

## Manager's Report

To The President and Directors, Council of Canadian Beef Producers, (Western Section)

**E**IGHT months with the Council of Canadian Beef Producers, (Western Section), have served to confirm the task in promotion and public relations that faces the beef producers of Canada. The responses to the efforts of those months seem encouraging but as in all public relations work, they are difficult to measure.

From the beginning of service with the Council at July 1st, 1952, the opportunities fell in four general categories, technical service to cattlemen, research and investigation, publicity and finally, public relations.

**Technical Service to Cattlemen:** Through direct contact with cattlemen and by recourse to magazine articles there have been fairly numerous opportunities to advise on feeding problems, breeding and management. There is evidence that such direction as the manager was able to give, was appreciated. It was possible to furnish some specific direction to feedlot operators, to breeders seeking detailed information about dwarfism in pure bred cattle, in respect to stinkweed taint in meats, etc.

**Research and Investigation:** Original studies of one kind or another seem necessary in order to maintain the most effective publicity. One of the projects has been an analysis of the Red Cross Blood Donor data covering nearly 60,000 samples of blood donated in that section of Alberta and British Columbia which is served by the Calgary headquarters. The study covered the blood donations of three years, 1950, '51 and '52. A preliminary report was given at the autumn meeting of the Council but since then the study has advanced somewhat farther. From the beginning it has been an attempt to assess possible relationships between per capita level of meat intake in the area and the incidence or percentage of hemoglobin rejects. Without reviewing details, it can be said that some striking relationships have been suggested with the percentage of blood rejects due to poor quality hemoglobin rising as meat consumption went down in 1951 and also in each year at the particular time when hot weather produces a decline in meat consumption.

Seasonal trends in consumer demand for fresh meats have come under study. These show that 55% of the year's turnover is in the six months, November to April, inclusive. The month of January witnesses the highest demand and August the lowest. August fresh meats sales, according to the Council's work, run 72% of those of January.

A comprehensive study of a steer, bought on the stockyards for the purpose and followed through the packing plant and across the retailer's counter furnished the basis of reports to producers and consumers that created a lot of interest and seemed to help to restore confidence in the industry as a whole. Articles based on this study were published by the Family Herald and Weekly Star and the Canadian Cattleman, with reprints from the latter, under title "The Story of a Steer," being obtained for distribution.

Various surveys, mostly among consumers, served a double purpose, stimulating interest and furnishing information. That 62% of the consumers contacted prefer their beef "well done", 25% prefer it "medium" and 13% want it "rare", may not be important in a practical sense, but that about 20% of the prospective buyers who enter city meat stores, do so with no well defined ideas about what they will purchase, is important. That 20% group of customers is made up of susceptible people to whom the retailer could sell pork or fish, or fowl or smoked meat or lamb or cheese or beef. It has emphasized the importance of friendly relations with the retailers.

Almost the same could be said about relations with the restaurant operators. They are capable of doing a good service for the beef producers and when opportunity has arisen to reach these people, the response has been encouraging. The members of the Calgary Restaurant Associations were ready to agree that something could be done to glamorize the cheaper cuts of beef and thus create a new interest in those less popular portions of the beef carcass, comprising 50% of carcass weight. If there was more interest in stew and stewing beef, the price of steaks would not need to be as high in relation to carcass and values and demand would be in better balance.

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### MANAGER'S REPORT

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When Calgary housewives were asked to choose their beef for today's dinner, with no regard to cost or preparation, 36% would choose steaks; 36% would choose roast beef, 16% would take good beef stew and 12% would vote for hamburger. When the same question involving the same four meat dishes was placed before the members of the Calgary Restaurant Association, people who should be good judges of eating qualities, only 12½% voted for loin steaks for their dinners, while 19% voted for hamburger, 31% for roast beef and 37½% for that beef stew which has been too long despised. There is an opportunity for a campaign in this area where the world's best beef is available to promote with some such slogan, "From Steak to Stew, Beef at Its Best."

**Publicity:** In the face of extensive and costly propaganda in support of competing foods, it seems more and more important that cattlemen keep the name and food quality of their product before the public. One of the challenges of 1952 was to attempt to restore a traditional preference for beef which had suffered decline in 1951. One of the first steps taken by the reorganized Council in 1952 was a publicity service with press releases going out regularly. Since July 1, 1952, releases have gone out every two weeks to papers, magazines, radio stations and individuals in key positions. The thanks of the Council's management goes to the editors, radio commentators and others who used the releases quite regularly.

Special articles were prepared for farm publications and numerous speaking engagements and a few meat cutting demonstrations were accepted as opportunities to bring messages about the work of the Council, or at least the name of the Council before the public. In the seven months between July 1, 1952, and February 28, 1953, the manager has delivered talks at 42 meetings and banquets, judged at nine fairs or shows, conducted five meat cutting demonstrations, attended numerous field days, shows and short courses, had seven radio talks or interviews, the usual office correspondence and routine and been a member of a number of committees.

Much of the publicity material has been in the field of nutrition, it being concluded by the manager that in many respects the new Council can do its best service, both for producers and consumers, as a nutrition mouth-piece. If one preaches the importance of the essential proteins in human diets, the effect could be beneficial without even mentioning the word beef.

**The Meat Fair:** The Council conducted Calgary's first Meat Fair in October, a highly successful event, bringing together all phases of the livestock and meat industry.

**Slogan Contest:** As a publicity project, the Council conducted a Slogan Contest which brought out hundreds of letters and submissions. The cost of five prizes was modest in relation to the publicity obtained.

**"Beef, What Everybody Should Know About It":** This was the title to a 16-page booklet published in February, 1953, by the Council, at a cost of \$413.35 for 5,000 copies. The booklet is intended for consumer buyers with the main topics being nutritional values in meats, identification of beef cuts, selection, inspection and grading of meats, and methods of cooking. The booklet is well illustrated and the demand for it has exceeded expectations.

**Memberships:** While financing the proposed program presents a continuing problem, it is encouraging that membership in the Council has been extended to include the Cattle Breeders' Association of Manitoba and the Alberta Provincial Cattle Breeders' Association. The complete membership as at present is as follows: Canadian Shorthorn Association, B.C. Beef Cattle Growers' Association, Canadian Aberdeen-Angus Association, Saskatchewan Stock Growers' Association, Western Stock Growers' Association, Canadian Hereford Association, Alberta Provincial Cattle Breeders' Association, Cattle Breeders' Association of Manitoba.

**Conclusion:** The experience of eight months justifies the conclusion that the Council is now working in a field that has been too long neglected. It is a field in which producers must work in self defence.

And finally I desire to say a word of thanks to the good people with whom I have been privileged to work. My associations in the work could not have been better.

GRANT MacEWAN.

March 16, 1953.