

Meat Inspection Questions

By Louis Moore
Penn State Market Specialist
Pennsylvania's livestock producers all have an interest in the Pennsylvania meat inspection

law passed last July to conform with the Federal Wholesome Meat Act passed a year ago. The Federal Act gives the states until December 15,

1969 to have inspection programs at least equal to Federal inspection. The Secretary of Agriculture can give another year's extension to those states which are making substantial progress in that direction.

The laws recently passed are to insure that the nation's consumers obtain only wholesome meat. Producers express concern regarding the effect of the law on the future of the industry—will there be fewer markets for Pennsylvania livestock? Will the number of packers decline and will only the larger packers remain? How will it affect those who market only in small volume? Will producers be allowed to slaughter and market their own livestock?

We do not know the answers to these questions, but we know that at most we have only until December 15, 1970 to be at least "equal" to Federal inspection. The producer exemption is an interesting case. The Pennsylvania law has a liberal producer exemption. "A producer who slaughters animals owned by him and sells the meat and products derived therefrom

exclusively at retail is exempt." This allows producers to sell at farmers' markets, door-to-door, or retail at the farm and yet be exempt from inspection. At the end of two years, however, when we must have a program at least equal to Federal, some changes will undoubtedly be required. The Federal producer exemption provides that only persons who slaughter animals of their own raising and prepare the meat and meat food products exclusively for use in the owner's household by him and members of his household and nonpaying guests and employees are exempt. This means that only producers who kill for their own use will be exempt two years from now.

Beef Consumption and Retail Prices

Beef consumption in 1968 will probably average near 109 pounds per person, up 3 pounds from 1967. The increase came from increased fed cattle marketings and larger imports of processing beef. Despite larger supplies, beef retail prices have been running about 3 cents per pound higher than a year ago and products derived therefrom

the first half of 1969 are expected to be considerably above year-earlier levels. This will drop producer prices and insure consumers a large supply of beef in the coming year.

Veal Consumption Declines

Twelve years ago, per-capita veal consumption was 95 pounds. In 1968 it will be only 25 pounds. Veal retail prices have been high and fewer people seem to have a strong desire for veal. Consumers have substituted beef for veal in their diet.

Producers have contributed to this decline in veal consumption. There are fewer dairy herds than a decade ago, thus fewer calves are available for veal. In addition, more beef- and dairy-type calves have been placed in feedlots to be fed out. This also reduces the number of calves used for veal.

Lamb and Mutton Imports Increase

Lamb and mutton consumption, declining about one-quarter pound per person in 1968, is now down to 37 pounds. This reflects smaller domestic production. However, domestic production has been partially offset by increased imports. Lamb imports have increased each month since May. These increases have ranged from 42 to 320 percent. In the past, nearly all imported lamb and mutton was used in processed meats. In 1968, however, some imported frozen lamb cuts have been sold in food stores in the metropolitan areas of the East. These cuts have been well received by consumers.

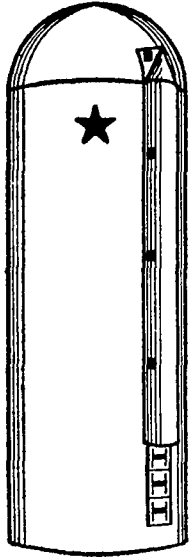
Appointment of Richard W. McLaren as Chief "Trustbuster" for the new Administration lifted some eyebrows in Washington. McLaren has represented some corporations, including the National Dairy Products Corp., against charges of anti-trust violations. He comes to the sensitive job at a time when the situation is growing worse. The Cabinet Committee on Price Stability issued a report Tuesday saying that the booming merger movement is centralizing economic power so much that it "may seriously impair the proper functioning of our competitive, free enterprise economy, and may threaten traditional American social and political values." NFU President Tony Dechant said, "This is exactly what we have been pointing out about the corporate domination of agriculture markets. Competition for many farm products is no longer working."

The first commercial shipment of fresh oranges from California to the east was made from Los Angeles in 1877.

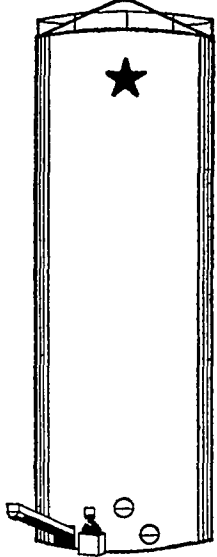
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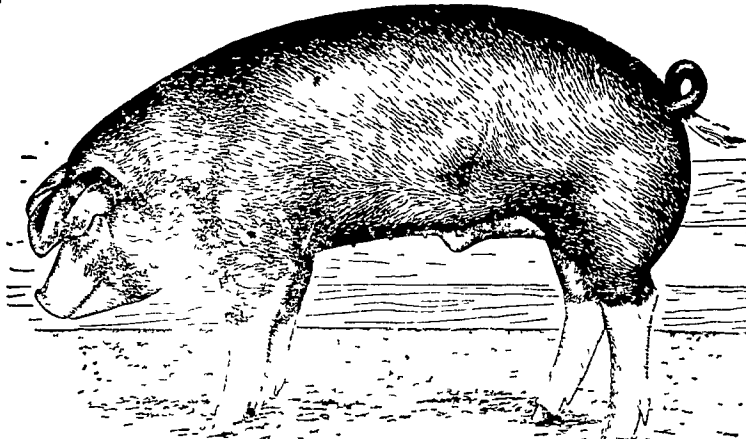
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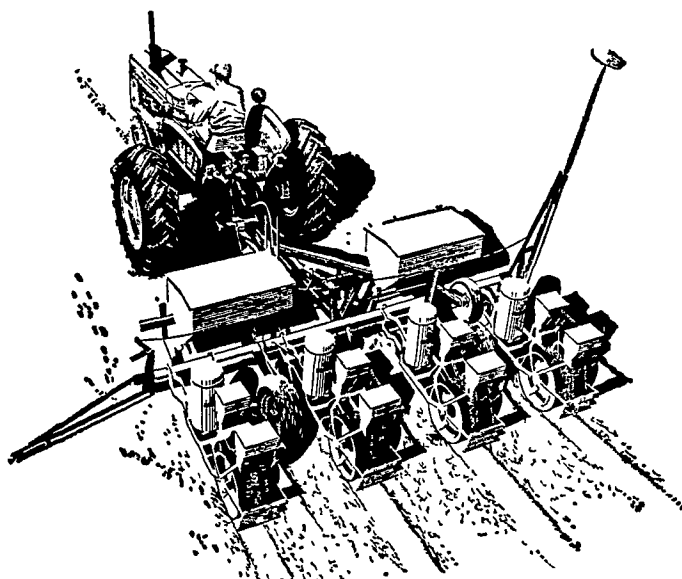
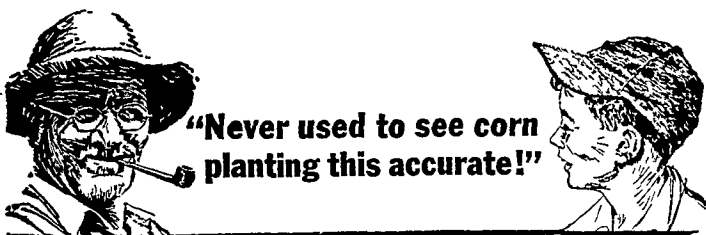
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