Marigrace Bucher who showed pictures of her recent trip to Europe. Miss Mary Esther Hess played several selections on the piano.

Mrs. Silas Long, Mrs. Ruth Keller and Mrs. Mary Schaefer won prizes in an Easter Hat Parade. The hats were made and decorated by their wearers.

Mrs. Silas Long read the Scripture opening the meeting. Roll call was answered by giving a household hint or a wise saying.

Refreshments were served by Mrs. Fred Hahn and co-hostess Mrs. John Dourte.

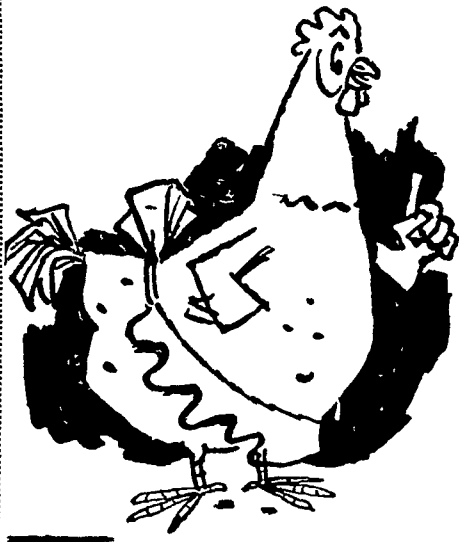
Any slippage in demand for beef would be the first in almost a decade. Unlike pork, beef has had the benefit of a steady growth in consumer for a number of years.



INSPECTING ONE of his entries in the Junior Chicken of Tomorrow contest is Joe Moore, 11, of Lancaster. This is the third time that he has entered the contest. His father, Floyd Moore, is chairman of the Coatesville Region of the contest. (LF Photo)

You are cordially invited to come in to see and hear about the . . .

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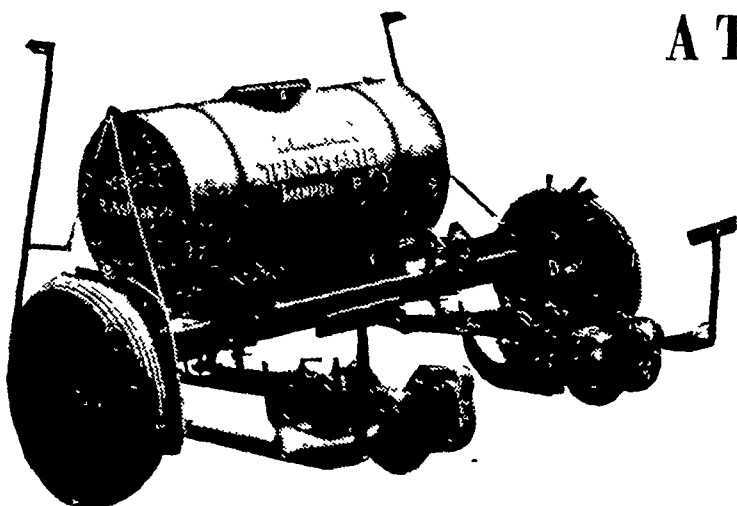
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