

there are three fundamental requirements:—

1. Consistently high quality in relation to price.
2. Quantity sufficiently substantial to interest the bulk or wholesale buyer.
3. Regularity of supply.

The quality of New Zealand pork in the past earned the goodwill of the British consumer, but an effective grading system giving incentive to the production of the best-quality carcasses finished at the most desirable weights (70 to 90lb.) is necessary to improve present quality and preserve goodwill.

In regard to price there is little to fear, because New Zealand pork is still the cheapest that Britain can buy. In view of reports that lack of purchasing power threatens to curtail increased consumption of meat in Britain, pig producers in New Zealand may be thankful that the price they have received for pig meat has enabled it to go into consumption without having to be subsidised by the British Government. Withdrawal of subsidies would mean that countries whose costs have risen so that they cannot produce pork at a price at which it will be consumed will find great difficulty in competing on the British market until their cost structure is adjusted.

The quantity of pork available for export must be increased quickly if sufficient is to be forthcoming to interest buyers once the "buyers' market" for pork returns. This is at once evident if the figures already quoted, showing the decline in exports since the pre-war period, are studied. That exports of pork can be increased quickly without decreasing the total weight of baconer carcasses produced will be shown later. What is required is for producers to take the long-term view regarding future market prospects and to be willing to organise and work for their own future security.

PREMIUM ON PORKERS



Production of more than half the total pigs as porkers is well suited to the dairy by-products feeding system.

Continuity of supply to the British pork market can be achieved by dovetailing frozen-pork supplies with fluctuations in local fresh-pork supplies. Traditionally, British people did not eat pork "when there was no R in the month"; that is, in the warmer months. However, just before the war New Zealand lean, dairy-fed pork had broken down tradition and was actu-

ally going into consumption during the whole 12 months. This can be achieved again. It does not mean that pork killings must be uniform throughout the year, and the fact that New Zealand pork exports must be frozen may be regarded as an advantage. Normal fluctuations in supplies of pig foods largely dictate the level of killings throughout the year, and the proportion of baconers to porkers killed is a result of the interaction of the number of sows farrowed, the dates of farrowing, and the quantity of dairy by-products available throughout the season.

Implications of Policy

Under a price schedule which provided a uniform rate per pound for all pigs from 60 to 175lb. dressed weight there was an incentive to reduce sow numbers to a minimum, to produce fewer pigs, and to take these to as high a weight as practicable. The basis of payment, coupled with scarcity of materials for building and shortage of labour, led many farmers to dispose of sows and buy just sufficient pigs to cope with the surplus skimmed milk or at least such a proportion of it as to reduce its "nuisance value" to the minimum. Prices of weaners and stores reached record figures in spring and little real profit could have been made out of bought-in pigs if losses and labour costs were taken into consideration, even if they were taken to top weights. Besides ruining quality the fattening of bought-in pigs has resulted in inefficient use of the feed



[B. Snowden photo.]

Porkers should be finished at 70 to 90lb. carcass weight.