

Meat Consumption Totals 174 Pounds

Pennsylvanians today are eating an average of 174 pounds of beef, veal, pork, and lamb per year, about 35 pounds more than they did 20 years ago and for a smaller percentage of their disposable income, declared Thomas B. King, head of the Department of Animal Science at The Pennsylvania State University.

"We spend about 5 percent of our income after taxes for meat today," Dr. King said. "In 1948, this figure was 6 percent. Since the nation's population increased by 53 million in the past 20 years, the livestock and meat industry produces 12 billion more pounds of meat or a total of 33 billion pounds."

Producing a better but less expensive product with higher costs of production has been accomplished by increasing output per man, per acre and per animal. But, the Penn State official said, the farmers profit per unit of output has not increased but rather has gone down.

"Today's modern beef animal is on only the first leg of the journey to market when it comes off the range," Dr. King pointed out. "For most cattle, there's still three months to a year for 'finishing' in a feedlot with grain and feed concentrate."

And the costs of ranchers and finishers have increased tremendously while the prices they receive for their meat animals have shown little increase — in fact, have actually decreased when compared with some past periods, the Penn State professor said.

He cites examples of what has caused production costs to increase.

— Farmers are paying nearly \$18 billion annually in real estate taxes — twice the amount paid in 1954. As inflation mounts, this figure will get larger and more burdensome.

— Many farm equipment items increased 5 percent last year — attributable to increasing wage rates to factory workers.

— Soybean meal, a prominent ingredient in modern cattle ra-

tions, has increased from a price range of \$51.25 - \$54.20 per ton in 1960 to recent quotations of \$74 - \$80.

All along the line there have been increases in the prices of labor, goods, and services farmers buy and in the costs of marketing the products they sell, Dr. King emphasized. What the agricultural family could buy for \$100 in 1957-59 costs about \$117 in 1968 — 17 percent more!

In 1967, the top cattle in Chi-

cago generally stayed below \$28 per hundredweight, the livestock specialist pointed out. Five years ago, the top was \$33, and in the early 1950's peak prices ranged from \$33.50 to \$42.50. The top price on hogs in Chicago has been around \$21 recently. As far back as 20 years ago, hogs brought \$27.50 per hundred pounds.

When we settle down in front of the television set to watch the adventures of those legendary cowboys, we've frequently

just finished a dinner including beef that cost vastly more to produce than did the beef of five or six generations ago, Dr. King said. It's also vastly better! In fast, today's consumers, accustomed to modern 'high quality, but, at some "old-time" prices, wouldn't accept the beef from cattle herded in by "The King said. It's also vastly better! In fast, today's consumers, ac-

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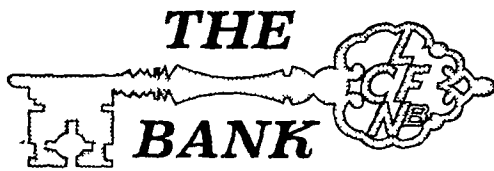
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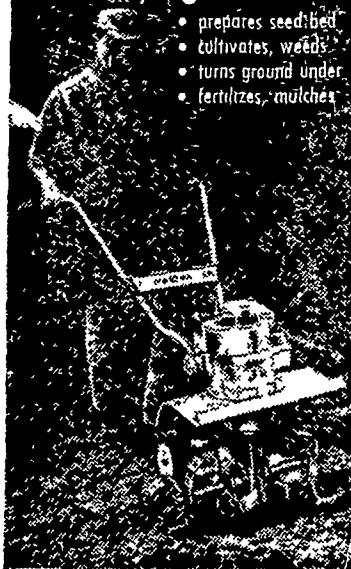


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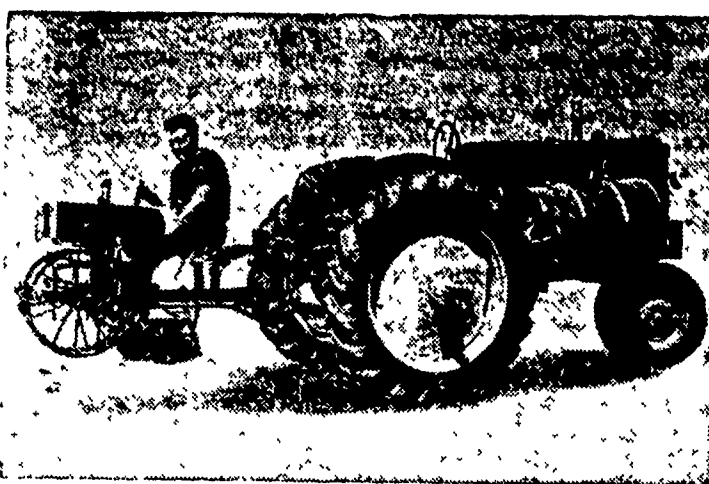
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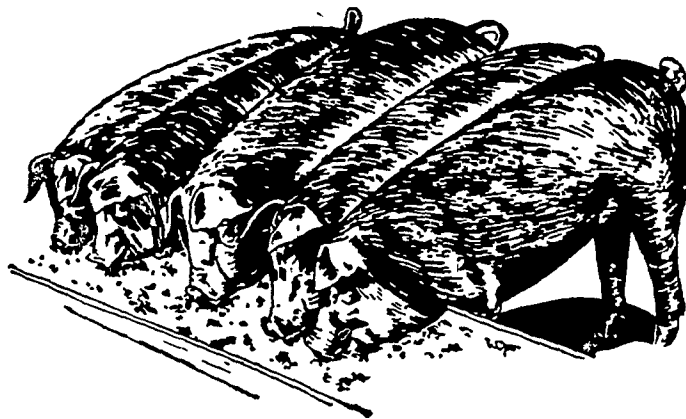
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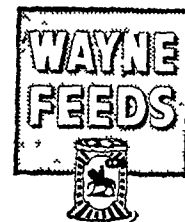
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