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Comments of the O.E.E.C. on Recommendation 180 relating to the marketing of livestock and meat

Communication

1.

1. The importance attached by the Ministerial Committee for Agriculture and Food to the solution of problems of marketing and distribution of food and agricultural products, in particular livestock and meat, which was already indicated in its general programme of work, was emphasised in the Recommendation adopted by the Ministers to assign at least 50 per cent of the agricultural budget of the European Productivity Agency for the years 1958-59 and 1959-60 to surveys and meetings of experts on these problems.

2. A programme of action concerning the livestock and meat sector has been drawn up (attached is the list of projects in hand) and three reports have already been prepared by experts on the following subjects :

a. marketing and distribution margins for livestock and meat in OEEC countries;

b. slaughterhouse facilities and meat distribution in European countries;

c. marketing and distribution of meat and dairy products in the United States.

3. It should be noted that special attention has been given to the problem of the increasing disparity between the prices received by the producer and the prices paid by the consumer. Since the raising of the standard of living calls for an increase of service (e.g. better processing, packaging, pre-conditioning, etc.), it follows that the producer's share of the price paid by the consumer tends to diminish. Nonetheless, greater efficiency in the marketing and distribution services should have a considerable influence on the income of farmers and agricultural workers and also on the quality and price of the products offered to the consumer.

4. The above-mentioned reports were discussed in Paris at the beginning of June 1959, at a conference of specialists responsible for the organisation of the livestock and meat markets and representatives of research centres dealing with the marketing of livestock products. The result of this work has been transmitted to the Committee of Deputies of the Ministers for Agriculture and Food, so that it may draw the appropriate conclusions and decide on the action to be taken.

Appendix O. E. E. C. • E. P. A. activities with regard to the marketing and distribution of livestock and meat

MARKETING SYSTEMS; MARKET RESEARCH; DISTRIBUTION MARGINS, etc.

Marketing and distribution margins for livestock and meat in OEEC countries.

A draft report has been prepared by Dr. H. J. Mittendorf of the Institute for Agricultural Market Research in Braunschweig-Völkenrode, Germany.

Marketing and distribution of meat and dairy products in the United States of America.

The aim of the Mission organised under this project was to study in detail the factors which, in the United States of America, have led to economies in trade and processing margins, and further to determine the extent to which the knowledge and experience available there might be utilised towards reducing the cost of marketing and distribution in Europe. The report of the Mission was published in May 1958.

Promotion of co-operation between European Institutes in work on market research, with particular emphasis on distribution margins.

A European Working Conference on Market Research was held at the OEEC Headquarters on 8th-llth June, 1959. This meeting, besides leading to an exchange of experience between institutes working in the field of agricultural market research, enabled closer co-operation to be established between them on common problems.

Improved methods of forecasting pig meat production.

The aim of this project is to promote the adoption of improved forecasting methods designed to help in eliminating excessive supply and price movements in the pig meat market. Methods of forecasting that can be used by member countries will be presented once the present studies on the censuses applied in different countries have been completed.

SLAUGHTERHOUSES; DISTRIBUTION AT THE WHOLESALE STAGE, etc.

Survey of slaughterhouse facilities and meat distribution in European countries.

Two teams have visited member countries and prepared a draft report on this subject, which will be discussed at the European Working Conference on Market Research to be held in Paris in June.

Survey of the organisation of the wholesale markets for meat.

Improved utilisation of offal and other by-products of slaughterhouses.

The reports prepared on the basis of investigations in these fields will be examined at a seminar.

DISTRIBUTION AT THE RETAIL STAGE

Improved methods of distribution in the retail trade.

The aim of this project is to stimulate action for improving the facilities for training food retailers in modern retailing techniques. Data on training facilities available in member countries will be collected to organise a workshop for instructors in the retail trade in meat to be held in the autumn of 1959 in Brussels.

MARKETING REGULATIONS; SANITARY REGULATIONS; GRADING, etc.

Survey of regulations affecting the marketing and distribution of meat.

This survey is undertaken in order to identify the types of marketing regulations which hamper rather than encourage the development of more efficient marketing methods.

Survey of sanitary regulations concerning animal products entering into international trade.

The aim of this project is to study such sanitary regulations as do in fact, or could, con-stutute an obstacle to the free flow of international trade in meat and live cattle.

Investigation into the grading of meat and carcasses as a basis for the development of European standards.

A report of the results of a first basic investigation will be drawn up.

GENERAL IMPROVEMENT IN THE MARKETING OF FOOD

Development of experimental cold chains for the distribution of frozen food.

In co-operation with national authorities and interested trade circles, two experimental cold chains between France and Italy have been set up in order that deep-frozen food, consisting mainly of fruit and vegetables and fish and other animal products, may be traded between the two countries.

N. B. — The projects quoted above have all been adopted under past or current productivity programmes. In addition, the following proposals will be submitted for inclusion in the 1959-60 productivity programme :

a. Survey of the organisation of marketing poultry meat with special emphasis on broilers;

b. Improved methods of forecasting beef production;

c. Patronage of a European Centre for the training of butchers in the handling and merchandising of meat;

d. Development of the distribution of pre-cut and pre-packed meat.