

nature apple tree with about 100,000 leaves gives about 96 gallons of water a day.

Carter

(Continued from Page 1)

than help consumers of beef."

"The administration is trying to create the impression that it is helping consumers at a time when beef prices have been rising," said Richard McDougal, NCA president. "However, this action is just another cosmetic approach to the problem of inflation - which is largely government caused," he said.

The NCA statement went on to explain that Carter's decision would discourage cattlemen from rebuilding their herds while having little effect on average retail prices.

"With the industry finally starting to make a profit," McDougal continued, "the administration chooses to play political games with the laws of supply and demand. It is destroying the very incentive that is needed to rebuild herds and eventually

bring larger beef supplies and more moderate prices."

An Adams County cattleman, Frank B. Darcey, Jr., told Lancaster Farming in a Friday morning telephone interview that he personally, as well as numerous organizations of which he is a member, find Carter's decision unfair and ill-conceived. He does acknowledge, however, that the decision to import beef could have been much worse. Darcey figures that the beef industry's lobbying efforts may have tempered Carter's final decision somewhat.

Nonetheless, the Adams County Hereford breeder views Carter's decision with doubt.

"We're in the same position as the consumer, and we don't want the consumer to rebel, as he might because of the rising beef prices," Darcey began. "But with this action we could face a real beef shortage down the road." Pointing out that there are very few cattle in the nation's major beef producing areas, he foresees possible shortages in the future and another price spiral this Fall. Carter's action on Thursday could also discourage many cattlemen, thus putting a damper on expansion plans.

"There's been too much meddling by the government," Darcey observed, adding that the Adams County Beef Producers Association, of which he is a former president and founder, had lodged a formal complaint on the matter with Congressman William Goodling. Darcey considers Carter's beef import plan ill-conceived for several reasons.

"This just means that there are many more dollars leaving the country, fueling inflation, and adding to our already imbalanced trade deficit," the beef producer noted. "It's downright unfair," he continued. "The beef industry doesn't ask for federal money. We don't like the peaks and valleys in prices any better than the government and consumers, but if they'd just realize that it's the boycotts and government intervention that cause the peaks and valleys we'd be a lot better off. If they'd

just let things run their course it would straighten itself out. When you mess with an industry - and the cattle business is an industry, the nation's biggest agricultural industry - it's just like fooling with Mother Nature," he said.

Darcey noted further that cattlemen did not want prices to skyrocket the way they did. They would have preferred moderate increases and not the headline-making high prices seen in recent weeks.

Agriculture Secretary Bob Bergland commented a week ago during a television interview that any opening on beef imports would have no great effect on cattle prices. He noted that there is a world-wide shortage of beef and there would be "no great influx even if all quotas were removed because there just isn't that kind of inventory around."

While President Carter was being pressured by his advisors to increase beef imports, Congress was in fact considering legislation to restrict such trade. The Senate had already passed such a measure. Bergland commented during the TV interview that he would recommend that the bill be vetoed by the President. He at that time did not feel that there would be any change in beef imports.

The cattle industry, however, felt something in the wind weeks before Carter made his controversial announcement.

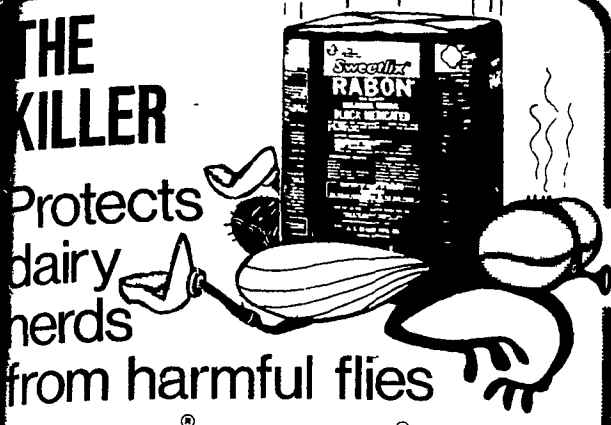
Despite the increase in beef, beef prices are expected to remain strong all Summer, says USDA. Secretary Bergland defends

that reasoning because there are 16 million fewer cattle in the country today than there were a couple of years ago. "Cattlemen had to reduce their herds because they weren't making any money and the drought in the West last year also forced them to reduce cattle numbers," he explained.

The Secretary said Thursday that the foreign beef would be mostly lean, grass-fed meat which would be blended with cuttings from fat American cattle to make hamburgers. He doesn't expect any effect on prices until late July or early August and predicts that there'll be no effect at all on the expensive beef cuts.

The Administration supports its philosophy because Americans supposedly want more beef than is available. Americans are consuming 125 pounds of beef per person, said Bergland. "There isn't enough beef in the world to sustain that rate for the two or three years needed to rebuild domestic herds," he said.

While the news of increased imports is being welcomed in Australia and New Zealand, where cattlemen have been hurting worse than their American counterparts, U.S. cattlemen aren't convinced that the Carter Administration's plan will help one bit to put domestic beef supplies on a track towards adequate supplies and reasonable prices. Instead, they feel that this action will just aggravate the situation and lay the groundwork for more severe shortages in months and years to come.

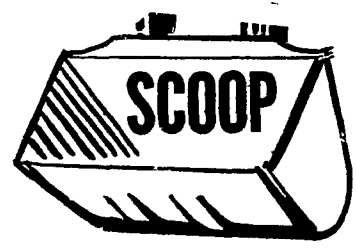


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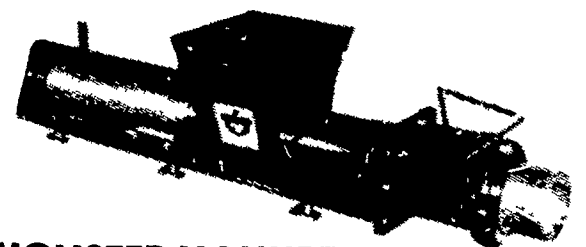
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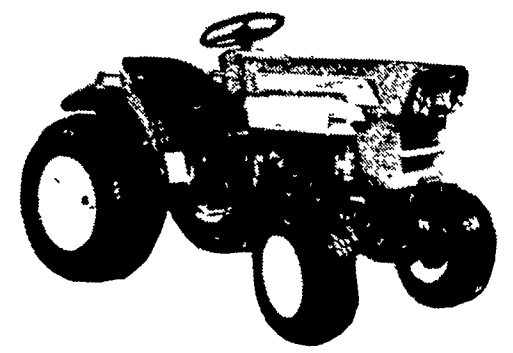
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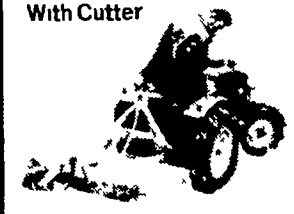
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