

Too Much Meat Could Mean Lean Year

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Consumers probably will pay less for some meats this year, but low prices caused by booming production could make 1993 a lean year for some livestock producers, said a market expert in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences.

"This may not be a banner year for the livestock industry," said H. Louis Moore, professor of agricultural economics. "Total red meat

and poultry production will be about 60 billion pounds, up two billion from last year's record and about 10 percent more than 1990. This level of production will keep prices for meat animals low. There's just too much meat for any segment of the livestock industry to be very profitable throughout 1993."

The recovering economy should boost consumer demand for meat, however. "Per capita

consumption of all meats will be about 212 pounds this year, up three pounds from last year's record," Moore said. "But real disposable income probably will increase only 1 to 2 percent. This rather sluggish consumer income growth will put more downward pressure on livestock and poultry prices."

Moore expects most of the production increase to come from poultry and pork. "Based on the

December pig crop report, pork output should increase about 4 percent, broilers about 4 percent and turkey about 3 percent," he said.

Beef production should rise about 2 percent in 1993. "Beef prices are currently high because of bad weather and slow gains of cattle in feedlots, but prices are likely to fall by several dollars when the weather market is over," Moore said.

Veal output for the year probably will drop about 1 percent, while lamb will rise 3 percent. "Their production levels make lamb and veal minor production items," Moore said. "Lamb and veal combined now account for only 1 percent of red meat and poultry production."

"Hog prices at Pennsylvania markets should range in the mid \$40's most of the year," he said. "This is despite last year's 8 percent production increase and an expected 4 percent increase in 1993. The hog industry has become more competitive with poultry and has developed a favorable image with consumers."

Livestock producers should more than break even thanks to inexpensive feed. "The record 9.48 billion bushel corn crop from 1992 is cheap and of fairly poor quality, and eventually will be fed to livestock," Moore said. "Cheap feed will help producers keep costs down, and most beef, pork, and poultry producers will cover all of their cash costs in 1993. This may encourage more production in 1994, especially if the economy continues to improve."

Farmers Launch Weed Air Attack

WILMINGTON, Del. — Farmers and ranchers have a new option to control weeds this spring in hard-to-reach areas in pastures and rangeland.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has approved the aerial application of Ally herbicide, giving farmers more flexibility in keeping weeds such as musk thistle, a noxious weed, from spreading in fields and reducing beef production. Registered for use on pasture and rangeland for the past three years, the herbicide had been labeled for ground application only.

Being able to control weeds by air is an important option to beef producers, explained Reginald Young, DuPont product manager.

"Ally offers improved safety and weed control, but the past restriction requiring application by ground rigs only was a limitation to producers," Young said.

"Aerial application gives producers more flexibility in their weed control programs to maximize production. For example, they can now cover rugged terrain to keep weeds from getting established and becoming a source of later problems. It also helps them with large acreages where spraying is impractical with ground equipment. And it gives them greater flexibility to work around

unfavorable weather and wet field conditions."

A broad-spectrum broadleaf herbicide, Ally is used by producers in the spring to control problem weeds including musk thistle, bolting musk thistle, common broomweed, mare's tail, pigweed, kochia, cocklebur, wild carrot, and buckbrush. Other advantages include crop safety, low use rates, reduced pesticide load to the environment, a wide application window, and residual activity.

Specialists note that weed control is an important part of an overall pasture management pro-

gram to maximize forage and beef production.

"By eliminating broadleaf weeds using herbicides like Ally, the yield and quality of the available forage increases. Producers can run more head per acre and realize an increased daily gain," Young said. "And, since there is no grazing restriction — even for lactating dairy animals — producers don't have to worry about the problems of moving stock. The bottom line is that producers can improve the efficiency of their beef production two ways: overall weight gain and convenience."



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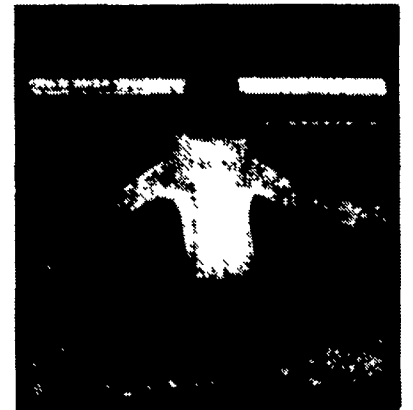
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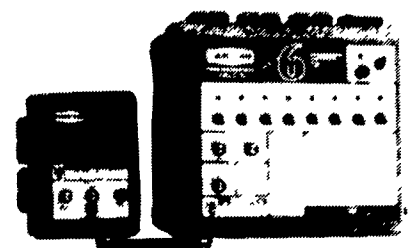
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