

# Fat Content Reduced in Livestock

U.S. livestock farmers, especially pork producers, have brought about a sharp decline in the fat content of meat and meat products, according to Dr. Lowell L. Wilson of The Pennsylvania State University. Professor of animal science at Penn State, Dr. Wilson spoke to delegates attending the 11th Meat Industry Research Conference held recently at the University of Chicago. Wilson cited observations by Dr. John H. Ziegler of Penn State in which the backfat thickness of hogs exhibited at Pennsylvania carcass shows had decreased over 38 percent in the past 17 years. Dr. Ziegler is associate professor of meat science at Penn State. The area of the loin-eye, the muscle contained in the pork chop, has increased

about 26 percent. Moreover, the percentage of the hog carcass in the more desirable and high priced cuts, hams and loins, has increased about 30 percent. Wilson suggested that most of the decreased fat content of hogs has been due to intensive selection of breeding stock for less fat, increased growth rate, and improved rate of gain per pound of feed. Opportunities exist to reduce further the fat in hogs, he affirmed. However, progress in decreasing fat content may be slower, since livestock breeders and farmers must avoid upsetting other important production traits such as lean meat firmness, reproductive ability, and soundness of feet and legs. In beef cattle, Dr. Wilson

predicted that within the next 10 to 20 years the consumer would demand a beef product much lower in fat content than presently produced. With the wide variety in breeds of beef cattle, he suggested that a carcass with almost any given fat percentage could be produced. He indicated, however, that several antagonistic factors exist between desirable carcass types and farm production costs determined by traits of beef cattle. Most important of these is the size of the cows which have to be maintained to produce a very lean carcass. Equally important are calving difficulties resulting from the use of very large bulls with extreme amounts of muscling. Quality beef can be produced from a high-forage, low-grain ration, he stated from research results at many experiment stations. However, cost of production will continue to be greater under these feeding systems than they have been under the moderately high-grain system of the past. This results partly from the high rate of increase of all inputs into any farming enterprise. Then too, cattle have to be fed longer to produce quality carcasses from all-forage rations. And there are other cost factors such as initial establishment of additional high-quality pastures. "The cattle industry is using about 2.1 pounds of grain to produce one pound

of beef, and this trend should continue for many years. We must realize that over 1 billion acres of U.S. land that cannot be used to produce grains are used to grow grass for these cattle. In this way farmers produce the highly nutritious beef available to American consumers," he stated. In raising sheep, he claimed that continued improvement can be made by selection within breeds for leaner, meatier carcasses, increased growth rates, and number of lambs weaned per ewe. In addition, there are many different breeds that, if used in crossbreeding programs, can result in continued advances in efficiency. Also attending from Penn State was Dr. John D. Sink, professor of meat science. Dr. Sink is president of the American Meat Science Association, one of the co-sponsors of the Meat Industry Research Conference. The other sponsor was the American Meat Institute. The Penn State scientists are associated with the Agricultural Experiment Station at University Park. The year 1975 marks the Centennial for these research divisions of the land-grant universities. **Costs Up** Foods that are most likely to increase your food costs include: cream, ice cream, cream cheese, and specialty cheeses; ready-prepared dishes; choice cuts of meats, cookies, cakes, pies, ready-made or ready-to-bake buns; snack foods; soft drinks



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## Sewing Contest

Entries for the Pennsylvania State Grange's annual sewing contest are beginning to roll in, with indications the total may exceed 2,300 by the April 30 deadline, according to Mrs. Leroy Hoover, of Roaring Spring, director of women's activities for the organization. Last year's contest attracted a record 2,324 entries, Mrs. Hoover said. Among the early entries are several from young people in the 10-17 age group and in a new class for this year's contest - men's sport coat and pants, or suit. The age limit for young

people has been lowered from 12 to 10 years for the 1975 contest, Mrs. Hoover said. The contest is open to Grange members, and to non-members who are sponsored by a Grange member. Prizes will be awarded at the local, county or Pomona, and state levels. Winners in the state competition will be judged in the National Grange contest in June. Top prize for the national winner will be a one-week Caribbean cruise for two persons.

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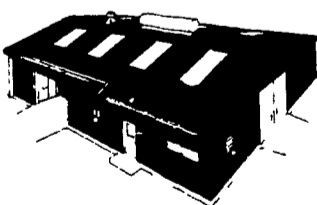
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