

Increasing transportation costs and the development of refrigeration have tended to reduce the shipment of live animals to distant markets. It is more economical to slaughter the animals close to the production area and ship the surplus product to deficit areas. The same factors are tending toward some decentralization of the packing industry. There is less country slaughter, more of the meat supplies for small towns and villages being delivered under refrigeration from inspected plants.

Prepackaging of meat before it reaches the retail counter is a trend well under way. The wrapping films now in use have been developed mostly since 1945. A growing proportion of all meats are retailed on a self-service basis but frequently in the same store there is a choice between self-service or butcher service. This type of merchandising is offered mainly in chain stores and in other large city stores. The constantly increasing consumer demand for ready-to-serve foods has resulted in the appearance of a great variety of canned and otherwise processed meat and meat products.

#### POULTRY AND EGGS

The poultry industry is rapidly assuming the characteristics of a manufacturing business. Improvements in housing, nutrition, breeding and management practices of this industry have reduced the need for poultrymen to tie production to any season of the year. Natural production cycles, peak egg production and hatchings in the spring and the growth of young chickens in summer and autumn still persist, but most commercial poultrymen are now offsetting the marketing disadvantages of these cycles.

Although commercial egg marketings were about the same in 1945 as in 1954, there was a marked difference in the regularity of supply. In 1945 April marketings were four times larger than in October when production was at a seasonal low. In 1954 however marketings were more uniformly distributed throughout the year as illustrated by the fact that production in April was only one-quarter more than in August, which had become the low month.

The poultry meat supply pattern has been levelled out by the development of the broiler business in Canada. Broilers are light weight meat-type chicken marketed throughout the year at the age of ten to twelve weeks, weighing  $3\frac{1}{2}$  lb. live weight. White breed turkeys, aged about three months, are also marketed throughout the year and weigh 7 to 8 lb. With the more regular supply of fresh poultry throughout the year, the cold storage holding of poultry and shell eggs is becoming less important and variation in price during the season is less pronounced; both of these trends have consumer appeal. The variation of Grade A Large egg prices has been reduced by more than one-third in recent years, and prices of broilers vary little throughout the year, which in turn tempers the price variation for other kinds of poultry.

Most eggs receive no processing but are sorted for quality and size before being packed in cases or cartons by producers or market agencies and sold as shell eggs. A small portion of these shell eggs intended for cold storage is dipped in a tasteless, odorless oil to help preserve quality but the tendency is for an increasing proportion of the shell eggs to move more directly from producer to the retail outlet through fewer handlers. Fewer storage eggs are reaching retail outlets. Instead surplus eggs are being broken for use as frozen egg and dried egg. Eggs in these forms, used chiefly by bakeries, confectioners and producers of dry cake mixes, enter households in forms unrecognized by consumers.

Changes in marketing poultry meat have been more spectacular than with eggs. Ten years ago poultry was commonly marketed only in the dressed form (blood and feathers removed). Although this form of marketing still dominates the poultry meat industry in Canada the development of the broiler industry is rapidly bringing about a change. Broilers are marketed in the ready-to-cook form either as whole chicken or in parts and as a result increasing quantities of heavy poultry are being sold in the ready-to-cook form. Large numbers of fowl are also being canned whole.

Increased domestic consumption of poultry products in recent years is largely attributable to the changes in production and marketing. Egg consumption has increased on a per capita basis as well as with population growth and the per capita consumption of poultry has gone up slightly more than one-third in the past few years. Poultry in Canada is no longer a Sunday treat but has become an everyday dish.