

# Dairy buy-out will add to 2nd-quarter beef supply

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Additional slaughter resulting from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's dairy whole-herd buy-out program will add only slightly to second-quarter beef supplies, according to a USDA official.

Ewen M. Wilson, deputy assistant secretary for economics, said analysis by USDA's Economic Research Service points to 250-275 million pounds, or three to four

percent, more beef in the second quarter as a result of the dairy program. In the third quarter, beef supplies are expected to increase about three percent, or 160-190 million pounds, Wilson said.

From April 1 through Aug. 31, the first of three periods of the buy-out program, USDA will contract with 9,503 dairy farmers for slaughter of 633,176 cows, 216,970 heifers and 165,900 calves. Under program provisions, cows and

bred heifers must be slaughtered within 15 days of the date of the sale of the animal, or exported within 45 days, but not later than Aug. 31. For the April-August period, unbred heifers and calves may be put on feed but must be slaughtered by Sept. 30 or exported within 45 days, but not later than Aug. 31.

Sharpest slaughter increases will occur for cow beef, Wilson said, primarily for April through

August — the first of the three program periods. Dates for the other two program periods are Sept. 1-Feb. 28 and March 1-August 31, 1987.

However, Wilson stressed that about 30 percent of these cows would have been slaughtered anyway, given the normal culling rate of the dairy herd. Also, he said, heifers and calves going to market will be of lighter weight, thus adding less to overall supplies. Total cattle slaughter for the last three quarters in 1986 is expected to average at least 1-3 percent below last year's level, he said.

Wilson noted that provisions in the Food Security Act of 1985 to remove excess red meat supplies from the market can largely offset the impact of the increased slaughter. On March 28, USDA said it would buy 400 million pounds of red meat in addition to amounts normally purchased for the school lunch and other domestic feeding programs. USDA

also is negotiating with the Defense Department on additional DOD use of red meat as specified in the farm bill (included in the 400 million pounds).

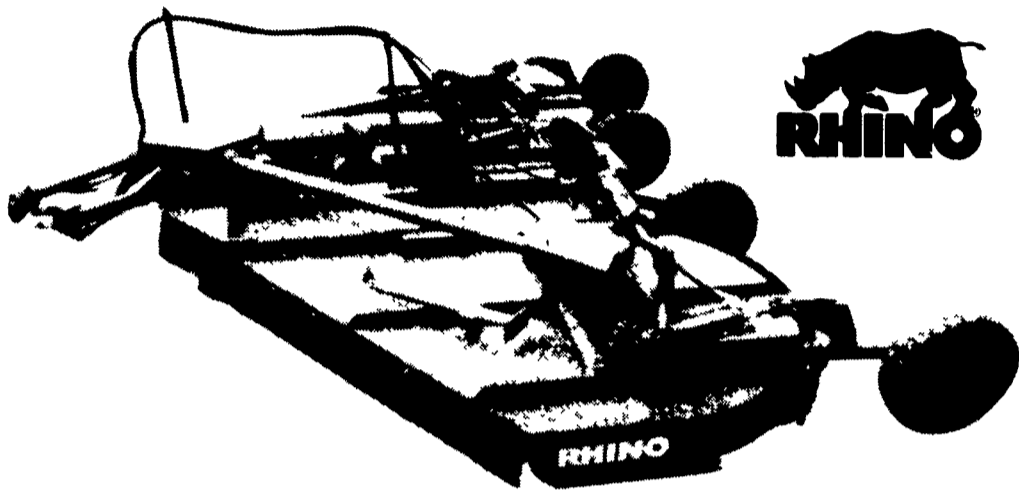
Purchases of canned beef and ground beef will begin immediately and purchases of other red-meat items will be timed to coincide with slaughter under the termination program and to assist markets. Other purchases under consideration include ham, beef roasts, and other red meat items. Of the 400 million pounds, 200 million will be for domestic use, and the remaining 200 million pounds of red meat will be available for export.

Potential also exists, Wilson said, for export of some of the cattle as producing dairy animals and heifers, thus further reducing the burden on domestic meat supplies.

Also, the United States has a 10,000-ton (22-million-pound) quota for high quality beef into the European Community. This has never been filled and could provide a market for some additional meat.

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