

LIVESTOCK NOTE

Mr. C. A. Burmeister has an article on livestock developments and prospects in the June, 1948, issue of "Marketing Activities" of the Production and Marketing Administration of the United States Department of Agriculture. He points out that we had the largest per capita consumption of meat last year since 1908, an average of more than 155 pounds per person. He also notes that the number of cattle and calves slaughtered in 1947 exceeded the estimated calf crop by about 700,000 head. Imports of cattle dropped off sharply because of the foot-and-mouth disease in Mexico. The total number of cattle in the United States is now about where it was six years ago with the greater decrease in dairy cattle than in beef cattle. The highest of the calf crop ever sold was sold in 1947, namely 39%. The number of cattle on feed at the beginning of 1948 was 12% less than a year earlier. It is expected that the total number of slaughtered cattle and calves in 1948 will be 33,000,000 or about 3,000,000 fewer than in 1947.

The total number of sheep in the United States is the smallest it has been since the Civil War and the 1948 lamb crop is expected to be the smallest in the last fifty years. The decline in sheep numbers appears to be due to production costs increasing faster per sheep than for other commodities plus the difficulty of getting and holding help and low prices for wool in comparison to prices for other commodities.

The trend in hog production is also down and with slaughter expected to be about 60,000,000 in 1948 compared to 69,000,000 head in 1947. Apparently the pork supply for next winter will be less than that for last winter. In fact our meat supply seems to be the smallest since 1941.

Mr. Burmeister emphasizes that the amount of meat that this country can produce depends upon the best use of its feed and grazing resources. He estimates that the national grazing areas have a capacity of 70,000,000 animal grazing units and in favorable weather between 75,000,000 and 80,000,000. If the south were to make full use of its grazing resources the probable capacity would be around 95,000,000 grazing units. The continued decline in horses and mules continues to release grazing land and forage crops for grazing purposes for meat animals.