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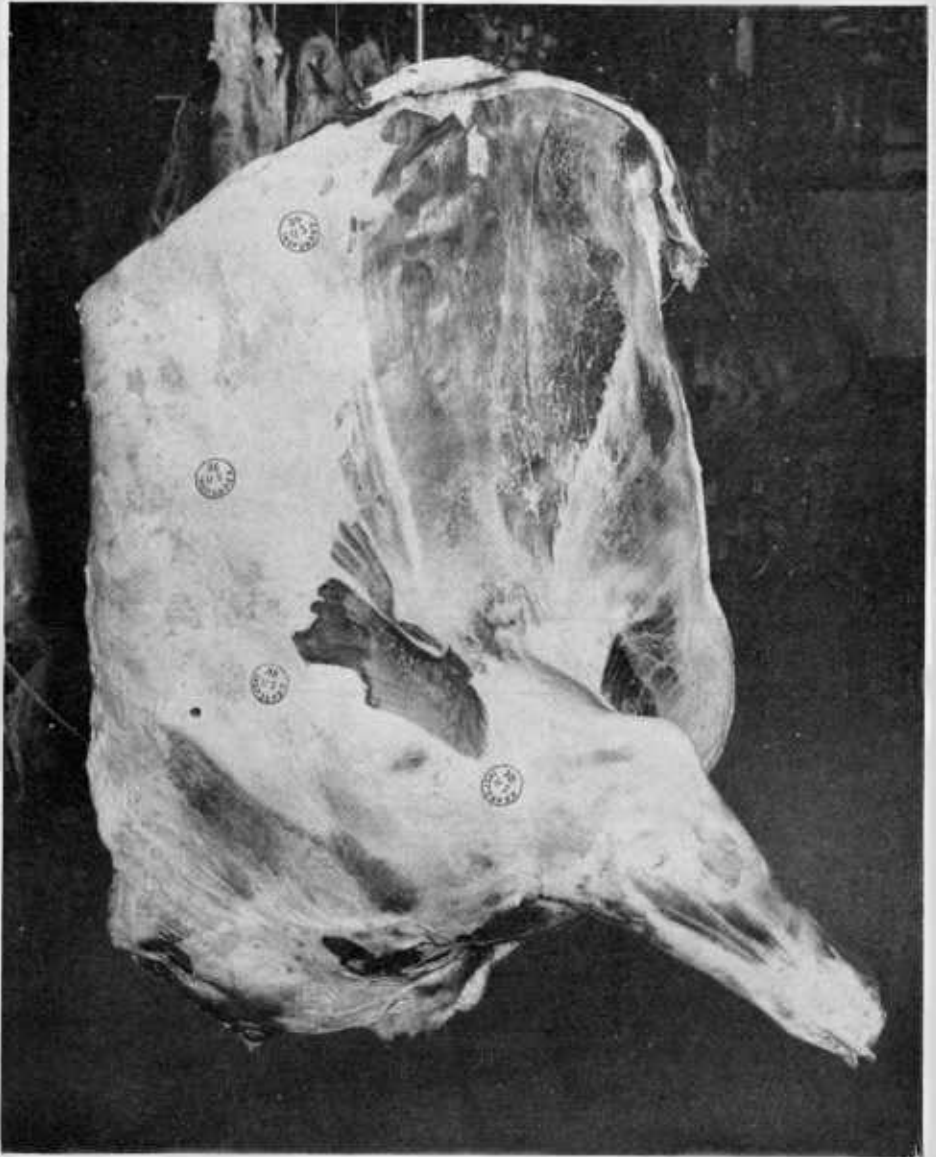
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# THE INSPECTION STAMP AS A GUIDE TO WHOLESOME MEAT



AGRICULTURE INFORMATION BULLETIN NO. 92  
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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

**T**HIS BULLETIN describes briefly the manner in which the Federal meat-inspection service operates. It discusses the extent of Federal supervision over the meat supply and how producers, consumers, and the public generally may derive the greatest benefits. It points out, likewise, opportunities for supplementing Federal inspection with State or municipal inspection.

Necessarily the technical and legal sides of the work are unsuitable for full discussion in a brief circular of this kind. Persons interested in those phases of meat inspection should consult the meat-inspection law and regulations which are kept on file in federally inspected establishments and at libraries generally.

Washington 25, D. C.

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# THE INSPECTION STAMP AS A GUIDE TO WHOLESOME MEAT

By JOHN R. MOHLER, *Chief of the Bureau of Animal Industry*<sup>1</sup>

## THE MEANING OF THE LITTLE PURPLE STAMP

A natural way to learn how Federal meat inspection serves the public is to make inquiries when selecting meat. A housewife setting out to buy meat for dinner enters a shop where she has been a frequent customer and sees several cuts of meat on the counter. They have small purple stamps on them—stamps familiar to her, but she has never learned their real meaning.

"What does that stamp mean and who puts it on the meat? I've often wondered about it," says the housewife, as she points to the cut nearest her. In reply, the butcher explains: "That is the Government meat-inspection mark. It is your assurance that any meat which has that mark came from animals that passed a thorough inspection given by trained experts. I once worked in a packing house that operated under Government inspection, and I know how strict the regulations are. Only meat that comes from healthy animals and that is clean and wholesome in every way can pass the rigid inspection."

"Just what do you mean by inspection?" inquires the customer, still uncertain of its meaning. "I can see for myself that the meat is all right."

"Let me explain how thorough the inspection is," the dealer continues, "and then you will understand why just looking at a retail cut of meat tells scarcely anything about its history. The inspection begins with the live animals, before they are driven in for slaughter. There is an inspector in the yards who observes the stock ready for the killing pen."

## ANIMALS ARE INSPECTED BOTH BEFORE AND AT TIME OF SLAUGHTER

"Most animals, of course, are healthy, but if the inspector sees an animal that looks sick or abnormal in any other way he tags it with a

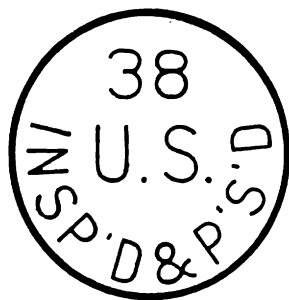


FIGURE 1.—The "little purple stamp" used for marking carcasses and products that have passed inspection. The number identifies the establishment where the product was prepared.

<sup>1</sup> Retired on July 31, 1943. This revision is by A. R. Miller, Chief of Meat Inspection Division, Bureau of Animal Industry, Agricultural Research Administration.

metal label fastened to the ear. The tag may read either 'U. S. Condemned' or 'U. S. Suspect,' depending on how serious the ailment is; and each tag also has a serial number. If condemned, animals so tagged must not be taken into the slaughter room. Animals whose condition is merely doubtful and which consequently receive only a

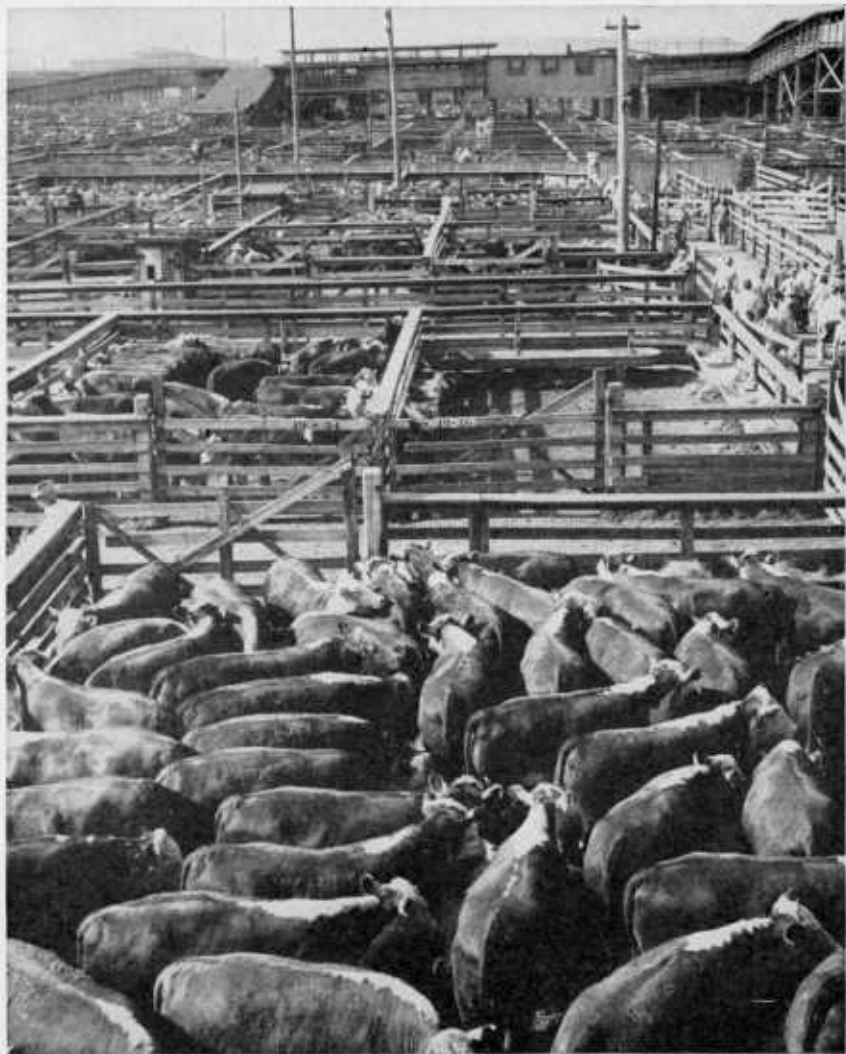


FIGURE 2.—Livestock waiting to be looked over by buyers in a public stockyard. Buyers may buy all the animals in one pen or select certain animals from each pen.

'suspect' tag are kept apart and slaughtered separately from other animals. The examination of the live animals is known as the ante mortem inspection.

"Next comes the more important or post mortem inspection at the time the animals are slaughtered. Every part of each carcass re-

ceives a searching examination, especially the internal organs, because any abnormal condition commonly appears there first. Animals with 'suspect' tags get special attention. The Government inspectors who conduct the post mortem examinations do this work in the slaughtering rooms as the animals are being skinned and dressed.

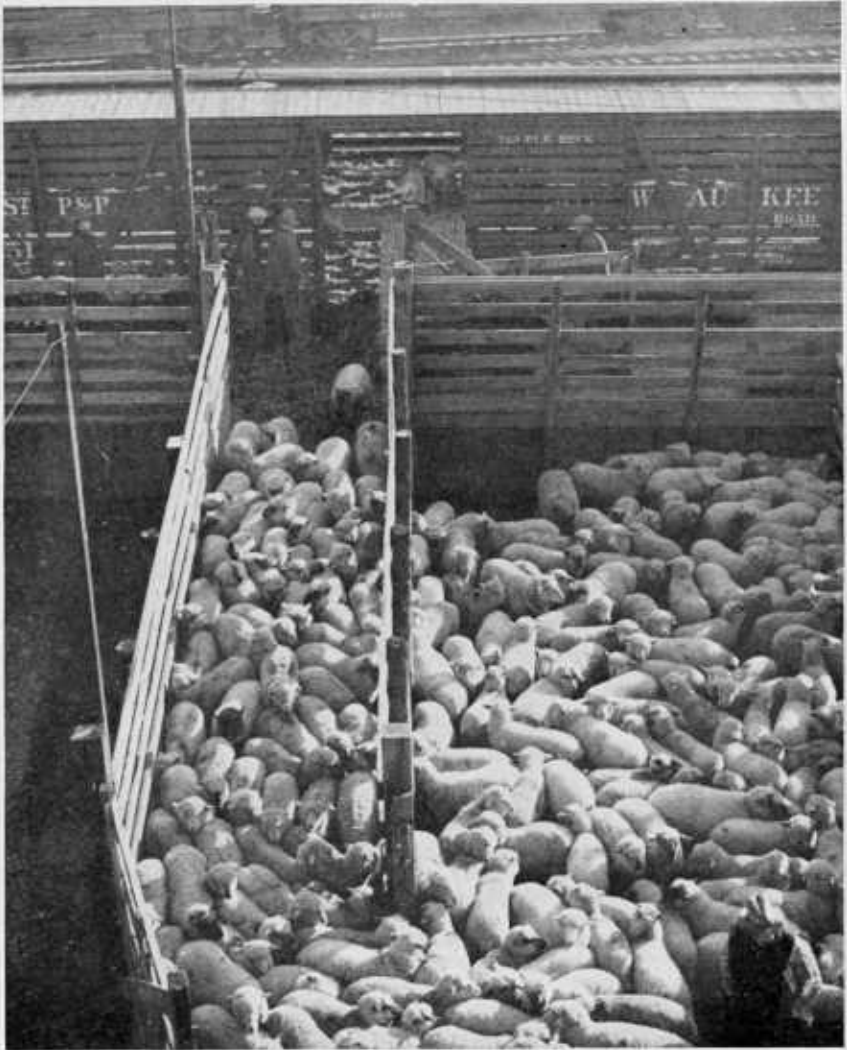


FIGURE 3.—Unloading sheep at a public stockyard.

Here again the great majority are found to be healthy, but any carcasses that the inspectors find that show disease are marked, and then all parts are specially examined by veterinary experts in meat inspection. Any kind of meat inspection in which the inspector does not see the carcasses with the organs in place is hardly worth the name of inspection or the confidence of the public."

"Why do you say that?" the housewife naturally inquires.

"Because of the various ailments that affect animals and the fact that abnormal conditions cannot always be detected unless the inspector can see the organs as well as the meat. Although most of the animals pass inspection, the only way to be certain that they are healthy is to see the carcasses inside as well as outside. That is now recognized as necessary in all kinds of inspection, whether Federal, State, or municipal."

"I don't quite understand about the different kinds of inspection," the woman inquires. "What is the difference?"



FIGURE 4.—Veterinary inspectors examine all animals before they are sent to the slaughtering department. Only those which appear normal are permitted to proceed to slaughter. Those condemned are not permitted to be used for food purposes. The animals affected but not to the degree which requires condemnation are identified as "U. S. Suspects" and are slaughtered separately. Full information regarding symptoms observed by the inspector is furnished the veterinary inspector in the slaughtering department.

## EXTENT OF FEDERAL INSPECTION LIMITED BY LAW

"It's this. Some people—probably most people—have heard so much about Federal meat inspection," the butcher explains, "that they think all meat receives Federal inspection. But that assumption is much too great. The United States Government has authority only over meats from establishments whose products enter wholly or partly into interstate or foreign commerce. It has nothing to say about meats of establishments which confine their business to the

same State where the animals are killed. That is a matter for State supervision. Cities can also supervise meats sold within their limits, just as they inspect local milk supplies.

"But so many meat establishments do an interstate business that Federal inspection is the most comprehensive of all and, in recent years, has included about 70 percent of all animals slaughtered in the United States. It is so thorough and so impartially done that officials everywhere—including those of foreign countries—accept United States Government inspected meats without question. But if you see a dressed carcass or any large cuts of such carcasses *without* the little round purple stamps you may assume that it is the product of a local slaughtering establishment or was killed on a farm."

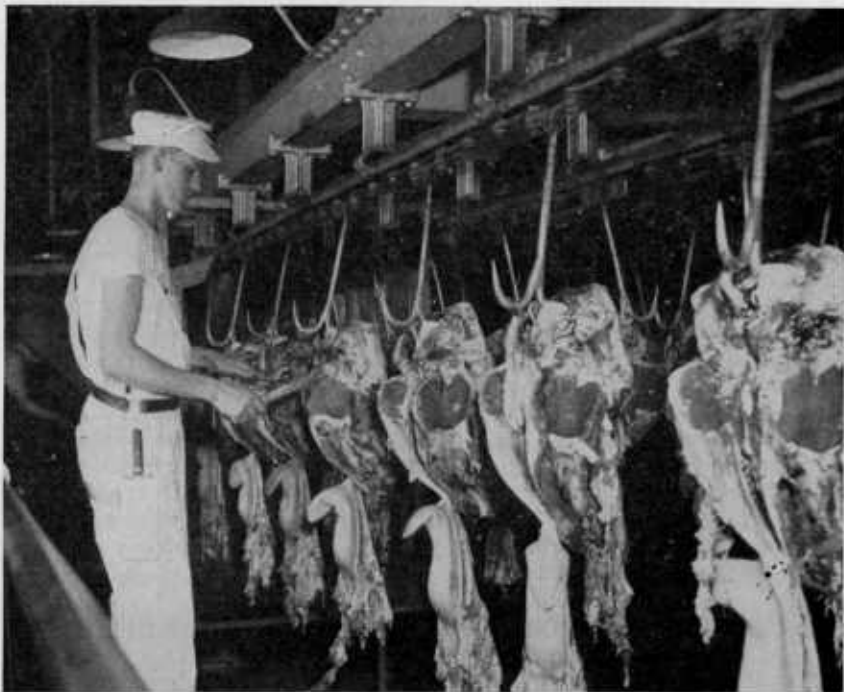


FIGURE 5.—An inspector incises the cheek muscles of cattle in search of tapeworm cysts and carefully checks lymph nodes to detect any evidence of disease or other abnormal conditions. All horns, hair, and hide have been removed and the heads are thoroughly cleaned.

## THE NEED FOR LOCAL INSPECTION

"The best thing for everybody—farmers, consumers, and the meat trade—would be a well-organized system of inspection in every State that would inspect all meat that doesn't come under Federal authority. The system should be based on the Federal requirements, which are reasonable, though strict, and have stood the test of over 40 years. Some cities have meat ordinances patterned after Federal inspection, but they are few compared with the total number.



"I want to get a nice roast this morning," the customer remarks, "and I'd like to hear more about meat inspection some other time. I may get our civic club to put the subject on the program. Would you talk to us on your experience in the packing house?"

"Well, now, I'm not a public speaker, but I'll be glad to make a few remarks and answer questions. You ought to get some one from the board of health for your principal speaker."

"That's a good suggestion, and I'll let you know what we decide to do. Now, if you'll weigh up that roast"—pointing to a pot roast bearing the inspection stamp—"I must be going."

Conversations with his customers on various subjects relating to his business were so frequent that the butcher dismissed the matter from his mind. But a few days later a rare visitor, the city health commissioner, entered his shop.

"What about this meat-inspection program you're stirring up?" the commissioner asked, with noticeable earnestness. "I've been ask to prepare a speech for the civic club and dropped in to notify you that you're on the program, too."

"I suppose it's the usual penalty for enthusiasm on a subject. Any kind of activity means time and work," the dealer replied, "but the satisfaction of handling good meats and telling folks about them is more than worth a little extra work like getting up to talk. You know, Commissioner, that some of the meat sold in this city isn't properly inspected."

"I know it," the commissioner admitted, "but I believe that as people become better posted they will insist on protection of their meat supply just as much as they now demand good police and fire protection. I understand that you have had some experience with Federal meat inspection. Am I right?"

Here the butcher related the same general information he had been in the custom of giving his patrons, but the health commissioner wanted further details. Pointing to a cut of meat, the commissioner said: "Here's a piece of United States inspected beef. How thorough was the veterinary examination? I'm on the program for a scientific talk, and there may be physicians and veterinarians present."

## COMPLETENESS OF INSPECTION DESCRIBED

"That's steer beef, to get down to details," the butcher began, "and since it bears the Federal stamp, it passed all inspections. The steer, of course, first satisfied the ante-mortem requirements. It showed no signs of railroad fever, tetanus, or any other serious condition. Otherwise it would have been condemned at once, and instead of its being here you would have had to look for it in a soap factory or fertilizer works.

"In the slaughtering room the Government inspector began his post mortem inspection when the skinning of the steer was commenced. The head was the first part removed from the body, and the inspector examined it by cutting open several lymph glands in search of signs of abnormal conditions, such as tuberculosis, lumpy jaw, and abscesses. Then he looked at the tongue, cutting into it if he suspected any abnormal condition. He made deep, slicing cuts into the inner and outer cheek muscles, looking for cysts that might

produce tapeworms. And finally he gave the head, as a whole, a thorough examination.

"The next inspection which that steer received was of the internal organs, or viscera, which were removed from the carcass in the presence of the inspector and placed before him in clean trucks or on sanitary tables where a good light was available for close scrutiny. The inspector examined the various organs by close observation and touch, cutting into certain ones. The procedure is based on long experience in knowing where diseased or harmful conditions exist."

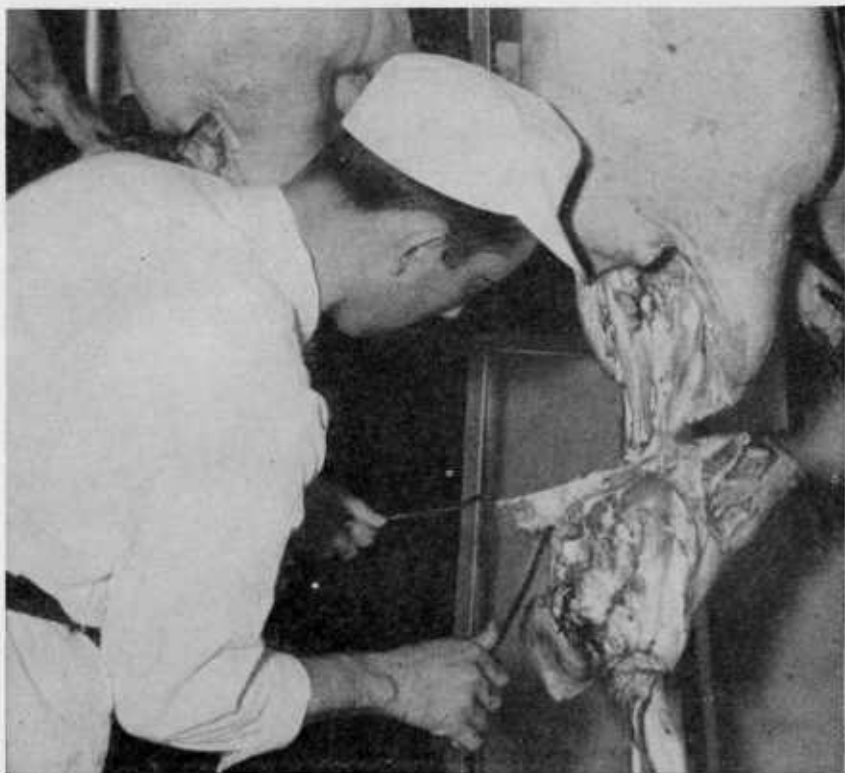


FIGURE 6.—An inspector of the Federal Meat Inspection Service incises the lymph nodes of the head of hogs, looking for lesions of tuberculosis or other diseases and conditions that might affect the wholesomeness of the meat.

As the butcher paused to wait on a customer, the commissioner viewed the show case of inspected meat with added interest and pictured to himself the inspection service of which he had just heard.

"I was unaware the inspection was so detailed," he remarked, after the customer had gone. "How much more of it is there?"

"What I have described is only a little more than half," the butcher continued. "We'll now get a little closer view of the carcass from which that particular cut you inquired about came. The carcass inspection was the next step after the examination of the viscera. The inspector observed all surfaces and parts of the car-

cass, looking for nodules on the ribs as signs of tuberculosis. He also observed the membranes of the chest and abdomen, the various groups of lymph glands, the kidneys, split backbone, and body generally, looking for any condition that would indicate unfitness of the carcass for food. The head, viscera, and carcass inspections combined form what is commonly known as the post mortem. An



FIGURES 7 and 8.—Veterinary inspectors of the Federal Meat Inspection Service performing post mortem inspection on cattle viscera in a viscera inspection truck and on hog viscera on a moving-top viscera inspection table. Carcasses are examined after each set of viscera has been examined. Every carcass the viscera of which show signs of any pathological or other unsound condition is identified by a "U. S. RETAINED" tag and segregated for a closer veterinary examination. Special tags, numbered in duplicate or triplicate, are attached to each retained carcass and the viscera taken from it.

animal found to be free from diseased or doubtful conditions, or which shows only small, localized, inactive lesions that could safely be removed with adjacent parts, is marked 'U. S. Inspected and Passed.' Every important cut of meat of that carcass is then marked with the purple Federal meat-inspection stamp."

## DISPOSAL OF MEAT THAT FAILS TO PASS INSPECTION

"That's very good as far as it goes," the commissioner agreed, "but it isn't quite what I need as material for my talk. What happens to the animals that don't pass inspection? Is there any way to smuggle them out of the back door and sell the meat just the same?"



FIGURE 8. See legend on opposite page.

The butcher shook his head. "Not under Federal inspection. It couldn't possibly happen. The packing industry, moreover, knows that Federal inspection is a valuable asset and that failure to comply with all regulations would mean prompt withdrawal of the inspection. That would prevent a packing plant from doing any inter-state business. And, besides those reasons, all condemned meat is constantly in charge of the inspectors. In the packing house where I worked there were special rooms and compartments, kept under Federal lock and key. All condemned meats not disposed of at once were kept in those rooms until tanked for fertilizer. It's the same in other places."

"That seems to be a well-organized system suitable for a large establishment," remarked the health commissioner," but our slaugh-

terhouses here are small. As a practical meat dealer, do you think such methods would work in this city?"

"I'm just in the retail side of the business," the butcher answered frankly, "and my opinion of how it should be done isn't of much value. But any of the chief Government inspectors would know."

The commissioner consulted a notebook, finding the date of the civic club meeting. "That's not a bad idea, and I'll have time to visit a city where Federal inspection is conducted and see the work for myself. But before I go, how do you explain this? If meat inspection is such a good thing that you're for it and the women folks want it, why haven't we had it here in this town long ago? Who would want to oppose it?"

## IMPORTANCE OF COMPETENT INSPECTION

"It's true I'm for it, but I don't represent the sentiment of the entire trade. Everybody doesn't think the same way on these questions," the dealer replied. "There are always people on the other side of the fence, and a small fighting minority can sometimes stop the most worthy causes. Besides, a good many housewives are not discriminating and don't care whether the meat is inspected or not, so long as the price suits them. Still others let the cook or servants do the marketing and never bother about where the meat comes from.

"The farmers also would have various ideas on the subject," the butcher continued, "and one has to consider the source of supply. Finally, it's not easy to keep local work of that kind out of politics and on a strictly impersonal basis. If inspection is to amount to anything it must be done by a competent veterinary inspector rather than by an untrained appointee."

"That's understood, of course," the commissioner agreed. "The same thing was once true of my department, but we have no more trouble from political pressure. The public realizes that health work is a professional rather than a political service and has made all its officials see it in the same light. We have the confidence and support of the public, regardless of how the elections go. The same condition would have to apply to meat inspection, of course."

During the week following this conversation the butcher received a formal notice of his place on the program of the civic club and later learned from the housewife who had made the arrangements that the Federal inspector in charge of meat inspection in a near-by city—whom the commissioner had visited—also had consented to be a speaker. The officers of the club had decided to put the subject of meat inspection on the program to see how much interest it would create.

The night of the meeting arrived. The public had been invited and the club's auditorium was well filled. There was music, followed by preliminary remarks. Then as an out-of-town guest the Federal inspector was announced as the first speaker. He described the general system of inspection already outlined and corroborated what the butcher had said of its painstaking thoroughness. A sound film released by the Department of Agriculture, *Meats with Approval*, was shown. The film showed the purposes of the Federal meat inspection program and how it helps to assure wholesome, clean meat for the

consumer. After stating that most carcasses passed inspection, he explained how all suspicious ones were specially examined. These were known as "retained" carcasses, he added, and were either condemned, passed in part, or passed entirely for food, depending on the results of the final examination. He explained that all condemned meats must be destroyed and denatured in the presence of an inspector, who must render a report covering their history.

"The meat-inspection act," he declared, "provides that the Secretary of Agriculture may withhold inspection from any establishment which fails to destroy for food purposes any condemned carcass or part thereof. The usual method of treating condemned carcasses



FIGURE 9.—A Federal meat inspector examines the eviscerated carcass. He scrutinizes all surfaces and all parts of the carcass, looking for abnormal conditions, such as nodules on the ribs—a sign of tuberculosis. His examination includes also chest and abdominal membranes, the split backbone, and body generally. He notes any evidence that the carcass may be unfit for human consumption, and retains, for further veterinary examination, any showing such evidence.

and parts is to convert them into grease and fertilizer. Small plants destroy the condemned meat by incineration or by the addition of crude carbolic acid or other prescribed denaturing agent."

### CHEMISTS MAKE MANY TESTS

The speaker described also the "products inspection," which includes supervision over the preparation and inspection of a great variety of meat products put up in packages and cans. Lard, oleomargarine,

cured meats, sausage, and potted and canned meats are typical of the products. The purpose of that inspection is to assure the use of wholesome ingredients and accurate labels, so the purchaser may obtain a product that is honestly labeled as well as pure from a food standpoint. The inspector explained the work of the meat-inspection chemists, who test the purity of the water supply in establishments, of spices, substances of various kinds, and of thousands of samples of meat products. He told of the many precautions taken as, for instance, the handling of edible products in rooms entirely separate from those used for inedible products. "If I fail to make any point perfectly clear," he invited, "don't hesitate to ask questions."

On the subject of sanitation, the Federal representative reviewed conditions prior to the passage of the meat-inspection act of 1906.

He described the improvements brought about partly by more modern types of construction and partly by enforcing strict cleanliness as regards rooms and equipment.

At this point a meat dealer inquired, "I'd like to know who makes all the regulations and rules concerning the way meat has to be handled and whether an animal should be passed for food or made into fertilizer."

"The regulations," the speaker on the platform explained, "are authorized by the Federal meat-inspection law of 1906, and subsequent acts and are issued by the Secretary of Agriculture. They embody the recommendations of scientists and hygienists outside of the Department of Agriculture as well as the judgment and experience of administrative officials and workers in the service. The regulations are in printed form, and anyone may judge for himself as to their fairness to all interests concerned as well as their thoroughness in covering details of the work.

"It is a common but mistaken belief," he continued, "that an animal which has a slight, localized diseased condition is unwholesome for food and that the inspectors condemn the whole carcass. To do so would mean an enormous economic waste and serve no useful purpose. A potato, to use a homely illustration, may have a small unsound spot and, strictly speaking, is unsound, but with the spot cut away it is nevertheless wholesome and nourishing. The same example may be applied to a bunch of grapes in which a few grapes are withered or spoiled; they do not make the entire bunch unfit for food. Yet if the spot in the potato is too large, or if too many grapes in the bunch are spoiled, it is best to take no chances in using the rest for food. The same principle applies to meat inspection, and its correctness is supported by laboratory tests. Moreover, the cooking of meat in the home is an important additional safeguard. In cases of unusual nature the department's policy has been 'safety first' with respect to public welfare. Does that answer your question?"

"Yes; but I want to ask another," said the dealer who had asked the first question. "I'd like to know what kind of ink the inspectors use in stamping the Federal mark on meat. My customers nearly always ask me to cut the mark off."

"That is also a good question, and I'm glad you asked it," the inspector replied. "The fluid used for marking meats which pass inspection is composed of approved ingredients, all of which are

absolutely harmless—just as harmless as fruit juices. There is no good reason for cutting the stamp away.

“Formerly a label attached to the meat was used, but this proved expensive and unsatisfactory. The little purple stamp containing the abbreviated statement ‘U. S. Insp’d & P’s’d’ in a circle is indelible, easily applied, and economical compared with every other means of marking investigated. Occasionally burning brands or hot ink brands are used for imprinting the mark on cured meats, such as



FIGURE 10.—Inspection by Federal meat inspectors showed this carcass to be unfit for human consumption because of the presence of lesions diagnostic of pyemia, a disease characterized by the formation of multiple abscesses. After the carcass is stamped “U. S. INSP'D and CONDEMNED” it is kept under close supervision by the Federal inspector until it is destroyed for human food. Such carcasses are usually converted into fertilizer and inedible grease.



hams and bacon. Sometimes colors other than purple are used on prepared meat food products. However, only purple ink is used on carcasses and fresh meat cuts."

### VIOLATIONS OF THE LAW RELATIVELY FEW

In reply to a question from the city attorney inquiring about the frequency of prosecutions for violations of the Federal meat-inspection law and regulations, the inspector explained that violations are surprisingly few, considering the nature and extent of the business.

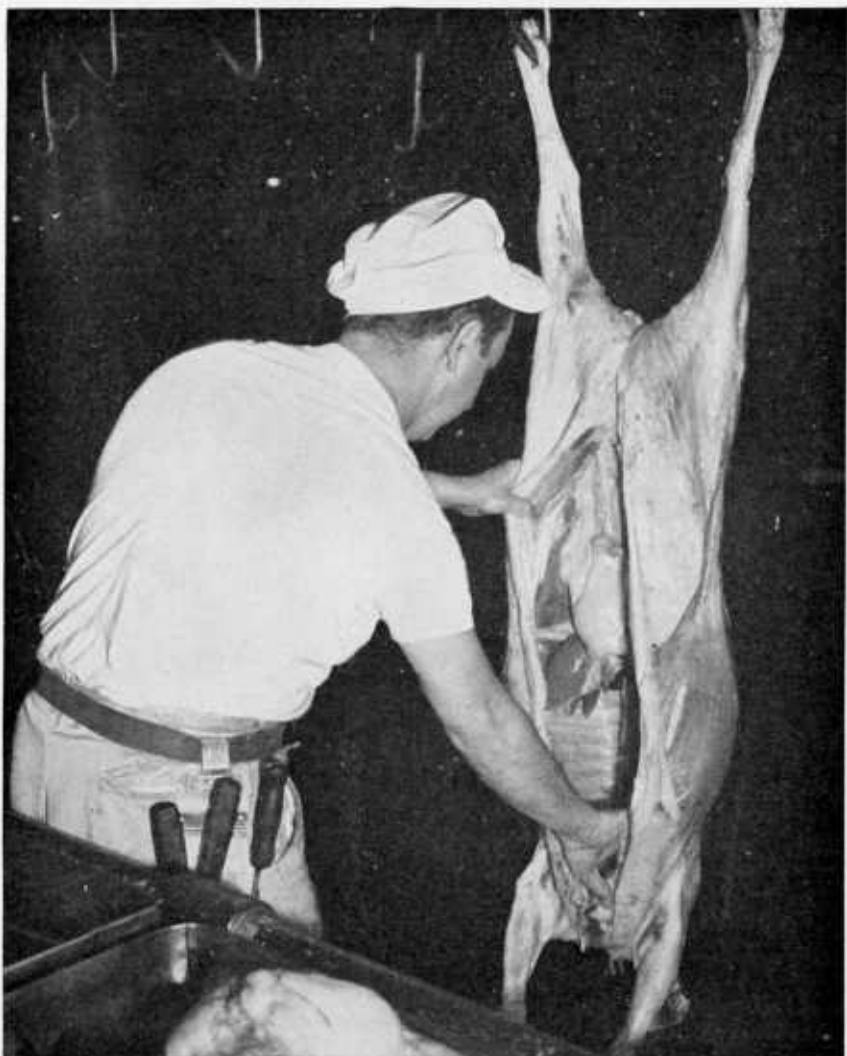


FIGURE 11.—A lamb carcass is being given a careful inspection by a Federal meat inspector to assure its wholesomeness. The viscera in the pan opposite the carcass have already been inspected.

"Prosecutions seldom exceed three or four a month," he stated, "owing largely to a growing voluntary compliance with the requirements and also to the severe penalties provided by law. In this connection it should be remembered that the meat-inspection service extends to about 1,000 establishments in about 400 cities and that violations may occur also in many places outside of inspected establishments.

"The officers of packing establishments and Federal inspectors work together harmoniously," he continued, "but a very strict provision of the law deters the packers from attempting to influence the judgment of inspectors. To give or offer money or anything of value,



FIGURE 12.—An inspector of the Federal Meat Inspection Service checks the labeling on frankfurters to see that they are truthfully and informatively labeled.

directly or indirectly, to an inspector with the intent to influence him in the discharge of his duty is a felony. The least penalty, on conviction, is a fine of \$5,000 and a year's imprisonment. A similar penalty, plus immediate discharge, is in store for a Federal employee who receives or accepts offers of the kind described. The regulations throughout are explicit and the penalties so severe as to discourage infractions. Yet I want to make it clear that Federal meat inspection involves nothing impossible or unreasonable."

Following further discussion, the inspector expressed his desire to have members and visitors of the club see Federal inspection of meats for themselves and draw their own conclusions from first-hand observation whenever they visited a city where such inspection was maintained.

## RISK IN USING UNINSPECTED PRODUCTS

The health commissioner, whose address was the next feature on the program, told of the more common abuses which crept into uninspected meat supplies. "Sausage, for example," he stated, "is an excellent food when properly made, but unless its manufacture has proper supervision, it can also be most grievous deception. Consider a piece of sausage that received no inspection. It may be of a nice, bright color resembling fresh, lean meat, and yet be composed of questionable ingredients all ground together and mixed with a large quantity of cereal and cooked in a solution of artificial coloring matter. Yet in some cities and States there is no penalty, at



FIGURE 13.—Hams of the kind that may be eaten without further cooking are tested by a Federal meat inspector to see that they have been heated sufficiently to destroy any possible live trichinae.

present, for selling such a product as genuine sausage if the product is made and sold locally, that is, without crossing State lines.

"Since becoming interested in this question of meat inspection," the commissioner continued, "I have visited many meat shops, some handling federally inspected meats, others handling purely local products. It is common for a dealer who handles uninspected meats to speak with pride of doing his 'own butchering' and using his 'own formulas' for processed and cured products. But when one inquires into details of methods and ingredients and asks to look around it is not easy to get very full information, nor does the proprietor care to show you the things he takes pride in talking about. Meat establishments, like other food-handling places, naturally attract flies, rats, mice, and other pests; and without systematic and strict inspection such pests are tolerated to a surprising degree. I am convinced that official supervision is a desirable public service,

and in the long run benefits the dealer or butcher as well as it does the consumer. Inspection does not interfere with the business of persons who are handling clean, wholesome products, but it compels those who are dirty or dishonest to conform to a reasonable standard of conduct or else turn to some other line of business that is not so closely related to public health and welfare.

"An important practical side of meat inspection as a service to the public is the cost," the commissioner continued. "As taxpayers we want to know and have a right to know what the protection costs. Our guest, the Federal inspector, did not include this subject in his address, since he previously told me it was not his province to discuss matters of that sort. He said that the Washington office was the proper authority to consult. So I wrote to the chief of the Meat Inspection Division of the Bureau of Animal Industry. Let me read you his reply."

## COST OF INSPECTION

The cost of inspection per animal slaughtered is about 12.3 cents, or, for 1 cent, 16.8 pounds of meat is inspected. This cost includes in addition to inspection at the time of slaughter also such items as inspection of animals before slaughter, the inspection of products and of imported meats, supervision of labeling, inspection of cars in which meat is shipped, and laboratory analyses.

The low cost of the service is further evident when the inspected carcasses are converted into cured, processed, and manufactured products, which form so large a part of the meat packing output. Where such products, including edible offal, are considered, 28.3 pounds are inspected for 1 cent. Thus the net cost of Federal meat inspection is under one-thirtieth of a cent per pound. Approximately 70 percent of the meat consumed by the public is federally inspected.

## IMPORTANCE OF USING THE SERVICE

"What I have to say," the retail meat-shop proprietor began, when introduced, "is largely for the benefit of those who do the actual selection and buying of meats. From what I see in my own shop and hear from others, I am sure that the average family pays much more attention to the buying of clothes and hats and other apparel worn on the body than to the selection of foods that nourish and become a part of the body itself.

"A customer will call up on the telephone and say, 'Send me a nice, tender leg of lamb; I want it by 4 o'clock,' when she wouldn't consider calling a millinery store and say, 'I wish you would send me up a nice-looking hat; I must have it for use tonight.' A butcher is accustomed to such requests. They give him more than half his business. But I dare say that such a telephone message would startle a milliner. The example may seem extreme, but it shows the great responsibility the public places on the meat-handling trade. That is why I handle meats which I know have had proper inspection. Some cuts may not be so tender or appetizing as others, and I am not denying that I receive some complaints, but I have never sold a pound of meat that was not clean and wholesome. I know this is so because everything I handle has the Government inspection stamp on it.

"Those of us who have worked in inspected packing houses and also who have been around uninspected places see a great contrast in conditions and methods. Human nature is much the same everywhere, and

it is easier for an inspector to condemn an unsound animal or unwholesome meat than for the owner to do so.

"I am not going to make a long speech, but I want to urge everyone who does marketing for the family to use discrimination in buying meats. Look for the inspection mark, read the labels on packaged and canned products, and patronize clean, sanitary shops."

Following the dealer's talk, the chairman announced that the meeting was open for general discussion. Several women voiced their interest in the addresses and seconded the importance of selecting meat personally, so as to judge its general quality as well as insisting on the inspection stamp.



FIGURE 14.—An inspector tries hams for soundness. Hams having a sour odor or other evidence of unsoundness are condemned in whole or in part, depending upon the findings of the inspector.

## FEDERAL MEAT INSPECTION AS A SERVICE TO FARMERS

Finally a stockily built man of mature years, who had listened intently to the program, inquired of the chairman whether he might say a few words. "I am a farmer," he announced, after being invited to take the platform, "and I realize that this is largely a city audience. But I have heard several references to the need for inspection as a public safeguard against the weakness of some persons who otherwise would slaughter sick animals and attempt to sell the meat. Shall I continue?" Upon being urged to proceed, he surprised the audience by the nature of his remarks.

"There is no occasion for controversy on the subject of meat inspection," the farmer continued. "A few years ago I should have resented some of the statements made here this evening and would have objected strongly. But no large body of workers in any line of business can claim 100 percent of perfection in the matter of integrity and compliance with a high code of ethics. Unfortunately, a few livestock owners do reprehensible things, just as a small minority of persons in professional, business, and social life commit offenses against the common good. But I want to assure this gathering that producers of livestock are working zealously to produce and market the best quality of livestock and also the healthiest stock that is



FIGURE 15.—Packing houses in the United States prepare various kinds of canned meats. Filled and closed cans are checked by a Federal meat inspector for net weight, proper closure, adequate processing, and labeling.

humanly possible. No body of workers is more active or serious in this matter. I happen to be president of the county livestock association, and I'd like to read just a few sentences from our constitution and bylaws:

The object of this association shall be to promote interest in the breeding and improvement of high-class livestock, to instruct its members in the prevention and eradication of diseases peculiar to such animals, to provide and establish an adequate market for the same, to bring about a high standard of business dealings, and to encourage a fuller appreciation of farm life.

"Thus you will see that our interest in the question of good and wholesome meat is exactly the same as yours. And we should like to see something done that would help all city people to get a taste

of really first-class meat. I know that certain shops sell meat of wretched quality and doubtful origin. Such a product naturally causes prejudice against all meat. So our association welcomes competent inspection, whether Federal, State, or municipal." Generous applause followed this assertion, and he continued:

"You may not realize that farmers, as well as yourselves, receive direct benefits from Federal inspection. The benefits are more important and numerous than you would imagine. The export trade of this country in meats and their products could not exist without the guaranty of Federal meat inspection. Foreign countries would not accept our products otherwise.

"The history of this trade shows that formerly there was much prejudice and in some cases a hostile attitude toward the admission of United States meats into some of the importing countries. That attitude has changed now, because the Federal inspection system has won the confidence of foreign governments. Livestock owners naturally share in the benefits from such exports, which in recent years have amounted to over 1,000,000,000 pounds annually. Besides the export-trade advantages, meat inspection assures that meat products imported into the United States are sound and wholesome, thus giving us protection against unfair competition. A certificate signed by a recognized foreign official must accompany such products; otherwise they are refused entry.

"The Federal inspection service has also been a great help to stockmen by the careful records kept concerning diseases and ailments that animals show on the killing floor. We know what diseases to watch for and study and eradicate. My own herd of cattle is now on the officially accredited list as being entirely free from tuberculosis, and it is a great source of pride and satisfaction to me.

"There is still another benefit. Suppose I have a bunch of hogs ready for market and my neighbor loses a few from cholera, which is highly infectious. Immediately there is a scare in the neighborhood, and even though my stock is all healthy, the local buyers are suspicious. I face the loss of the profit I have earned for all my work of raising those hogs. But I can ship them to a market where there is Government inspection and sell them on a strictly health basis. I submit my stock for examination before the supreme court of veterinary justice—that's what it really is.

## HIGH QUALIFICATIONS OF INSPECTORS

"Another matter not mentioned this evening is the source and training of the men who do the work of inspecting. You may wonder why I bring up this point. It is because I am a farmer and because more than 90 percent of the veterinary inspectors in the Federal meat-inspection service were farm raised. Being associated with livestock from an early age, boys on the farm lean toward veterinary work more naturally than those raised in the city. So we have the rather odd fact that the men who condemn unsound meat as a protection to the public are frequently the sons or brothers of the men who raised the meat. I know this to be the case, since my neighbor's son has a responsible position on the Federal meat-inspection force.

"He had to study 5 to 6 years in an accredited veterinary college and pass a civil-service examination besides. It was a strict test, and they even investigated whether he had a keen sense of smell, which is important in that work. He had to furnish references as to his character besides proof of ability; and even after he passed he had to work as an assistant for some time under an experienced man before the Government considered him qualified to pass on the condition of dressed carcasses. From my talks with the members of our livestock association I find that they have the same attitude toward meat inspection that I have. But I can't make it too strong that the men in charge must be qualified and well trained. They must be competent to make correct decisions on the animals and meats they inspect."

### ASSISTANCE TO CITIES AND TOWNS

The applause and several cordial personal greetings which followed the farmer's remarks indicated that his impromptu talk had been a welcome feature of the program. On the chairman's call for further discussion, a businessman rose to his feet.

"I am in the restaurant business," he explained, "and speak from my former knowledge of the subject as well as from what I have heard here tonight. This city uses several hundred thousand pounds of uninspected meat annually, as well as a large quantity of the federally inspected product. I should like to have our guest, the United States



FIGURE 16.—Representative samples of canned-meat products are collected by a Federal meat inspector and incubated in a room under his direct control. A careful record is kept of each lot. This is done as a check on the keeping qualities of the products.



inspector, tell us whether the Government renders assistance to cities and towns which desire to conduct municipal inspection, and what is the nature of the assistance."

"Are you prepared to answer that question?" the chairman asked, turning to the inspector.

"Yes; that is one frequently made," the inspector replied. "The Government renders such assistance in an advisory capacity and is deeply interested in municipal inspection, because it supplements the



FIGURE 17.—Modern dressing rooms are well-lighted and ventilated. Individual lockers are provided for all employees. The area between rows of lockers provides adequate space and is easy to keep clean. The lavatories are equipped with soap and hot and cold water. Individual towels also are supplied.

Federal work and extends the scope of protection to the public. The Department of Agriculture will furnish city officials with copies of the Federal regulations on meat inspection and information regarding necessary qualifications of employees, and will give the benefit of its experience on other matters.

"Many of the larger cities conduct municipal inspection substantially in the same manner as Federal inspection. In fact, some of the supervisory city inspectors are highly qualified and experienced men formerly in the Federal service. If we have to lose a good man, we are always glad to know that he is taking up similar service for a city or State.

"I cannot place too much stress on the question of sanitation, because it is so important. Sometimes it is necessary to abandon the use of old slaughterhouses entirely and establish modern abattoirs, centrally located, where all the slaughterers of a community may conduct their operations under sanitary conditions and, of course, under inspection. City inspectors commonly follow the Federal system of stamping the meat, even using the same purple stamping fluid, except that the Federal stamp is round, whereas municipal stamps are diamond shaped, octagonal, or of some other form. Some are in the form of a shield and are very attractive in appearance. The municipal stamps carry the city's name or a suitable abbreviation, thus being easily distinguished from the initials 'U. S.' of the Federal stamp.

"As already stated, the Federal Government's authority applies especially to meats intended for interstate and foreign commerce, but the Government believes so strongly in the general principles involved that it encourages the action of city and State officials in establishing supplementary inspection."

"That answers my question exactly," the restaurant owner continued, "and now, Mr. Chairman, I have a motion to make. We have heard the story of the Federal meat-inspection service and of the opportunity which we, as public-spirited citizens, have in rendering a similar service to our communities. I move that the civic club give a vote of thanks to the speakers of the evening, and that the chairman appoint a committee of five, representing varied civic interests, to consider the feasibility of establishing municipal inspection of meats, in accord with the standards and general methods of Federal inspection."

The motion was seconded and carried. And, after adjournment, in the groups that gathered about the speakers and members of the program committee there was ample evidence of active interest created by the topic of the evening and of a clearer understanding of the meat-inspection stamp and the service it represents.