

Slump in cattle numbers appears to be ending

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Following four years of inventory decline, the liquidation phase of the 1979's cattle cycle has apparently ended.

This was the largest reduction in cattle numbers since records began.

From January 1, 1975 to January 1, 1979 the cattle and calf inventory declined

21.1 million head, a 16 percent reduction. The January 1, 1980 cattle inventory totaled nearly 111 million head, up only 100,000 head from 1979.

Beef supplies in 1980 are expected to decline another two to four percent from 1979 level, marking the fourth consecutive year of decline.

However, pork and poultry supplies are each expected to increase four to six percent, more than offsetting declining beef supplies.

Total red meat and poultry supplies are expected to increase about one percent in 1980. Total supplies are expected to approximate the record levels of 1976 and 1977.

Recent changes in supply and demand factors have altered the 1980 outlook for the red meat and poultry sector.

Beef cow numbers were down slightly on January 1, 1980 to about 37 million head, despite a 30-percent reduction in cow slaughter in 1979. Cattle numbers have leveled off, but the expansion will not begin until increased numbers of replacement heifers enter the cow herd.

Producers indicated they were holding back 5.9 million beef replacement heifers on January 1, 1980, and eight-percent increase over 1979.

The January 1, 1980 cattle on feed report indicated a large number of heavy cattle were on feed. Fed cattle marketings in the first quarter are expected to be

only about five percent below year-earlier marketings.

Increased slaughter weights may hold first quarter beef production near fourth quarter 1979 levels and only slightly below year-earlier levels.

The report also indicated sharply lower marketing prospects for the second quarter with the number of cattle on feed in the middle weight groups down 10 to 15 percent for a year earlier.

However, placements of heavier yearlings in the first quarter are expected to narrow this gap. Second-quarter beef production is expected to be two to four percent below 1979 levels and about nine percent below first quarter 1980 levels. Choice fed steer prices are expected to average in the upper \$60's in the first quarter before increasing to the lower \$70's in the second quarter.

Federally inspected hog slaughter during the first 6 weeks of 1980 was up 26 percent from a year earlier. Dressed weights during this period averaged 3 pounds above a year ago.

Year-to-year increases in

hog slaughter may taper off later in the quarter, so commercial pork production may be near 4.1 billion pounds in the first quarter, up 21 percent from 1979.

Hog slaughter may decline slightly in the second quarter but should be 8 to 10 percent above year ago levels. Hog prices are expected to average in the upper \$30's in both the first and second quarters.

Average annual retail beef prices are expected to increase another 10 to 12

percent in 1980, about one-half the 1979 increase as large pork and broiler supplies help moderate the year-to-year increase.

Retail pork prices are expected to average about the same as in 1979, \$1.44 per pound. Broiler prices are expected to increase only slightly this year.

Increases in total red meat and poultry prices may be greatest in the second half of the year as the general economic situation improves.

Wood stove safety seminar slated

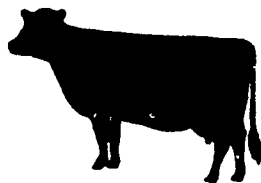
NEWARK, Del. — Because more people in Delaware are using wood as fuel, a wood stove safety seminar is scheduled for Wednesday, March 5, 1980 at 7:00 p.m. in the Five Points Volunteer Fire Company Hall, located at 209 S. Maryland Avenue, Wilmington, Delaware.

The seminar is designed for interested consumers, especially wood burners and those thinking about using wood as a primary or supplemental source of heat.

Program topics will include basic considerations for the new or future wood burner, safe wood stove installation and operation, wood as a fuel, chimney maintenance and other fire safety considerations.

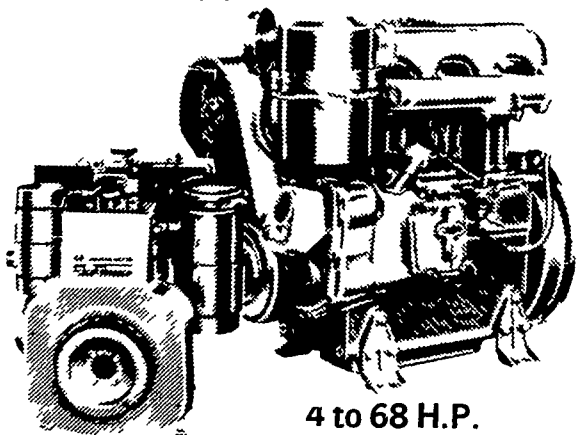
A wood stove retailer, fire safety instructor, and chimney sweep will share their concern in regards to wood burning. There will also be wood stove exhibits.

The event is sponsored by the Cooperative Extension Service in cooperation with the Five Points Volunteer Fire Company, the Delaware State Fire School and Delaware Department of Agriculture. There is no admission charge, but those desiring additional information are asked to call 738-2506.



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