

Egg Prices May Not Brighten

How will fall and winter egg prices, October 1967 - March 1968, compare with prices a year earlier? Will egg production drop enough to permit favorable farm prices?

There may not be sufficient reduction in the number of layers on farms by early fall to bring production in line with a year earlier, according to the Cooperative Extension Service, Poultry Marketing Information. Even if production is the same as a year ago, fall and winter prices may average lower because other factors affect the supply of eggs available to consumers.

Through June this year the national hatch of egg-type chicks was estimated as 2 percent below a year earlier. On July 1, 1967, eggs in incubators for hatching egg-type chicks were 11 percent below July 1, 1966. The number of chickens raised during 1967 in the U S is expected to decline about 3 percent below a year earlier.

As of July 1 there were still 5 percent more layers on farms than a year earlier. Unless the rate of culling hens is increased the nation's laying flock will likely remain above last year's numbers until late fall or winter.

Even though monthly egg production may equal or is slightly less than a year ago late 1967 fall prices may remain below a year ago. Because fewer pounds of frozen and dried eggs were available in the 1966 fall and winter months, liquid, frozen and dried egg production increased sharply in September through March which strengthened table egg prices. These monthly increases ranged from 4 to 83 percent more than the corresponding 1965 and 1966 months. Increased production of frozen and dried eggs last spring, 1967, will reduce the need for breaking stock this fall and winter. Thus some of the factors strengthening last year's price will be absent this fall and winter.

Hatching egg needs, although possibly higher than a year earlier, will not add to price strength as much as they did in the end of 1966 and the beginning of 1967. Then there was a sharp increase in chick hatching for both broilers and laying hens.

Military purchases will probably be about the same as a year ago. Shell eggs in storage also are well above last year's levels. How soon these shell eggs move from storage into consumer channels is the important factor.

One cannot overlook the demand for eggs when appraising egg price prospects. At times during the past year, some believed that consumer demand had increased. It is assumed that demand will remain steady this fall and winter.

MEANING OF "ENRICHED"

When you see the word "enriched" on bread, flour, and other cereal products, it means that iron, riboflavin, niacin, and thiamine are added, says Louise Hamilton, Penn State extension foods and nutrition specialist. Highly refined cereal foods are "enriched" to restore the levels of these four nutrients to the amount found in the whole grain, or sometimes in excess of whole grain levels. Federal and state governments set the standard levels of enrichment.

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