

Meat Institute Predicts Food Shortages Ahead

There is growing evidence that American farmers are cutting back on livestock production to such an extent that the nation will have serious meat shortages in the months and years ahead, the American Meat Institute said last week.

Herrell DeGraff, AMI president, said that meat packing plants are now receiving unprecedented numbers of pregnant sows for slaughter as farmers liquidate breeding herds

because of uncertainties caused by present price ceilings on meat.

DeGraff cited a report from the AMPAC Corp., which operates the nation's largest plant for slaughtering sows at 43rd St and Racine Ave., Chicago, that the percentage of pregnant sows being brought to market is running five to six times higher than that of normal times.

One day recently, 39 percent of the 1,900 sows slaughtered were pregnant compared with a

normal average of 5 to 7 percent, it was reported to AMI by AMPAC president Edward Ochylski.

DeGraff said similar reports of receipts of higher than usual percentages of pregnant sows had been received from other meat packers throughout the midwest.

"This information is fully as frightening for the nation's future food supply as was the drowning of baby chicks by poultrymen. All livestock producers are being squeezed between record-high feed costs and the frozen meat prices which are causing them to lose money if they feed out their animals," DeGraff said.

"Unless rigid ceilings and freeze-price regulations on meat are removed immediately, the nation will face a meat shortage so serious that rationing will be inevitable in order to distribute equitably a meat supply that will be increasingly inadequate to consumer demand.

"The tragedy of the situation is that it will take well into next year or beyond to rebuild livestock breeding herds now being liquidated because of ill-advised government policies that are not in the interest of the consuming public," he said.

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Doctor in the Kitchen®

by Laurence M. Hursh, M.D.
Consultant, National Dairy Council

KEEP FOOD COOL IN THE HEAT

When warm weather — really warm weather — gets to us, there is one picture that may be more common in people's minds than any other. It is the vision of mothers and housewives arriving home with the groceries. And they've a right to feel bedraggled. Even if the car is air-conditioned, it is a chore to be the family purchasing agent.

And if the kids and the dog have been along, and they are tired from the heat, too — well, let's not discuss that here.

The point is, whoever comes in with those groceries is usually frantically eager for a place to flop — and a tall, cool drink.

Don't Let Food Sit

Well, do reward yourself. But be careful. Don't let that food sit around too long. Food manufacturers and food retailers have worked hard and well to keep your food in good shape up to the time of your buying it. Now it's up to you — and being hot and tired may tempt you to let things go.

I know a milkman who could die when he sees bottles of milk still on doorsteps, long after home delivery, because people aren't up yet. Well, similarly, milk from the store can suffer if you take too long getting it home and under refrigeration. Milk's delicate flavor actually should never be subjected to warmth unnecessarily. Only when actually in use should milk be out of the refrigerator. Meat and fish, too.

Do you ever let them sit around on the kitchen counter during food preparation? Fish, especially, is subject to deterioration.

Meats are well protected against contamination and heat before you buy them. Fruits and vegetables are often flown in, in refrigerated planes, direct from their growing areas. Supermarkets also buy direct from farmers in your area when things are in season. Better stores spray cool water on vegetables, or protect freshness with beds of crushed ice. You should do no less. Washing fresh vegetables and fruits is a must when you get them home before storing them in your refrigerator.

Custard Is Vulnerable

Bakery goods are well packaged and during hotter months many bakeries do not offer custard or cream-filled goods because of their vulnerability to spoilage in hot weather. If you prepare such goods at home, keep them cool. Mayonnaise and similar dressings are susceptible to summer spoilage unless kept consistently cool. Don't apply dressings to salads until just before serving.

And since high temperatures encourage germ growth, you should be especially careful in summer if you have a cold or any sort of infection, or a sore on your hands. If you aren't careful in handling food, your chance in summer of passing something on to your family is much greater.

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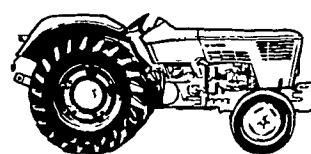
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