

# The Marketing of Country-Dressed Meat in Portland

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## INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

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**I**N 1926 the Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station began a series of investigations of the market demand and the market conditions confronting the producer of livestock in Oregon. The results of the cattle-marketing investigation were published in 1927. In 1930 the results of a similar study on lamb marketing were published. In 1932 the results of an investigation of hog marketing were published. A survey of the country-dressed meat trade was begun in 1930 as it was realized that this market is an important outlet for the livestock producer.

An understanding of the market conditions and the consumer demand are of vital importance to the livestock producer. A knowledge of market facilities and the outlet for meat is necessary to an intelligent livestock production and marketing program.

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## SUMMARY

1. Four per cent of the cattle, 83 per cent of the calves, 11 per cent of the hogs, and 27 per cent of the sheep and lambs used in Portland for meat are slaughtered in the country and shipped to Portland in the form of dressed carcasses.

2. The major portion of the country-dressed meat shipped to Portland is from the Willamette Valley and the Lower Columbia River counties, with only a comparatively small amount from Eastern Oregon or from other states.

3. Nearly every retail or wholesale meat dealer in Portland buys country-dressed meat, especially veal.

4. The sales and prices of country-dressed meat are not a matter of public record. The prices for country-dressed meat are not reported by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics as are the prices for live animals.

5. The commission houses selling dressed meat are not governed by rules and regulations such as govern the commission houses selling live animals on the stockyards.

6. Owing to the type of animals slaughtered, the quality of country-dressed meats, except veal, usually is lower than that of meats from other sources.

7. Unskilled butchering and the lack of cooling facilities often detract from the value of country-dressed meat.

8. The methods of wrapping and shipping country-dressed meat to Portland are often open to criticism. The best sanitary precautions are not always observed.

9. Published price quotations for country-dressed meats cannot be compared directly with price quotations for live animals. There are no recognized grades nor any established classification used for quoting prices on country-dressed meats in Portland.

10. A comparison of the highest quoted prices for country-dressed veal with "good to choice" calves alive shows that the best country-dressed veal on a live-weight basis was quoted at about 21¢ less per hundred pounds than "good to choice" live calves.

11. Sales of similar animals as carcasses and alive indicate that a higher net return is received for animals of the same quality when sold alive, provided the producer is able to get truckload or carload transportation rates on live animals.

12. The lack of adequate facilities for assembling less than carloads or truckloads of live animals and prohibitive rates for such small shipments compel many producers to market livestock as dressed meat.

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## INTRODUCTION

THE meat consumed in the city of Portland arrives in the city in three forms: (1) as live animals, (2) as dressed carcasses, and (3) as meat cuts and cured meats. As a proportion of the dressed carcasses have been killed on the farm where produced or in small local slaughterhouses, they are commonly designated in the trade as "country-dressed carcasses."

The conditions surrounding the trade in live animals are fairly well known and have been made the subject of several studies.\* On the other hand, there is little public information concerning the handling of country-dressed carcasses. This study, therefore, deals with country-dressed carcasses and was undertaken to determine: (1) the extent to which country-dressed carcasses enter into the meat trade in Portland, (2) the quality of these country-dressed carcasses as compared with meat from other sources, (3) the trade practices of the dealers and agencies handling country-dressed meats, (4) the relative prices received by producers for animals slaughtered on the farm, (5) the economic importance of this trade in farm-slaughtered livestock to producers.

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Since there is available so little direct information concerning country-dressed carcasses, more or less indirect methods of obtaining the information desired were used. The most useful sources of information are the records of the various meat-inspection services. It is necessary, therefore, to give some attention to the records of the various types of inspection service and to the significance of these records.

All meat that is used in the city of Portland must be inspected at some stage by either Federal, state, or city authorities. All dressed carcasses that come into Portland from outside the state except carcasses of animals slaughtered and shipped by the original producer are required by Federal law to have been slaughtered under Federal inspection. Carcasses of animals slaughtered in Federally inspected plants or state-inspected plants within the state of Oregon but outside the city of Portland may be shipped into Portland without further inspection. Only one such plant is operating under Federal inspection, and only 15 are operating under state inspection.

\*NOTE: *Lamb Marketing Investigation*, Bulletin 265, Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station, 1930. *Types of Hogs Marketed and Consumer Demand in Oregon*, Bulletin 297, Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station, 1934. *Cattle Marketing Investigations at Portland*, Bulletin 229, Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station, 1927.

Carcasses from plants not operating under state or Federal inspection must be inspected by the Portland authorities upon arriving in the city. The Portland health service provides facilities for meat inspection under the authority of Portland ordinances. This inspection is of three types: (1) inspection of the actual slaughter of animals killed within the city of Portland except those killed at plants operating under Federal inspection; (2) inspection of dressed meat brought into the city except that from plants operating under Federal or state inspection; (3) inspection and supervision of general sanitation at all wholesale and retail meat-handling establishments in the city of Portland except those operating under Federal inspection. Only a small proportion of the dressed carcasses arriving in Portland come from slaughtering plants operating under either Federal or state inspection. The larger portion are from animals that have been slaughtered on the farm or at small country slaughterhouses operating without Federal, state, or city inspection. Slaughtering establishments in Oregon outside the city of Portland are not required to maintain an inspection service unless they do interstate business, in which case they are required to operate under Federal inspection. Other plants may, at their own option, operate under the meat-inspection service of the state of Oregon, in which case the meat inspectors are hired by and responsible to the State Department of Agriculture. Less than 5 per cent of the slaughtering plants of the state operate under such state inspection. The major portion of the state-inspected meat sold in Portland comes from Eugene, Cottage Grove, and Oregon City.

The sources and nature of inspection data on dressed carcasses arriving in Portland are, therefore, as follows:

(1) Dressed carcasses from farms or noninspected slaughterhouses are inspected by the Portland Health Service. A record is made of the number so inspected each month. This record is quite complete beginning with 1931 to date but for 1930 and prior years is fragmentary.

(2) Carcasses arriving in Portland from killing plants within the state operating under state or Federal inspection are admitted to the city of Portland without further inspection, and no count is made by the Portland Health Service. Through courtesy of the various plants involved, however, a fairly satisfactory record of the number shipped has been obtained.

(3) Dressed carcasses shipped to Portland from Federally inspected plants outside the state are not a matter of public record. It is known, however, that the numbers of such shipments are comparatively small and that in general more meat is produced in Oregon than is consumed. It is believed, therefore, that the omission of carcasses shipped into Portland from Federally inspected plants outside the state does not introduce a serious element of error, especially since this study is concerned primarily with the dressed-meat market as an outlet for Oregon livestock. It should also be noted that this study deals with dressed carcasses and not with cured or pickled meats. Substantial quantities of cured and pickled pork products are shipped into Portland regularly from midwest points, but the precise figures are not now available and have not been made a subject of investigation.

The number of live animals slaughtered in the city of Portland is recorded by the city and Federal inspection services. Records of the city

inspection service are available and public. Official records of slaughter under Federal inspection in Portland are not available to the public. The Bureau of Agricultural Economics, however, does publish data as to the number of animals slaughtered locally from the Portland Union Stock Yards. Hence the difference between the city-inspected slaughter and the total slaughter must represent the Federally inspected slaughter plus or minus any errors that may occur through this method of obtaining data.

In view of the fact that the data so obtained do not precisely check with the data of the Federal inspection service, the term "other slaughter" rather than "Federally inspected slaughter" is used, although for practical purposes they are the same.

Not all of this "other slaughter" is consumed in Portland. There is always some movement of Federally inspected meats to Washington points, but this is counterbalanced, at least in part, by Federally inspected meats moving into Portland from other points. The big packers of Portland, Seattle, Tacoma, and Spokane do not hesitate to invade each other's territory.

There are seven slaughtering plants in the city of Portland: Swift & Co., Schlessers Brothers, Pacific Meat Company, Kenton Packing Company, Associated Meat Company, Adams Brothers, and the Gem Packing Company. Swift & Co. is a branch of the national corporation of that name, and operates under Federal inspection. The Schlessers Brothers plant operates under Federal inspection, but until very recently confined its business to the slaughter of horses for the export trade. The remaining five plants operate under city inspection. Each of these five plants does slaughtering for more than one wholesaler. Approximately fifteen wholesalers, large and small, have their slaughtering done at these plants. In some cases the wholesaler is the owner or part-owner of the killing plant, while in others the business is done on a purely custom basis.

## THE PORTLAND MEAT SUPPLY

**Beef.** The numbers of cattle available for consumption as beef from each of the various sources of supply for the past four years, classified according to origin and place of slaughter, are shown in Table 1.

Only 4 per cent of the cattle were marketed as dressed carcasses in Portland during the four years studied. There was some increase in the number of dressed carcasses marketed in the past two years, but compared with the total number of cattle marketed in Portland relatively few were killed in the country. Less than one per cent of the cattle were from state-inspected plants, and about three per cent were from farmers and local butchers outside of Portland.

There was an average of 79,508 head of cattle per year available as meat at Portland during these four years. The records showed that 36 per cent of these cattle were slaughtered in city-inspected plants. Other slaughter, a large part of which is under Federal inspection, represents 60 per cent of all beef that was available in Portland.

**Veal.** The calves marketed in Portland during the period from 1931 to 1934 are tabulated in Table 2 according to the source of supply and method of marketing.

Table 1. SOURCE OF CATTLE AVAILABLE FOR CONSUMPTION IN PORTLAND, 1931-1934

Year	Carcasses shipped to Portland				Live animals slaughtered in Portland				Total, all sources
	Country dressed, city inspected	Dressed, state inspected	Total*		City inspected		Other slaughter (includes Federal inspected)		
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	
1931 .....	1,521	386	1,907	2	29,701	32	60,527	66	92,135
1932 .....	1,879	420	2,299	4	26,289	31	55,189	66	83,777
1933 .....	3,392	719	4,111	6	26,862	40	35,721	54	66,694
1934 .....	3,952	1,455	5,407	7	32,079	42	37,938	50	75,424
Total .....	10,744	2,980	13,724	4	114,931	36	189,375	60	318,030

\*Does not include dressed carcasses which may be shipped to Portland from Federally inspected plants in Tacoma, Seattle, or Spokane.

Table 2. SOURCE OF CALVES AVAILABLE FOR CONSUMPTION IN PORTLAND, 1931-1934

Year	Carcasses shipped to Portland				Live animals slaughtered in Portland				Total, all sources
	Country dressed, city inspected	Dressed, state inspected	Total*		City inspected		Other slaughter (includes Federal inspected)		
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	
1931 .....	42,970	1,497	44,467	83	2,940	6	5,996	11	53,403
1932 .....	43,728	1,848	45,576	89	2,038	4	3,434	7	51,048
1933 .....	42,621	1,967	44,588	83	2,754	5	6,646	12	53,988
1934 .....	50,976	1,186	52,162	77	2,566	4	12,717	19	67,445
Total .....	180,295	6,498	186,793	83	10,298	5	28,793	12	225,884

\*Does not include dressed carcasses which may be shipped to Portland from Federally inspected plants in Tacoma, Seattle, or Spokane.



Table 3. SOURCE OF HOGS AVAILABLE FOR CONSUMPTION IN PORTLAND, 1931-1934

Year	Carcasses shipped to Portland				Live animals slaughtered in Portland				Total, all sources
	Country dressed, city inspected	Dressed, state inspected	Total*		City inspected		Other slaughter (includes Federal inspected)		
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	
1931 .....	21,129	83	21,212	11	67,576	36	101,173	53	189,961
1932 .....	23,388	241	23,629	13	72,705	41	79,273	45	175,607
1933 .....	18,570	163	18,733	10	71,068	38	95,303	51	185,104
1934 .....	14,734	126	14,860	10	52,336	34	85,870	56	153,066
Total .....	77,821	613	78,434	11	263,685	38	361,619	51	703,738

\*Does not include dressed carcasses which may be shipped to Portland from Federally inspected plants in Tacoma, Seattle, or Spokane.

Table 4. SOURCE OF SHEEP AND LAMBS AVAILABLE FOR CONSUMPTION IN PORTLAND, 1931-1934

Year	Carcasses shipped to Portland				Live animals slaughtered in Portland				Total, all sources
	Country dressed, city inspected	Dressed, state inspected	Total*		City inspected		Other slaughter (includes Federal inspected)		
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	
1931 .....	37,982	5,154	43,136	23	22,284	12	126,069	66	191,489
1932 .....	47,378	10,353	57,731	35	18,372	11	89,601	54	165,704
1933 .....	26,441	5,444	31,885	24	12,883	10	89,203	67	133,971
1934 .....	30,647	5,955	36,602	28	10,975	8	84,645	64	132,222
Total .....	142,448	26,906	169,354	27	64,514	10	389,518	63	623,386

\*Does not include dressed carcasses which may be shipped to Portland from Federally inspected plants in Tacoma, Seattle, or Spokane.

A total of 225,884 calves were marketed during the four years, or an average of 56,471 calves per year. The data in Table 2 show that 186,793 or 83 per cent of all calves marketed in Portland are killed outside of Portland and shipped in as veal. Less than 3 per cent of the veal shipped to Portland was from state-inspected plants. Eighty per cent of the calves were butchered by farmers and local butchers outside of Portland.

Only 17 per cent of the veal was brought in alive and slaughtered in Portland. Few of the live calves in Portland go through the city-inspected packing plants. Only 12 per cent of all calves were included under "other slaughter," most of which were killed in Federal-inspected plants at Portland. It is apparent from these data that country-dressed veal is not only an important factor in the meat supply of Portland, but is the backbone of the dressed-meat trade.

**Pork.** An average of 175,934 hogs per year were available in Portland during the four years for which the data were tabulated. The methods of marketing and place of slaughter of these hogs are given in Table 3.

Only 11 per cent of the hogs were shipped to Portland as dressed carcasses. Nearly all of the dressed pork was shipped by farmers and local butchers. Less than 1 per cent of the hog supply was from state-inspected killing plants.

The city-inspected killing plants handled an average of 65,921 hogs annually or 38 per cent of those available. Other slaughter accounts for 90,405 head per year or 51 per cent of the pork supply in Portland. This record, however, does not include pickled and smoked meat or other pork products shipped to Portland from other states.

**Sheep and lambs.** The sheep and lambs available for consumption in Portland from each of these places of slaughter and methods of marketing are given in Table 4.

The data in Table 4 show that an average of 42,338 or 27 per cent of all sheep and lambs marketed as meat in Portland were brought in as carcasses from farmers and local butchers. Only 6,726 or 4 per cent of sheep and lambs were state inspected. City-inspected packing plants slaughtered 10 per cent of the sheep and lambs. Other slaughter, which was largely in Federal-inspected plants, amounted to 63 per cent or 97,380 sheep and lambs per year.

## SEASONAL MARKETING OF COUNTRY-DRESSED MEAT

The monthly receipts for each of the different kinds of country-dressed carcasses shipped to Portland in 1934 are given in Table 5.

The data in Table 5 show that the greatest number of dressed carcasses of cattle arrived in Portland during the fall months, and that the smallest number arrived during the early spring months. The percentage of cattle carcasses during each of the different months of the year corresponded quite closely with the variation of monthly receipts at the Portland Union Stock Yards and North Portland.

Table 5. MONTHLY RECEIPTS OF COUNTRY-DRESSED CARCASSES IN PORTLAND, 1934

	Cattle	Calves	Hogs	Sheep and lambs
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>
January .....	320	4,271	1,583	1,595
February .....	226	3,464	1,160	1,054
March .....	208	4,110	1,241	1,883
April .....	234	4,712	1,425	2,104
May .....	301	4,868	1,332	3,198
June .....	257	4,714	1,037	2,873
July .....	239	3,719	752	2,803
August .....	213	3,707	1,080	2,585
September .....	576	4,088	1,003	3,393
October .....	418	4,691	1,387	4,276
November .....	504	4,402	1,435	2,348
December .....	456	4,230	1,299	2,535
TOTAL.....	3,952	50,976	14,734	30,647
Average per month .....	329	4,248	1,228	2,558

The number of veal carcasses marketed by the farmers and the small local butchers during the different months of the year was fairly constant.

An average of 4,248 veal calves per month were marketed as carcasses during 1934. The data in Table 5 indicate that there was but a small variation from the monthly average. The trade in dressed veal was fairly regular throughout the year.

An average of 1,228 hogs per month were marketed as country-dressed carcasses during 1934. The numbers marketed for each of the different months of the year show some variation. The greatest number of dressed hogs were marketed during the months of January and November, while the smallest number were marketed during July. The distribution of monthly receipts during the year corresponded to the usual seasonal variation in the supply of hogs.

An average of 2,558 country carcasses of sheep and lambs were marketed monthly in 1934. The variation in the monthly receipts during 1934 corresponded with the seasonal production of lambs in the Willamette Valley.

The number of dressed animals shipped monthly to Portland from state-inspected meat plants varied somewhat. The state-inspected plants shipped more hog and lamb carcasses during the seasons when the supply was greatest. The supply of beef and veal was fairly constant throughout the year. It is the practice of state-inspected packing plants to use the country-dressed market in Portland for meat that cannot be sold locally.

### SHIPMENTS OF COUNTRY-DRESSED MEAT BY COUNTIES

Country-dressed carcasses are received in Portland from nearly every county in Oregon. The shipments of dressed animals to Portland are greater from the Willamette Valley and from the Lower Columbia River counties.

In order to obtain an estimate of the relative receipts from each of the different counties in Oregon, the receipts of several leading dealers were tabulated from the reports required by the so-called "Gasoline Cowboy Law" of Oregon. These records are available at the State Veterinarian's office in Salem. Approximately twenty per cent of the carcasses

marketed during the year were included in the tabulation. The number reported from each of the different counties, reduced to a percentage basis, showed the relative number of carcasses shipped from each county to these firms. These percentages were then multiplied by the total receipts of country carcasses at Portland during 1932 to obtain an estimate of the shipments from each county. Although the information obtained in this way is an estimate, it indicates the relative shipments from each county.

Table 6. ESTIMATED NUMBER OF COUNTRY-DRESSED CARCASSES SHIPPED TO PORTLAND FROM COUNTIES IN OREGON, 1932

County	Cattle	Veal	Hogs	Sheep and lambs
	Number	Number	Number	Number
<i>Willamette Valley counties and Columbia County</i>				
Benton .....	.....	700	327	1,089
Clackamas .....	28	2,186	1,754	710
Columbia .....	113	2,842	608	142
Lane .....	15	2,799	702	6,013
Linn .....	54	5,072	1,066	7,244
Marion .....	73	3,717	2,502	9,943
Multnomah .....	528	4,285	1,240	1,136
Polk .....	26	918	631	1,231
Washington .....	333	4,635	3,531	852
Yamhill .....	92	2,318	4,514	10,417
Total .....	1,262	29,472	16,815	38,777
<i>Other Counties in Oregon</i>				
Baker .....	11	87	70	284
Clatsop .....	15	481	.....	47
Coos .....	47	612	94	1,515
Crook .....	.....	219	23	.....
Curry .....	.....	87	.....	758
Deschutes .....	4	481	444	47
Douglas .....	11	918	398	2,888
Gilliam .....	4	219	48	284
Grant .....	.....	87	23	142
Hood River .....	.....	44	.....	.....
Jackson .....	.....	2	.....	142
Jefferson .....	.....	131	468	47
Josephine .....	.....	44	.....	.....
Lincoln .....	11	875	.....	710
Malheur .....	.....	.....	.....	95
Morrow .....	8	437	327	3
Sherman .....	.....	131	47	.....
Tillamook .....	290	1,487	3,204	142
Umatilla .....	.....	612	47	47
Union .....	15	175	.....	.....
Wallowa .....	77	262	47	47
Wasco .....	4	88	187	1,326
Wheeler .....	22	87	.....	.....
Total .....	519	7,566	5,427	8,524
Total Oregon .....	1,781	37,038	22,242	47,301
Washington .....	98	5,204	889	.....
Idaho .....	.....	1,355	117	.....
Unknown .....	.....	131	140	47
GRAND TOTAL.....	1,879	43,728	23,388	47,348

The data show that a relatively small number of dressed carcasses were received from Central Oregon, and that very few carcasses were received from the counties located in the extreme eastern part of Oregon. Dealers state that few country-dressed carcasses are received from long distances during the warm weather in the summer time. Shipments from distant counties usually are received during the fall and winter months.

With the exception of veal, a relatively small number of dressed carcasses were shipped to Portland from either Washington or Idaho. It is possible that a high percentage of the country-dressed carcasses in Oregon were from small local butchers rather than from producers.

### THE MARKETING OF COUNTRY-DRESSED MEAT

**Dealers.** The trade in country-dressed meats in Portland is confined largely to Front Street and the near vicinity, so that the term "Front Street" is often used as synonymous with the Portland wholesale trade in country-dressed carcasses.

The farmer who desires to sell a dressed carcass may (1) sell it direct to a retailer, (2) sell it to a wholesaler who in turn sells to a retailer, or (3) turn it over to a commission house on Front Street that may sell the carcass to the retailer and charge the farmer a commission. Most of the so-called commission houses, however, do not confine themselves to strictly a commission business. They may buy carcasses themselves and resell to the retailer for whatever price they can get. Only a very few of these houses limit themselves to strictly a commission business.

The producer may deliver the carcasses in person, with his own car, trailer, or truck, or he may ship by express or truck to whatever commission house or wholesaler he may choose. The producer must, of course, take whatever price is remitted to him. On the other hand, the buyers of these country-dressed carcasses get the bulk of their business through these shipments. They must keep the shippers reasonably well satisfied. This applies not only to the commission houses but also to the wholesalers who confine their business to buying and do no commission business. The producer can, and often does, take a carcass from retailer to retailer until a satisfactory price is offered, although there are some shipments from country direct to retailers.

Country-dressed meat is used by various kinds of trade—hotel, restaurant, retailer, and sausage maker.

The small amount of veal killed under Federal inspection practically forces even the larger packers to buy country-dressed veal. Once prepared to buy country-dressed veal, they often buy whatever other country-dressed meat is offered. No killing plant or plant that processes meat and operates under Federal inspection is permitted to handle country-dressed meat, but a firm may own one plant under Federal inspection and a branch house without Federal inspection. No Federal-inspected meat that is processed at a noninspected branch can enter interstate trade. To meet this situation most of the packers operating in Portland who do their killing and processing under Federal inspection, maintain a distributing house. These distributing houses, under city inspection, are permitted to buy country-dressed meat and to sell it anywhere within the state but not outside of the state. One national packer uses the branch house in Portland to supply Washington as well as Oregon trade and does not handle country-dressed meat.

The commission firms are nearly all located on Front Street. Such commission houses provide special facilities for the sale and distribution of country-dressed meats received by them. These facilities usually consist of refrigeration, delivery service, and the necessary sale space and other items pertaining to such a business.

The commission firms that sell meat on a commission basis usually charge the producer five per cent of the gross sale price, deduct other charges such as freight and express from the gross receipts, and remit the balance to the producer. The carcasses are handled at the owner's risk. The loss of any that are condemned by the inspector ordinarily is borne by the shipper.

The commission houses and dealers handling country-dressed meat are entirely distinct and separate from the firms that buy and sell livestock on public stockyards. They are located in a different part of the city and do business in quite a different manner. The dealers and commission firms handling country-dressed meats are not subject to any rules of their own making, nor are they subject to any Federal regulations such as govern business on public stockyards. Each firm handling country-dressed meat has its own code of ethics and trade practices that are limited by ordinances or state laws concerning the licensing, inspection, and sanitation of such places. The business policies generally adopted consist in meeting the requirements of the law and of surviving the competition of other concerns engaged in the meat trade.

**Quality and sanitation.** Quality in meat is affected both by the workmanship of the butcher and by the type of animal slaughtered. The quality of country-dressed meat in general is not as good as that of meat from other sources. Butchering on the farm and by local butchers is usually done in whatever manner is found the most convenient. The methods used and places of slaughter are not always the best from a sanitation standpoint. The small butcher usually is better equipped than the farmer. Neither the farmer nor the country butcher usually has adequate cooling facilities for storing and handling dressed meat. Carcasses from such sources are usually shipped while warm, or at least before they have been cooled adequately. The loss from souring and spoiling is considerably greater than when cooling facilities are available.

Dressed carcasses are shipped to Portland by truck, express, and freight. Much of such meat is hauled in passenger cars, trucks, and trailers owned by farmers and butchers. There is considerable variation in the methods of wrapping and handling carcasses in shipping. Some dressed meat is carefully wrapped and shipped under good conditions. Much is indifferently wrapped and carelessly handled in shipping, all of which lowers the marketability and detracts from the appearance of the meat.

The cattle carcasses, except those that are custom killed in the larger packing houses upstate, often are quite badly mutilated in skinning and splitting. Skinning is often carelessly done by inexperienced men. The carcasses often are badly cut, which lowers the marketability and detracts from the appearance. Splitting is often carelessly and poorly done. The dressed beef shipped to Portland from the country is largely from animals of the lower market grades, such as old dairy cows, bulls, and odd lots. Many carcasses grade "cutter" or "low cutter." Such beef is used extensively by sausage and hamburger manufacturers.

The hogs killed on the farm and sold to the meat trade in Portland are ordinarily odd weights and sizes. There is considerable variation in the quality as well as in the finish of these carcasses. A number of desirable market-weight carcasses are marketed from country points, but old sows, stags, light-weight pigs, and odd lots are the general types found in country

shipments. Many dealers in Portland prefer to buy hogs that have been killed in the larger packing houses rather than by farmers. Hog carcasses contain a higher percentage of fat than is true of other livestock and hence do not cool out readily. There is more difficulty from souring around the bone, especially in the heavier cuts such as the hams and shoulders. Country-dressed pork is used largely for the fresh-meat trade. It is not as a rule as satisfactory for pickling and curing as is the pork from properly equipped packing plants.

Pork dressed on the farm often shows the results of unskillful butchering. Many carcasses are stuck in the shoulder and have been improperly scalded and scraped. Improper washing and cleaning are also common criticisms. Some farmers follow the practice of having their hogs killed by professional butchers. Such carcasses have a much better appearance than farm-dressed carcasses.

The carcasses of country-dressed lambs and sheep are somewhat better in quality than the carcasses of cattle and hogs. As indicated in Table 4, some lambs are custom-killed in state-inspected plants. Many lamb carcasses show the results of slaughtering by professional butchers and in this case compare favorably with the mutton and lamb from regular packing plants. Sheep and lambs killed on the farm by other than regular butchers usually show poor butchering. The fell on farm-killed lambs is often torn and the carcasses bruised and not always carefully washed, all of which detracts from the appearance and marketability of the meat. The inspectors in Portland believe that there has been a decided improvement in recent years in the quality and the handling of the country-dressed lamb and mutton.

Country-dressed calves are usually handled much better than other farm meats. Such calves are killed immediately after they are taken from the cows, and there is little loss from shrinkage and handling. This is a decided advantage since calves shrink rapidly after being taken away from the cow. At the public stockyards, it is the practice to kill calves as soon as possible after purchase to avoid excessive shrinkage, but at best there is some shrinkage. The meat trade in Portland is quite generally agreed that country-dressed veal is usually equal in quality to that received from the larger packing plants.

The butchering of calves is a comparatively simple process, and requires but little skill. The hide is left on and only the offal and the head, feet, and shanks are removed before shipment. The methods of handling and shipping country veal are not as good from a sanitation standpoint as the methods followed by the large packers, but country veal is generally acceptable to the meat trade and little is condemned by the inspectors in Portland. Only a small percentage of the calves are overweight, unusually thin, or immature.

**Inspection.** Country-dressed carcasses and the animals slaughtered at five plants in North Portland are inspected by regularly employed veterinarians of the Health Service of Portland. The number of inspectors and their duties have varied somewhat during the past few years. These inspectors also enforce sanitary regulations for the storage and sale of meat in the city. Each inspector is assigned to certain areas and places of business. Some of these city meat inspectors are stationed during working hours at killing plants located at North Portland. One or two of the in-

spectors usually visit the larger wholesale and retail shops and examine the meat that arrives at these places. An inspector is stationed at the City Hall subject to call by telephone for inspection at small outlying shops and at other places throughout the city where country-dressed meat is received.

The city regulations governing the inspection of the meat at killing plants are very much the same as the regulations for Federal meat inspection. Carcasses inspected at the killing plants at North Portland are inspected at the time of slaughter on the killing floor. Some of the animals killed in such plants are inspected both before and after slaughter. The ordinances of the City of Portland, however, provide that the operator or employees of such plants may stamp and offer carcasses for sale if the city inspector fails to appear after the required notification has been given.

The ordinances of the City of Portland, among other requirements, provide for the inspection of carcasses as follows:

"The carcasses of all animals which are not slaughtered in an official establishment or under Federal inspection as hereinbefore provided, shall be brought to such places as may be selected by the Chief of the Bureau of Health and shall there be inspected. Such carcasses shall have attached thereto a card setting forth the name and address of the shipper and the place where such animals were slaughtered.

"Calves shall have the liver, naval and kidneys attached to the carcass by their natural attachments. Sheep and goats shall have at least the liver and kidneys attached to the carcass by their natural attachments.

"Hogs may be shipped without the internal organs, but the body lymphatic glands must not be removed."

These country-dressed carcasses are, necessarily, inspected cold. The viscera and organs are not all available for inspection. Often considerable time has elapsed since the animals were killed. It is hardly possible that such inspections can be as thorough as when the carcasses are inspected warm shortly after killing. City inspection of country meats is made over such a wide area and in so many different places that it can not be expected to be as effective and as efficient as inspection at regular killing plants.

**Prices.** Several sales were made in Portland during this study in an effort to determine the relative costs and receipts for animals sold alive and as carcasses. Seven different firms were involved in these sales, and a record was kept of all expenses and receipts for the shipments. The animals in each of the shipments compared were of the same market grade and quality. Although there were only a few of these sales, the relative costs and receipts from each method of shipping are indicated and can be used at least to compare marketing costs.

It is observed from Table 7 that the cost of marketing the shipment of lambs was 71 cents per head when sold as carcasses and 62 cents when sold alive. The transportation cost per head for live lambs was more than double the cost of shipping such animals as dressed carcasses. The transportation cost per head for live hogs and live calves was also more than for the carcasses. The net returns per 100 pounds live weight on the farm



Table 7. RECEIPTS AND MARKETING EXPENSES PER HEAD FOR DRESSED CARCASSES AND LIVE ANIMALS SOLD IN PORTLAND

	Kind of livestock and method of marketing							
	Lambs		Hogs		Hogs		Calves	
	Carcass	Alive	Carcass	Alive	Carcass	Alive	Carcass	Alive
<i>Receipts</i>								
Number of head .....	10	65	7	7	10	22	10	17
Live weight per head at farm, pounds	73	76.45	185.28	193.86	214.90	216.50	210.50	203.59
Selling weight per head alive, pounds	.....	73.38	.....	185.00	.....	209.09	.....	196.47
Selling weight per head dressed, pounds .....	35.50	.....	138.57	.....	160.60	.....	139.10	.....
Selling price per 100 pounds alive.....	\$11.50	\$ 6.50	.....	\$ 4.35	.....	\$ 5.50	.....	\$ 6.00
Selling price per 100 pounds dressed	.....	.....	\$ 5.43	.....	\$ 6.94	.....	\$ 7.22	.....
Other receipts .....	\$ 0.35	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Dock .....	.....	\$ 0.06	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Gross selling price per head.....	\$ 4.43	\$ 4.71	\$ 7.52	\$ 8.05	\$11.15	\$11.50	\$10.04	\$11.79
<i>Sale costs per head</i>								
Commission .....	\$ 0.21	\$ 0.16	\$ 0.38	\$ 0.22	\$ 0.56	\$ 0.22	\$ 0.51	\$ 0.35
Yardage .....	.....	.09	.....	.12	.....	.12	.....	.22
Insurance .....	.....	.00	.....	.01	.....	.006	.....	.006
Butchering charge .....	.35	.....	1.00	.....	1.00	.....	.50	.....
Transportation .....	.15	.37	.56	.92	.71	.84	.61	.98
Total sale cost per head.....	\$ 0.71	\$ 0.62	\$ 1.94	\$ 1.27	\$ 2.27	\$ 1.19	\$ 1.62	\$ 1.56
Net returns per head .....	\$ 3.73	\$ 4.09	\$ 5.58	\$ 6.78	\$ 8.88	\$10.37	\$ 8.42	\$10.23
Net returns per 100 pounds alive.....	5.10	5.34	3.01	3.50	4.13	4.79	4.00	5.02

were also greater for those animals sold alive. On the basis of live weights on the farm, live lambs brought 23¢ more, live hogs 49 and 66¢ more, and live calves \$1.02 more per hundred pounds than similar animals marketed dressed.

In each of these shipments truckloads of live animals were marketed so that it was possible to take advantage of the rates for full truckloads of livestock to Portland. In some of the sales reported in Table 7 the animals were shipped with enough other livestock to make up a truckload and thereby take advantage of the lower rate for a full truckload.

The total marketing cost per head for each of the shipments was greater when the animals were sold as carcasses. It should be noted, however, that the butchering charge was included in the cost of marketing carcasses. In the shipments reported in Table 7 all slaughtering was done by men experienced in butchering, and charges represent the usual custom charges for slaughtering.

The net returns for each of the sales compared indicate that it was more profitable in each instance to sell the animals alive. Lambs sold for 36¢ more per head alive than as carcasses. One shipment of live hogs showed a net return of \$1.49 per head greater than as carcasses, another shipment \$1.20 per head greater. The calves returned \$1.81 more per head when sold alive.

Producers in comparing prices of live animals and for dressed carcasses too often do not take into consideration the dressing percentage of livestock. It is generally accepted by those in the meat trade that the following dressing percentages are representative for good butcher animals. Extra-quality animals will yield more. Poorer-quality animals will yield less.

	<i>Dressing per cent</i>
Hogs .....	75
Calves .....	66½
Lambs .....	50

Dressing percentage represents the proportion  
of carcass to live weight.

**Price quotations and grades.** Live animals and dressed carcasses vary widely in kind and quality. The Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the United States Department of Agriculture maintains a price-reporting service on the public stockyards. These prices for live animals are based on standard grades of livestock which have been established by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and are generally recognized by livestock producers and others. Such prices are published by the leading daily papers and make it possible to compare quotations for similar grades of animals on the different livestock markets. Representative sales showing the price, weight, and class of animals sold are also published for the Portland livestock market.

The prices reported for the different grades and classes of dressed carcasses at Portland are assembled by the market news editors of the daily papers at Portland. The grades for dressed carcasses are local grades and do not necessarily have any connection with similar grades for live animals. It is doubtful whether even the highest prices quoted for the different

Table 8. MONTHLY AVERAGE PRICES PER HUNDRED POUNDS FOR "FANCY" VEAL CARCASSES AND "GOOD TO CHOICE" LIVE CALVES ON DRESSED-WEIGHT\* BASIS AT PORTLAND, 1931-1934

	1931		1932		1933		1934		Average	
	"Good to choice" calves, dressed basis	"Fancy" country-dressed veal	"Good to choice" calves, dressed basis	"Fancy" country-dressed veal	"Good to choice" calves, dressed basis	"Fancy" country-dressed veal	"Good to choice" calves, dressed basis	"Fancy" country-dressed veal	"Good to choice" calves, dressed basis	"Fancy" country-dressed veal
January .....	\$16.41	\$15.25	\$11.62	\$11.75	\$ 7.87	\$ 8.12	\$ 8.58	\$ 8.05	\$11.12	\$10.79
February ....	15.84	15.00	11.62	11.50	8.64	8.56	10.35	9.69	11.61	11.19
March .....	15.56	13.50	11.06	10.10	8.90	8.55	10.88	10.13	11.60	10.57
April .....	14.91	13.40	9.42	9.50	8.52	7.94	9.82	9.37	10.67	10.05
May .....	13.17	11.87	8.28	8.88	8.79	7.45	7.60	7.55	9.46	8.93
June .....	12.00	11.25	7.42	7.60	9.57	7.45	7.04	7.12	9.01	8.36
July .....	12.22	12.60	7.12	8.00	9.38†	8.31	7.68	7.69	9.10	9.15
August .....	12.00	13.37	7.69	9.00	10.31†	9.40	9.02	9.60	9.76	10.34
September ....	12.00	14.00	9.28	9.62	9.98	10.12	10.50	10.87	10.44	11.15
October .....	11.82	11.62	8.43	8.50	9.84	8.81	9.75	10.25	9.96	9.80
November .....	11.16	10.75	7.89	7.10	9.15	7.40	9.57	9.37	9.44	8.66
December ....	10.88	10.20	7.89	6.62	8.25	7.00	8.73	9.19	8.94	8.25
Average .....	\$13.16	\$12.64	\$ 8.97	\$ 9.02	\$ 9.10	\$ 8.26	\$ 9.13	\$ 9.08	\$10.09	\$ 9.77

\*The live weight quotations for Good to Choice calves were divided by .66 $\frac{2}{3}$  to obtain an equivalent dressed price.

†Daily newspaper quotations.

classes of dressed carcasses are representative of the prices for dressed meat from the best quality of live animals. There are no established grades for dressed carcasses that are generally recognized by the trade, nor is there a public record of actual sales of dressed carcasses. On the other hand, the sales of live animals at the stockyards are a matter of public record. The name of the buyer, the sale price, and the weight are recorded on the scale ticket for each sale. These sales are constantly checked by buyers, market reporters, and others interested.

There is such a great variation in the quality of dressed beef and hog carcasses that few, if any, of the prices can be compared with prices for live animals. Comparatively few of the best quality of beef carcasses are shipped from the country butchers to Portland. There is also much variation in the weight and quality of hog carcasses shipped by producers and butchers to Portland. It is doubtful whether the prices for any of the different grades of dressed carcasses of beef and pork are comparable to the prices quoted for established grades of live cattle and pigs.

An attempt was made to compare the prices of "good to choice" live lambs with the highest prices quoted for country-dressed lambs, but there was so much variation and the prices were so inconsistent with the usual variation in prices for lambs, that the attempt was abandoned.

**Quotations for dressed veal and live calves.** There is a considerable quantity of high-quality calves at the stockyards at Portland. A large supply of high-quality calves are marketed as dressed carcasses at Portland. The average monthly prices for "good to choice" live calves reported by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics were tabulated for the four years. The average dressing percentage of this class of live calves is usually two-thirds of the live weight. The prices for live calves were converted to a dressed-weight price.

The prices for "Fancy" veal carcasses reported in the daily papers at Portland were tabulated. A comparison of the average monthly prices for live calves and veal carcasses for 1931 to 1934 is given in Table 8.

Carcasses termed "Fancy" veal averaged 32¢ per hundred pounds lower in price than "Good to Choice" calves on a dressed basis; that is, live calves of this quality were quoted at 21¢ per hundred pounds more than the best quality of calves that were killed in the country.

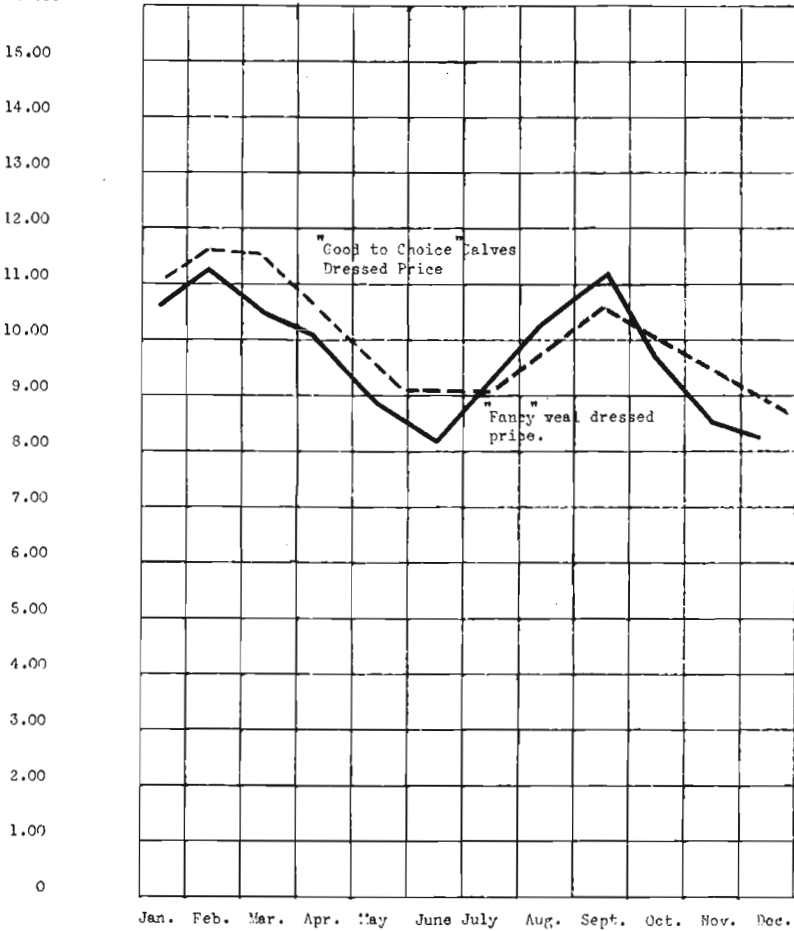
During nine months of the year, the prices for "Fancy" veal carcasses averaged 47 cents per hundred less than the prices for live calves on a dressed basis. During August and September "Fancy" veal was quoted for more than "Good to Choice" calves would have sold dressed. During these two months dressed veal averaged 64¢ per hundred more than the carcass value of the live calves. The average monthly prices for the veal carcasses and for live calves at the dressed value for the four years are shown in the chart on page 21.

It is shown in the chart that the prices for dressed veal were higher only during the months of August and September. During the remainder of the year calves sold alive would bring the producer more than calves of similar quality sold as dressed carcasses. There was a decrease in the number of veal carcasses marketed during August and September as shown in Table 5, which undoubtedly accounts for the higher price for dressed calves during the months of August and September.

THE MARKETING OF COUNTRY-DRESSED MEAT IN PORTLAND 21

It appears that marketing alive was in general more profitable provided the calves could be shipped in full carloads or truckloads. Where shipping in full carloads or truckloads is not possible, shipping dressed seems to be the only outlet for the small producer.

Price per  
hundred  
pounds  
\$16.00



Monthly average prices for "Fancy" veal carcasses and "Good to Choice" live calves on a dressed basis, Portland 1931-1934.

### ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE

The market for country-dressed meat is a convenience for the farmer who markets only one or two head of animals at a time. Often there are no facilities available to the farmer for marketing a small number of live animals. Such animals can be killed on the farm or by the local butcher and the meat can be shipped to Portland by rail or truck. The cost of transportation for less than a truckload of live animals to Portland is often prohibitive. In many places in the Willamette Valley there are no trucking companies that provide facilities and service at rates low enough to induce shippers to send less than truckloads of live animals to market. In Eastern Oregon there are several truck lines that have established facilities and service so that the cost of shipping live animals in less than full truckloads is low enough for the producer to ship to Portland.

The freight rates for less than carload lots of live animals are so high that few less-than-car-lots of live animals are sent to Portland by rail.\* In some sections of Oregon cooperative shipping associations or professional shippers provide a good outlet for small lots, but at many shipping points the volume of business is too small to justify either a shipping association or a private shipper. Farmers at such points therefore accept the lower marketability and decreased quality of country-dressed meat because of the inconvenience and expense of selling less than carload or truckload lots. Local butchers frequently buy everything they can get in their locality and then market their surplus meat, if any, in the form of dressed carcasses. This is a great convenience to these local butchers as it gives them an immediate outlet for any and all surplus meat. It also makes it possible for them to buy whatever their local farmers offer.

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\* June 1935. At this date radical revisions in less than carload rates for livestock are under consideration.

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