

US Meat Imports

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EC beef production is expected to rise more than 13 percent, as slaughter accelerates beyond earlier expectations. This high slaughter has been made possible by several years of herd building that saw cattle numbers as of January 1, 1974, some 6.4 percent above those of January 1973.

Should cattle numbers now stabilize for a couple of years, beef production could still remain at an unusually high level, exacerbating the EC oversupply problem.

At the same time, the EC is adjusting to stagnating beef consumption because of the combined impact of inflation, which has reduced consumer purchasing power, and higher margins to farmers, which have kept retail prices high.

The weighted average retail price of table cuts of beef in September was almost 4 percent above that for September 1973, whereas the wholesale price was off 5 percent from that of the previous year.

EC authorities believe the cost of EC cattle and hog price supports will exceed \$500 million in fiscal 1975, compared with \$100 million in fiscal 1974. How-

ever, this increase will be partly offset by lower costs for grain support. Moreover, EC officials feel that since livestock farmers have smaller operations than grain farmers, the cost of support in this area can be justified as a social program.

The situation is complicated, however, by the EC Council's move to increase the cattle orientation price again this year and resulting German complaints. The EC Commission submitted to the Council a 5-percent upward adjustment, which was approved on September 20 but then vetoed by the German Parliament on September 28: The Germans, who contribute the most to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), wanted a smaller price increase and want it to come into effect next year instead of this year.

Even now, high support prices are keeping EC cattle prices about 26 percent above U.S. levels and there is a larger gap than usual between them and pork prices—85 percent higher compared with 54 percent last year. As a result, pork is more attractive than beef as a consumer product.

Thought For Food



Tortas Compuestas

Drain 1 can (1lb 4oz.) kidney beans, saving 3 tablespoons liquid. Combine beans, bean liquid and: 1 teaspoon chili powder, ½ teaspoon salt, ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper and ¼ teaspoon garlic powder. Bring to boiling point. Place in blender jar and blend until smooth—or force through a sieve. Cool. Cut 4 French rolls in half lengthwise; tear out soft centers and discard. Spread chili bean mixture over bottom halves of the rolls. Sprinkle with ½ cup finely shredded lettuce. Top with 1 large thinly sliced tomato, ¼ pound thinly sliced cooked pork, tongue, turkey or ham and 1 peeled and thinly sliced avocado. Pour ¼ cup French dressing over each sandwich to moisten. Sprinkle lightly with chili powder. Yields four portions.

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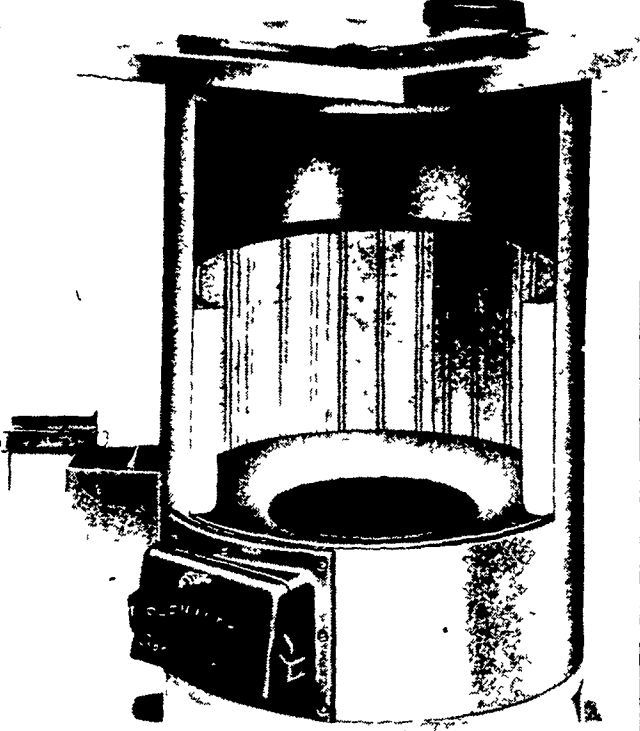
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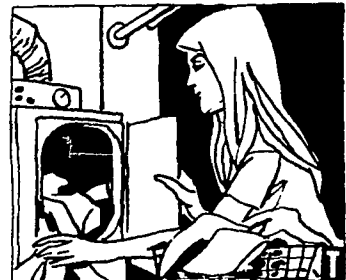
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CONSUMER CORNER

LOWER APPLIANCE COSTS

Fifteen years ago, a good price for a gleaming white washing machine and dryer with all the up-to-date features then available would have set a sharp shopper back about \$480.

Today, such a shopper could easily come up with replacement units with more convenience features, a larger



motor, longer-lasting parts and a wide range of colors. all for \$350, about one-third less than in the good old days.

What's the story?

In part, it's the free enterprise system at work. Manufacturers of major appliances are a competitive bunch and they can't afford to pass on to consumers then rising labor and material costs. Instead, they rely on improved product engineering and higher productivity to offset mounting costs.

"Without a doubt, one of the reasons the appliance industry has been able to hold down production costs year after year is the increased use of plastics," says an appliance industry executive.

Scoters at the "plastic society" may be surprised to learn that the appliance industry which builds parts to last is a major customer of the plastics industry, according to a recent issue of "Exxon Chemicals Magazine." Others using plastics for durable end uses include the automotive, communications and construction businesses.

By far, styrenes are the plastics most widely used in major appliances. In 1973, appliances consumed 403 million pounds of this material. ABS plastics were next with nearly 106 million pounds and then came polypropylene with 97 million pounds.

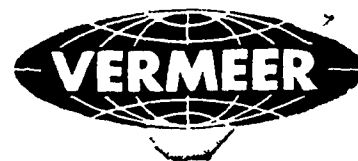
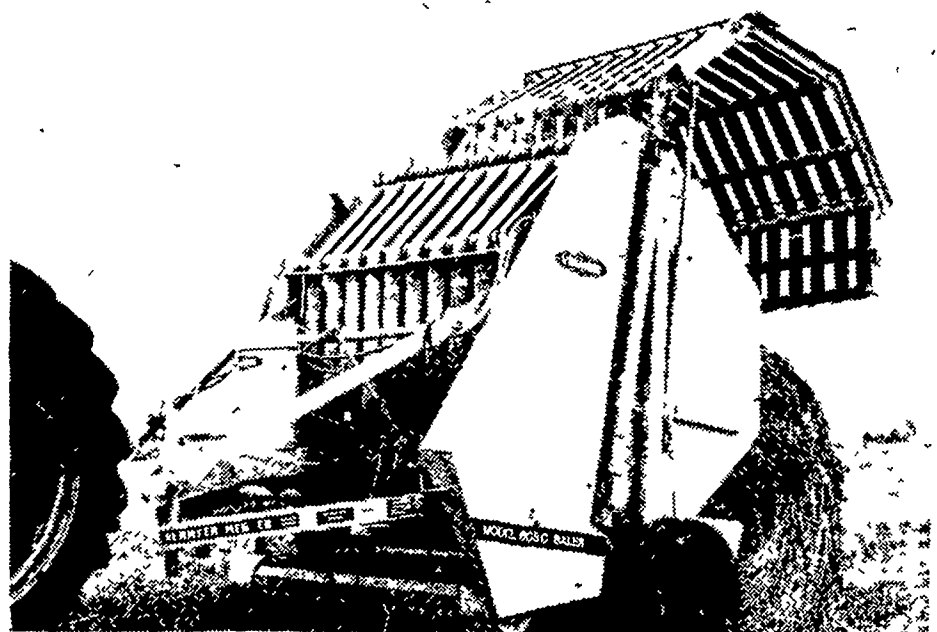
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