

Cattle Expert Defends Processing Meat Imports

OMAHA, Mar. 5 — The nation's voracious appetite for hamburgers and hot dogs currently requires substantial imports of manufacturing-type beef, Herrell DeGraff, president of the American Meat Institute told the 16th Annual National Livestock Conference at Ak-Sar-Ben Coliseum here today.

Dr. DeGraff, a widely known agricultural economist and food industry analyst, said that domestic production of cow and bull meat dropped from 27 pounds per person in 1955 to 14 pounds in 1963 — an almost 50 per cent decline including current annual imports of approximately 1.5 billion pounds of manufacturing-type beef, the per capita supply of this hamburger and frankfurter beef is still down about 15 per cent from 1955, he said.

He cautioned that sharp cutbacks in imports would have adverse impact on supplies of hamburgers and wieners which account for nearly one-third of beef consumption.

"If the hot dogs, hamburger and other processed meats are to be in our markets in anything approaching stable quantities, it can be accomplished during years of low cow slaughter only with imported processing beef. This situation, in degree, will continue to be true until our domestic production of manufacturing-type beef again turns upward."

"Since 1955, we have had an increase of 10 million teenagers alone. And these youngsters, of course, are the big hamburger and hot dog consumers."

"I believe that it is better to keep people eating these

products made from beef than it is to surrender this market to alternative foods to which the consumers could and would have to turn," Dr. DeGraff said.

Current beef imports, he said, are a relatively minor factor affecting cattle prices compared with domestic overproduction of fed cattle and the competition of other foods.

He quoted U. S. Department of Agriculture figures that average cattle prices are down about \$3.70 per hundredweight compared to a year ago. The USDA estimated that about 20 cents of the drop was due to increased supplies of poultry and pork about 50 cents due to increased imports and about \$3.00 due to increased domestic beef production.

"While I hold no brief for the precision of these figures, I do think that they are roughly in line with the facts," Dr. DeGraff said. "And if this is true, it indicates that there are matters of concern to the cattle industry that run deeper than the single question of imports."

Emphasizing that his purpose was to try to bring imports into "proper perspective" Dr. DeGraff listed four steps for cattlemen which he said would help solve the current price squeeze.

1. Tighten up ranch operations by culling old and barren cows.

2. Quit over-fattening of cattle in feed lots.

3. Avoid bunched marketing.

4. Support expanded beef promotion programs directed toward consumers.

Dr. DeGraff predicted a continued rise in consumer demand for beef. "Prospective population growth and the continued rising level of consumer income indicate that by 1970 we will need in this country some 25 per cent more beef production potential than we have at the present time. The tougher part of the outlook is some intermediate years of adjustment — a time when we have temporarily over-

produced," he said.

He pointed out that meat packers traditionally have been neutral in questions of tariff and trade.

"This is certainly not for lack of interest in such questions as they may affect our domestic livestock industry. Rather, the policy is recognition that trade is a two-way street. We have an enormous amount of tallow and grease — \$150 million worth last year — that must be sold abroad. Other exports last year included \$80 million worth of hides and \$25 million worth of variety meats. There are still other slaughter by-products for which we need export markets."

"It is certainly true that in recent years, meat imports have considerably exceeded the value of slaughter-product exports. But this has never yet been true over the whole of a cattle cycle. Trade is, and still must be a two-way street — and even the present imports problem cannot be regarded as all white or all black, as all good or as all bad," Dr. DeGraff said.

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	1961	1962	1963	3 Year Average
No. Birds Started	2500	2500	2500	2500
No. Birds Sold	2441	2382	2430	2418
% Livability	97.6%	95.2%	97.2%	96.72%
Average Weight Per Bird	21.28 lbs.	21.82 lbs.	21.76 lbs.	21.62 lbs.
Average Tom Weight	25.00 lbs.	26.41 lbs.	26.16 lbs.	25.86 lbs.
Average Hen Weight	17.32 lbs.	17.26 lbs.	17.45 lbs.	17.34 lbs.
Lbs. Feed/Lbs. Meat	3.38	3.43	3.26	3.36
Feed Cost Per Lb.	13.52c	14.67c	14.58c	14.26c
Strain	Bronze	Bronze	Bronze	Bronze



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● Scabies

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disease from that County.

The scabies-free designation, announced today in the Federal Register, means that precautionary dipping of breeder and feeder sheep being moved from Cumberland County to other areas no longer is compulsory. However, inspection of sheep for symptoms of the disease will continue.

● Breeding Co-op

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cutive secretary, Holstein Friesian Association. His topic will be "The Cow That Meets the Demands of Tomorrow."

Fred A. Hughes, extension farm management specialist at The Pennsylvania State University, will discuss "Can Pennsylvania Dairymen Compete?"

The business session of the meeting will be Saturday, April 11. Election of new officers will take place immediately before adjournment.

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