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TURKEY PRODUCTS ARE CHANGING
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There have been great changes in the turkey growing, processing, and marketing industries during the last 30 years.

Turkey production has increased to six times what it was in 1960. Increases for some parts of the year are even more impressive. In 1960, turkey was a seasonal food reserved for fall holidays. More than 90 percent of the tur-

eys were produced and marketed during the last half of the year.

By 1970, the portion of production in the fourth quarter had fallen below half, but 85 percent of the turkeys were still produced in the last half of the year. In 1980, third and fourth quarter production were nearly equal and 60 percent of the production came in the last half of the year. By 1990, the quarterly production levels were nearly even with 22, 24, 27, and 27 percent produced in the first, second, third, and fourth quarters, respectively.

Spreading production over the entire year has allowed the turkey industry to increase production much more rapidly than it has had to expand farm and slaughter capacity. When production took place primarily in the last half of the year, most turkey equipment was not used the other half of the year. With more equal production patterns, six times as much turkey meat is produced annually but only three times as much equipment is required.

The benefits of using the equipment over a longer period of time each year makes up the difference. Fourth quarter production was only three times as large in 1990 as in 1960, while first quarter production was 35 times as large.

Changes in turkey marketing were necessary in order to utilize year-round production. In 1960, nine out of every 10 turkeys were marketed as whole birds.

The pounds of turkey sold as whole birds has been relatively constant over the years. Whole body birds weighing 735 million

pounds were sold in 1960. Sales peaked at 799 million pounds in 1970, and have fallen to an estimated 671 million pounds (15 percent of turkey production) in 1990. Smaller family sizes and wider spread families result in smaller holiday gatherings and are probably limiting whole bird sales.

How have the vast increases in turkey production been marketed? The two major categories with sales increases have been cut-up and further processed. Availability of drum sticks, thighs, wings, and breasts in consumer packs in the meat case have shown the development of the cut-up market. Dark meat portions are lower priced and it usually is difficult for companies to sell enough dark meat to get the amount of white meat they need.

It appears that recently the further processed dark meat products have become successful enough that the balance of product needs is changing. Reports of dark meat shortages have been heard recently and price relationships for turkey parts appear to be changing.

February turkey parts prices showed drumsticks and boneless thigh meat higher in price than for both previous Februaries, while breast portions were lower priced than the previous two years. It appears that the value of dark meat has increased and breast meat decreased, at least temporarily. Future price reports will confirm whether or not this is a shift in turkey demand or just a temporary shortage of dark meat.

TURKEY PRICES
Whole-body hens, 8-16 lbs. Drumsticks Thighs Breasts

-----cents per pound-----

February 1991	55	40	99	120
February 1990	55	21	88	168
February 1989	62	37	91	165

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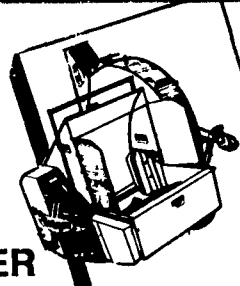
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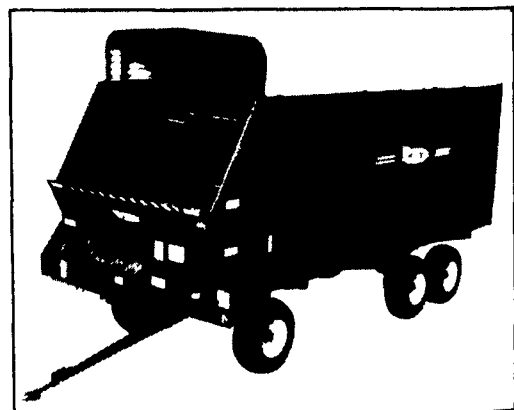


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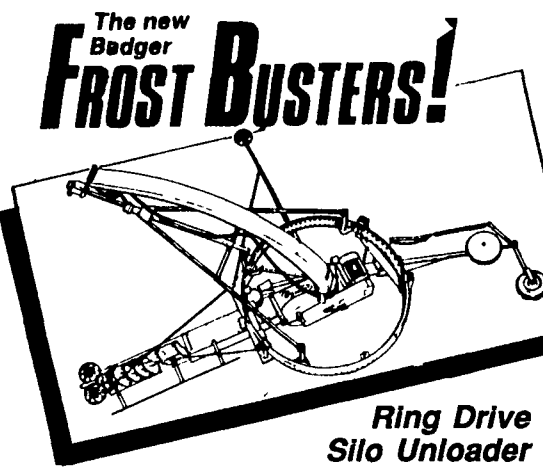
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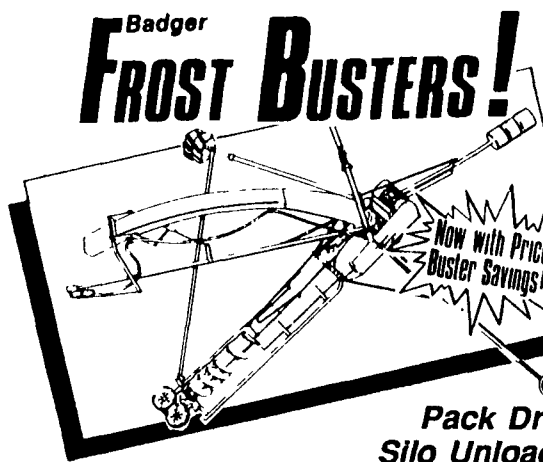


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