

Beef Consumption Doubles in 20 yrs.

The average American eats twice as much beef as he did 20 years ago according to the USDA. He consumed 113 pounds of beef in 1951, compared with 56 pounds in 1951, and he may be eating 130 pounds in 1980. Meanwhile, farmers and ranchers have increased beef production 2½ times in the last 20 years—from 8.8 billion pounds in

1951 to 21.9 billion pounds in 1971. They've done it by: **Increasing beef cow numbers.** Our beef cow herd is nearly 39 million now, up from 20 million in 1952. **Switching from dairy to beef animals.** Over the last 20 years, the number of milk cows has dropped from 21 million to just over 12 million. Some cows once

kept for dairy purposes—and entire herds in many cases—have been replaced by beef animals. **Marketing more fed beef.** By far, this is the largest single factor behind the expansion in beef production. Today more than three-fourths of our beef is grain-fed, compared with half 20 years ago, and about a third in the mid-1940's. Choice grade now

makes up 60 percent of beef output compared with a third in 1952. **Veal production has gone down** drastically as the demand for beef has increased. Meatier dairy calves used to be slaughtered for veal at 150 pounds. Now they're fed to 1,000 pounds. And veal production fell from 1 billion

pounds in 1951 to just over a half billion in 1971. Beef and veal imports have risen even faster than our beef production—they're 4 times larger than 20 years ago. Imports, however, amount to only a small percentage of our total U.S. beef consumption—at 1.8 billion pounds last year, they represented 8 percent of total usage.

Catfish Farms

There may come a day when farm-raised catfish compete with broilers and pork, as well as other fish, for the average shopper's favor

But right now, the new catfish industry must jump some major hurdles before it breaks in big on the supermarket and restaurant circuits where U.S. consumers buy most of their food.

Not the least of these hurdles in price. Farm-raised catfish retail for about \$1.10 to \$1.30 a pound. And those in the business simply can't lower their price to compete because very little money is being made now.

From a pound of fish sold at retail, growers get about two cents, and processors, wholesalers, and retailers, one cent each—or about four percent profit for the whole industry.

It's estimated that if a new product such as fillets were put on the market, they'd have to be priced at \$2 a pound to cover costs.

Making the price more attractive to the consumer will require greater efficiency in all industry functions—production, processing, and marketing. Some work is being done now. Much more will be required.

In addition, more promotion will be needed. For instance, a recent USDA survey indicated nearly 70 percent of Eastern consumers had never tried catfish.

Another hurdle is in providing supermarket and restaurant chains with the uniform and steady supply they require. Since most farmers get a higher return in local or fee-fishing markets, most of today's catfish do not go to the processor. Summer months mean even fewer catfish for the processor. Farmers avoid harvesting during the summer for a variety of reasons, including the risk of mortality associated with high water temperatures.

Despite its problems, the industry has some things going for it. Farm-raised catfish are tasty, have a high feed conversion ratio, and adapt readily to commercial farming. Since 1960, catfish production has increased from a modest 400 acres in Arkansas to some 50,000 or more acres this year, mainly in seven Southern States—Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Alabama, Tennessee, and Georgia.

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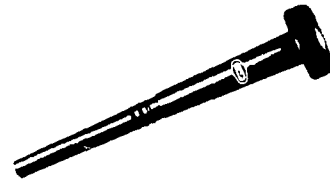


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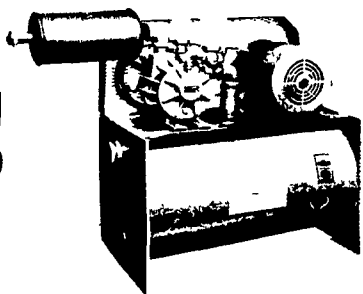
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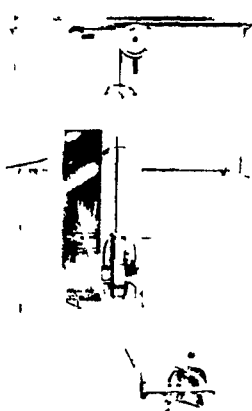


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