

Farm Exports

(Continued from Page 48) consumer resistance to higher beef prices.

The necessary adjustments will not take place overnight. More cattle may be going to slaughter in the near term, which may result in an immediate softening of prices, but will likely mean higher prices later when the effects of reduced cattle numbers are seen.

Fortunately, pasture conditions in many important cattle- and beef-exporting countries, notably those in Australia and Central America, are excellent, and these countries are expected to carry cattle on grass until the marketing situation improves. Much of the additional slaughter will probably not be grain-fed beef.

It is far more difficult to estimate the likely effects on agricultural production, consumption, and trade that are resulting from the current sweeping changes in financial liquidity or the problems of rampant inflation being faced by

practically all countries of the world.

Vast sums of money are flowing from the developed countries of the world, which are major purchasers of U.S. agricultural products, to the oil-producing nations. The latter countries have relatively small populations. While they will almost certainly increase their imports of agricultural products to improve their diets, there is a limit to the quantity of food they will need.

Faced with the necessity to pay their greatly increased oil bills, and with double-digit inflation reducing the amount of money in the hands of consumers, established markets for U.S. agricultural products will probably make some adjustments in their consumption. Similar reactions have already occurred in the United States in the form of reduced beef consumption because of higher prices.

Economically, agriculture will perform in the foreseeable future with much the same vigor of the last two years, an Allis-Chalmers Corp. executive vice president told the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture recently.

Joseph H. Maloney described the current state of agriculture at a dinner meeting in the Grand Ballroom of the Pfister Hotel during the association's 56th annual convention being held here this week.

Progress made by the food production industry is outstanding, Maloney said, while the action on the farm has been truly amazing. Although he cautioned that future production increases will not be as easy to achieve as those over the past decades, he cited several promising trends.

Technological development of machine power and

"Vigorous" Agriculture Seen Continuing in US

capacity, on the one hand, hold promise of increases in efficiency that can double work output in larger tractors and combines, he said.

On the other hand, Maloney noted, recent reports on research in plant genetics give hope for new strains of wheat and corn that are generally resistant to disease, insects and drought as well as richer in protein content.

"In addition, we have barely scratched the surface of research," Maloney said, "on improvement in soybean strains."

He also cited both the development of stripper cotton in the southwest and double-cropping made feasible for midwest farms by the new technique of no-tillage planting combined with irrigation as examples of practical advances. Such endeavors, Maloney said, represent the real opportunities for significant expansion in food production.

The current free market system of the United States and the efficient information network supplying farmers with the latest facts are the two factors, Maloney said, that give our country's farmer the edge and ability to meet the challenge of the world food problem.

He applauded the continuing efforts of state Agriculture Departments, the United States Department of Agriculture, University Extension services, and industry research and development supplying the U.S. farmer with proven developments.

Maloney called for improved capital investment

incentives to help both farm and industry achieve higher production that will help curb the inflationary spiral. Essential to this, too, is assurance to the American farmer that he will continue under a free trade and market oriented agriculture rather than one dominated by production limiting policies, he said.

"While we have a very fertile agriculture," Maloney said, "we also have fertile grounds for misunderstandings -- misunderstandings about food values and prices, costs and production, food processing, USDA budgets and expenses, and even accomplishments."

He noted that the farmer and his business are open to attack by vocal forces that

would regulate what he does and how he does it. Imposing unreasonable limitations on farmers, however, will lead inevitably to less food, poorer quality and unreasonable prices as a consequence, he said.

Maloney opposed export restrictions on farm products as involving harmful consequences far beyond any possible benefits. Much has been done to bring farmers' story to the public, but intensified efforts and resources of government, industry, education and agriculture are needed to counter those voices opposed to a free market and thereby assure continued abundant food both at home and abroad, he said.

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