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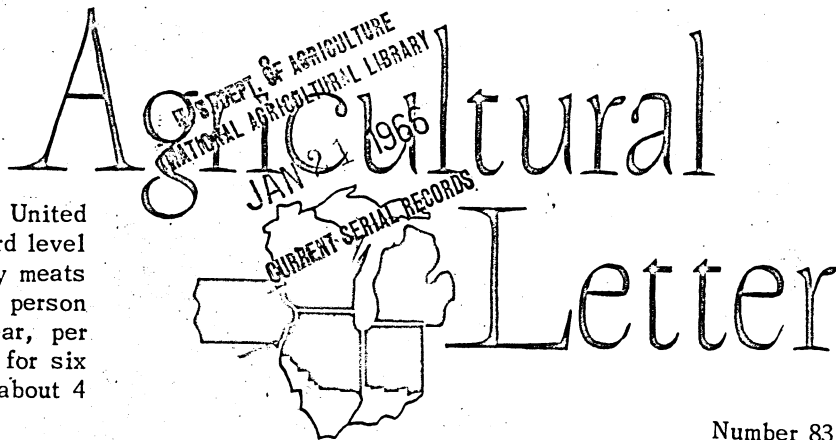
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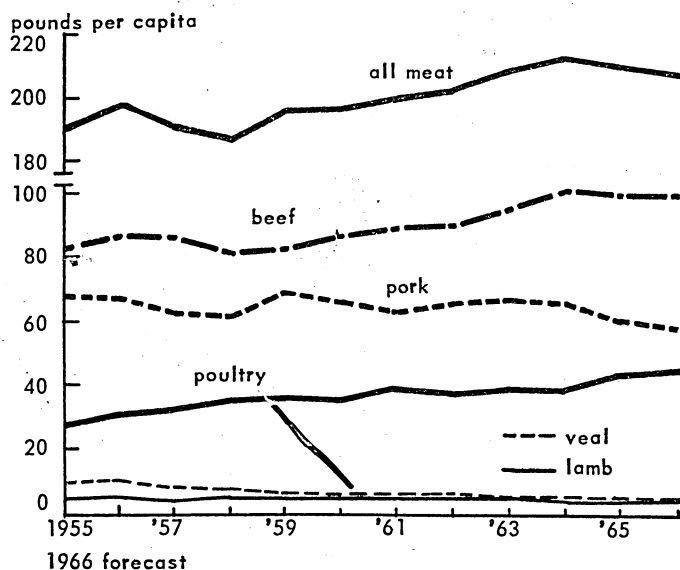
CONSUMPTION OF MEAT per person in the United States declined during 1965 after reaching a record level the previous year. Total "red" meat and poultry meats consumed last year declined about 2 pounds per person to an estimated 210 pounds. Prior to last year, per capita consumption of all meats had increased for six consecutive years at an annual average rate of about 4 pounds.

Pork accounted for nearly all of the decline in meat consumption from the previous year even though pork imports increased substantially. Domestic production dropped as farmers curtailed output in response to unfavorable prices during the two preceding years. The available supply declined about 9 per cent and per capita consumption averaged only slightly more than 60 pounds—nearly 5 pounds less than a year earlier.

substitutes for the relatively high priced red meats. Consumption of poultry meat rose to a record level of about 41 pounds per capita—up more than 2 pounds from 1964. Consumption of broiler meat accounted for most of the increase although turkey consumption was also higher.

For this year, a further reduction in per capita consumption is in prospect, according to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Again most of the decline will be accounted for by pork.

Meat Consumption Declines from Record High



Beef consumption per person declined slightly as the growth in population more than offset the gain in production. Production of beef increased about 1 per cent from 1964 although the number of animals slaughtered was 4 per cent greater than a year earlier. With the continued growth in population, per capita consumption of beef declined about 1 per cent from the record 100 pounds consumed in 1964.

Lamb and mutton supplies also declined in 1965, reflecting a further cutback in domestic production and a decline in imports. As a result, consumption per person declined about a half pound from the 1964 consumption of 4.2 pounds to the lowest level on record.

In response to the smaller supplies and strong consumer demand, prices of all red meats rose sharply during 1965. For the year, retail pork prices averaged about 13 per cent higher, and prices of both beef and lamb increased about 5 per cent from the 1964 level.

Poultry supplies were readily available, and consumption increased sharply as consumers turned to

Pork production will likely be well below the year-earlier level during the first half of this year because of the estimated 5 per cent decline in farrowings of pigs in the last half of 1965. Farmers, however, are beginning to increase their breeding stock in response to the favorable hog prices. The spring pig crop is expected to be about 7 per cent larger. Consequently, pork consumption may be greater than now indicated, depending on how rapidly the production expansion progresses and on how large it becomes.

Beef production is currently expected to remain about at the same level as in the past year. However, with cheaper and abundant feed supplies available, farmers may feed animals to heavier weights than in 1965 thereby producing a larger supply than is presently indicated. Furthermore, weather conditions will have a substantial influence on the supply during the second half of the year.

Poultry meats are expected to be in plentiful supply again this year, and consumption likely will increase to a new record. Production of poultry has been stimulated by the relatively short supplies and higher prices of red meats. The rapid expansion, which gained momentum in the second half of 1965, probably will extend well into this year. The number of layers producing broiler hatching eggs has been rising since early last year and is expected to continue increasing through the first part of this year. Broiler marketings in the first quarter are expected to continue about 10 per cent above a year earlier, following the larger chick hatchings in recent months. Egg settings for chick production in 23 states in the 4 weeks ended December 26 were 14 per cent above the comparable period of 1964. This indicated increase in supply may result in lower prices which would tend to limit further expansion as the year progresses but probably would not cause a turnaround in production until late in the year.

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