

County Agent Views State Livestock Situation

Hog Kill Drop Temporary

Livestock numbers declined across the nation in 1969 and the declines in Pennsylvania were sharper than the national average, according to the Penn State extension service.

Slaughter of hogs, lambs, fed cattle and calves declined in Pennsylvania in 1969. Nationally, only beef showed an increase.

While Pennsylvania hog slaughter increased sharply during most of years in the 1960s, hog slaughter was down 10 per cent in the state in 1969. National hog slaughter dropped only one per cent.

Max Smith, county agent told Lancaster Farming, however, that he thinks the hog slaughter drop in the state was only temporary. He expects a significant increase this year.

Smith thinks the 1969 drop in hog numbers stemmed from unfavorable market conditions in 1968.

Pork prices for the farmer in 1968 were down to around 18 cents a pound, Smith recalled. As a result, many farmers either quit growing hogs or cut back.

The cutback in 1968 temporarily increased hog sales for 1968, but farmers had a reduced breeding stock for 1969.

Then, with supplies of hogs down in 1969, demand for pork jumped, along with demand for

other red meat. Hog prices also climbed into the high 20s, allowing very favorable profit margins to swine producers.

As a result, many farmers in 1969 were accumulating breeder stock, instead of selling at the normal rate. So the combination of a reduced hog population in 1968 and accumulation of bigger breeder operations in 1969 together account for the substantial reduction in marketings in the state in 1969, Smith said.

But he predicted that the build-up in 1969 will be reflected in 1970 slaughter figures. "I think we're on the increase in Pennsylvania," he said.

He added, "I think we have more hogs on Lancaster County farms than a year ago. I think you're going to find the slaughter is up here in 1970 and in Pennsylvania too."

Some eastern packers, accord-

ing to Penn State, cut back sharply when hog prices rose and supplies became tight during 1969. Smith noted some packers also have gone out of business because of tighter meat inspection standards.

Nationally, the 3.9 million hogs slaughtered in 1969 was the second largest on record, exceeded only by the 4 million slaughtered in 1968.

All states in the Northeast declined at about the same rate as Pennsylvania, so the Commonwealth continues to slaughter about 70 per cent of all the hogs slaughtered in the Northeast.

Lamb slaughter in the U.S. declined 10 per cent last year, and the 107 million head was the smallest slaughter on record.

Pennsylvania lamb slaughter, down 18 per cent during the year, consisted of only 128,000 lambs.

Lamb slaughter in the Com-

monwealth has declined 67 per cent since 1960.

Smith said wool prices have been weak and this apparently is a major factor in the decline in sheep. Sheep producers apparently have not found lamb production adequately profitable without the high return from wool.

As a result, sheep production has been shifting to Australia and areas with "plenty of grass," Smith said.

While sows generally have two litters of around nine pigs each or a total of about 18 pigs per year, a ewe will have only one crop averaging somewhat more than one lamb a year.

As a result, the return per animal has been relatively low on sheep.

Nationally, calf slaughter has declined sharply since the mid 1950s as calves have been diverted to feedlots for further feed-

ing. Calf slaughter was down 11 per cent nationally in 1969 while Pennsylvania slaughter declined 13 per cent.

Strong demand for feeder cattle of any type and the decline in dairy cattle will keep calf slaughter low in the years ahead.

The number of fed cattle marketed in the U.S. rose seven per cent last year, but this was offset by a 25 per cent decline in non-fed animals so that the total increase in beef production was only one per cent.

In Pennsylvania the number of cattle slaughtered declined from 817,000 head in 1968 to 762,000 in 1969 — nearly seven per cent.

This is the lowest number of cattle slaughtered in Pennsylvania for any year in the last decade. Cattle slaughter in the Commonwealth has declined each year since 1964, when 940,000 head were slaughtered. The five-year decline was 19 per cent.

Local Officials Attend CD Meet

Several local officials this week attended the first of six regional training meetings on county civil defense.

They were Max Smith, county agent, Orval Bass, district conservation manager, Miss Dorothy Neel, ASCS Manager, Roy Giesmann, district FHA manager and Charles Chiebold, County Civil Defense representative. Officials from the Agricultural Research Service and both Federal and State forestry agencies also attended.

The meeting in Stouchsburg Wednesday was conducted by the State U.S. Department of Agriculture Defense Board. Kenneth H. Boyer is chairman.

A panel discussion included Civil Defense Directors, Radio Amateur Civilian Emergency Service members and County Defense Board chairmen. They discussed effective emergency operations of county defense boards.

Ernest Bergeron, Federal Consumer and Marketing Service, outlined responsibilities of county boards concerning the food management program. Bruce Eaton, Disaster & Defense Services Staff director, discussed the Department's program for claimancy of non-food items.

USDA Will Inspect North Dakota Meat

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced that meat plants operating wholly within North Dakota will be subject to Federal meat inspection effective April 16. The official notice has been published in the Federal Register.

The Department explained that action results from requirements of the Wholesome Meat Act. The Act requires, in part, that intrastate meat plants be Federally inspected in those States that do not establish an inspection program at least equal to Federal inspection.

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