

January Layer Hatch Up 21%

Perhaps the question foremost in the minds of persons in the egg industry is how many more hens will there be in the nation's laying flock in 1970 as compared with a year earlier, according to the Penn State extension service

There are those who feel the industry has become sufficiently sophisticated to resist the temptation of expanding production in spite of higher prices

in the past four months than in the same period a year earlier

They hope there will be only a moderate expansion, one which will not result in disastrous prices. Lending support to this thought was the failure of prices in November 1969 through February 1970 to drop below a year earlier. Also, strong demand for eggs is held up as a plus factor in favor of good prices

On the opposite side are those

who cannot forget responses to high prices in recent years as well as in the past two decades. They remember how high prices resulted in expansion and prices below cost of production

Time will tell who is right. What is the situation? The scene is set for expansion. The chief question is, "How much?"

Even though the hatch of chicks for laying flock replacements was 21 per cent above a year earlier in January, it will not affect expansion of production until about July

The present expansion has been masked by a shortage of frozen eggs and increased hatch of chicks for both laying flock replacements and meat production

On January 1, there were three per cent more layers on farms than a year earlier.

Egg production in January was three per cent above a year earlier in spite of the cold weather which caused some birds to go into a molt in the south

Where has the expansion taken place?

On January 1, there were more layers than a year ago in every area listed on the map except the West. There was about a one per cent decline in the West

The increase among states ranged from an increase of three million layers — 23 per cent in North Carolina — to a decrease of 600,000 hens in New Jersey.

In Pennsylvania, there was a 150,000 increase in numbers. However, the number of pullets on farms in the Commonwealth was about two per cent less than a year earlier

while the number of hens on farms was about three per cent of 745,000 layers a year earlier

Expansion is under way. It is difficult to predict

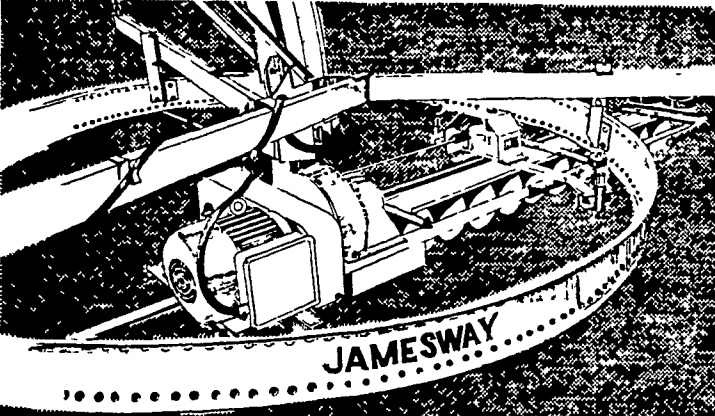
There are numerous factors to consider. Perhaps March production will be sufficiently above a year earlier to offset additional requirements for the

breaker and hatching market. If so, more eggs will be available for the table market than a year earlier

Keep abreast of changes in laying flock numbers as well as egg production and the multitude of factors affecting the demand and supply of eggs since changes may affect the situation

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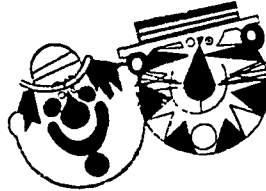
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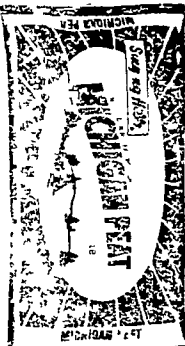
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