

With respect to beef cattle, the trend appears to be for a separation of the calf production and finishing functions, and markets for feeder cattle are well established. Another marked trend has been for an increasing proportion of slaughter steers to be well finished. Good and choice carcasses increased from 17 p.c. to 52 p.c. of all cattle slaughtered in inspected plants between 1950 and 1961. Total meat consumption per person increased from 127.1 lb. to 147.6 lb. in that period, beef accounting for almost all the increase although there was also some advance in lamb and canned meats. Meat prices relative to income levels declined during the period.

Probably the most important trend in fluid milk marketing in recent years has been the replacement of the milk can with the bulk tank. While this has made possible the provision of higher quality fluid milk, especially in hot weather, it has impaired the competitive position of the small-scale fluid milk shipper. There has also been a trend for city dairies to supply small town and village markets at a considerable distance from the dairy. Milk is shipped in cartons several hundred miles and in some provinces local dairies serving small towns have virtually disappeared.

Total consumption of fats per person has remained fairly stable in recent years but there has been a definite trend toward the consumption of less fat in dairy products. Butter consumption per person declined from 20.5 lb. in 1956 to 16.9 lb. in 1960 and there are indications of a further drop of one pound per person in 1961. Fluid whole milk also showed a slight downward trend in consumption during this period. In part, 2-p.c. milk was substituted for whole milk and the consumption of skimmed milk powder increased from 5.1 lb. per person in 1956 to 6.6 lb. in 1960.

In the fruit and vegetable field, probably the most significant development of the past decade has been the expansion of demand for frozen foods. Consumption of frozen fruits packed in consumer packages increased sixfold, on a per capita basis, between 1951 and 1960 and that of frozen vegetables about threefold. At the same time there has been a marked upward trend in the consumption of fruit juice, especially frozen concentrated, and of vegetable juice. Consumption trends for the canned and dried products have been less pronounced except when new products such as instant mashed potatoes have been introduced.

Of significance to the food producer is the trend toward complete integration of wholesaling and retailing functions for many food commodities by corporate chain store organizations. They buy directly from processors, assemblers or sometimes producers. Their share of the Canadian retail food business has increased from 32 p.c. in 1951 to over 45 p.c. in 1961. Meanwhile, the growth of voluntary chains, which effect a somewhat similar integration through contracts, has been almost phenomenal. Their share of the food business increased from 5 p.c. in 1951 to over 25 p.c. in 1961.* Associated with the development of chains, corporate and voluntary, has been the growth of self-service retailing, and associated with the trend toward self-service retailing has been the very greatly increased use of packaging. Many other developments appear to be on the horizon in food marketing. Food discount houses and 'bantam' supermarkets are being built. Vending machines may perform an important role in food distribution in the future. Techniques have been developed for the tenderization of beef before it is sold, and tenderized beef is being market-tested. New or improved processed food products and prepared foods appear on the market quite frequently.

Over the past decade consumers have tended to spend about 23 p.c. of their disposable income on food and agricultural products. With increasing incomes there has been a shift to more expensive foods and associated services. If consumers in 1960 had purchased the same basket of food as they did in 1949 it would have taken only 20 p.c. of their incomes. During the period 1953-60 the farm value as a percentage of the retail value declined from 50 p.c. to about 43 p.c. This decrease in the farm share does not indicate the relative profit or loss to the farmer but rather is largely the result of increasing expenditures for assembly, processing and distribution and the addition of extra services.

* Figures are based on unofficial estimates published in trade journals.