

Beef production

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pound less than in 1975. As of mid-December, the five-cut average was down 19 cents from a year earlier."

But the American Meat Institute, based here, projected the following outlook in its Dec. 29, 1976 statement: "There will be plentiful supplies of meat at reasonable prices in 1977, the American Meat Institute said.

Institute President Richard Lyng predicted an increase in pork production over the 1976 level and said that beef production will drop slightly in 1977. "The record high corn crop in 1976 should encourage more hog production and bring about the largest pork supplies since 1974. Beef production and total red meat consumption were the highest ever in 1976," Lyng said.

In 1977, the supply of red meat will average 191.6 pounds per person, down about a half a pound from the 1976 record per capita figure of 192.0 pounds. By categories, this is: 123.0 pounds of beef, down 5.5 pounds; 63.5 pounds of pork, up nearly 6 pounds; and about two pounds of lamb and a little over three pounds of veal, Lyng said.

Total red meat production will increase slightly from 39.5 billion pounds in 1976 to 39.7 billion pounds in 1977. Most of this increase will come in pork which will go up to 13.7 billion pounds, over a billion pounds higher than the 1976 figure of 12.4 billion pounds. Beef production will drop slightly from 25.9 billion pounds in 1976 to 25.0 billion pounds in 1977.

The American Meat Institute is the national trade association of the meat packing and processing industry.

With prospects for small supplies of beef in 1977, U. S. Department of Agriculture and economists have been forecasting an increase in average retail beef prices ANCA's

Finney noted. However, based on the current outlook, prices may not reach the level of mid-1975, when supplies of higher quality fed beef were particularly limited.

At any rate, there will continue to be some fluctuations in prices as a result of changes in supplies of beef and other meats. For one thing, Finney explained, unforeseen weather and pasture conditions can markedly affect beef supplies.

The ANCA president explained that, in addition to short term changes in supplies and prices, the cattle industry generally goes through a 10-year cycle.

"We have one stage," he said, "where we build up numbers of cattle, as hundreds of thousands of individual cattlemen make decisions which collectively result in a larger total cattle herd - and ultimately in more beef. Subsequently, in response to adverse economics brought on by excessive supplies, we have a phase where total numbers of cattle are reduced. A single phase of the long-term cycle may last for several years.

"We are now nearing the end of a period of expanding beef production. Most cattlemen have been losing money for much of the past three years, and this has resulted in liquidation or cutbacks in basic herds. Widespread drought could further increase the herd liquidation - and beef supplies for consumers - in the short term. Otherwise, the basic trend is expected to be one of declining per capita beef supplies over the next few years.

"This will mean increases in average cattle and beef prices. Cattle prices simply have to get back to a point where they are higher than today's inflated production costs, and where cattlemen can begin to recoup their losses. If we don't experience some improvement soon, more producers will be forced out of the cattle business, and consumers eventually will find much less beef available, at much higher prices."

Kerstetter urges direct marketing

HARRISBURG, Pa. - Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture Raymond J. Kerstetter last week said that Pennsylvania's farmers and agricultural workers should step up their direct marketing practices.

Kerstetter said that the "Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976," P.L. 94-463, recently passed by Congress will provide appropriations to individual states for the promotion of the establishment and operation of direct marketing from farmers to consumers. Under the law, \$1.5 million will be appropriated for this purpose in fiscal years 1977 and 1978.

"The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture," Kerstetter said, "has long been active in the promotion of direct farmer to consumer marketing. If our farmers are to get a fair share of the food dollar and consumers hope to pay less, food must be moved by some method other than the conventional marketing system with its built in high costs. We have seen direct marketing as an obvious alternative."

Restrictions imposed

The average milk producer will need to be concerned about the purchase and use of such pesticides as Furadan, Dasnait, Dyfonate, Thimet, Guthion in crop production as feed for his dairy animals. These will probably be classified as Restricted and will require a Certification by the farmer after October 1977.

The Certification can be done through home study and examination applications are available at supply dealers and county Extension Service Offices.

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture publishes several pamphlets and brochures dealing with direct marketing services available to the public. These publications include an annual Pennsylvania Produce Buyer's Guide, How To Create a Farmers Market, and a listing of pick-your-own services operated by the Commonwealth's farmers. A monthly newsletter is mailed to some 600 farmer operated roadside stands.

The Bureau of Markets has held a series of meetings,

seminars, and conferences to promote the direct marketing idea. One of the seminars resulted in the opening and operating of the open-air market on the Farm Show grounds.

Kerstetter said that over \$100 million in retail sales are recorded each year from the state's roadside markets, pick-your-own, farmers markets and milk juggers. More direct marketing can only provide a better service to the farmer and consumer alike and is already accounting for a larger share of what our farmers have to sell.

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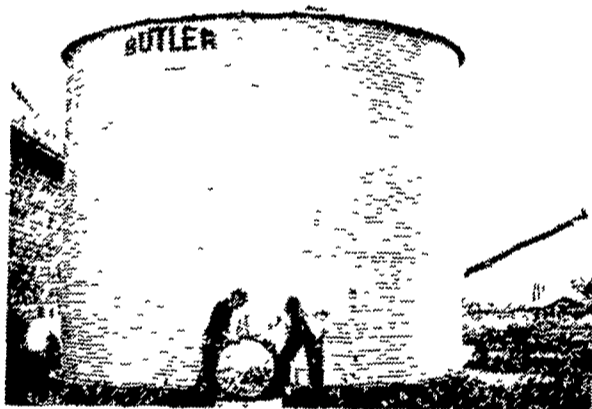
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