

The smaller, less-sophisticated producers usually deal with *introductores*, commission agents, collectors or transporters. The *introductor* delivers the live animals to the slaughterhouse and supervises their slaughter. Usually, the entire carcass is taken from the slaughterhouse to the abattoir, to be cut into the different prime cuts. Pork is practically never sold in a carcass form but rather in prime cuts directly by the abattoir or the slaughterhouse. The meat usually is not refrigerated after being slaughtered or during transportation to the abattoir because it is easier to cut with a knife when it is warm. The entrails are mostly sold to wholesalers and the head is often sold to head dealers who break it down and sell the parts to processors of *queso de puerco*, pork headcheese.

The meat packers purchase legs and backs to produce smoked ham, ribs for smoked ribs, trimmings for sausages, salami and *chorizo*, and bellies for bacon. Friers buy the *manteca*, fat, and the skins to prepare *chicharrones*, cracklings, and *carnitas*, small pieces of meat. All of these products are often sold in the streets or from small stands. Butcher shops and supermarkets purchase what is called *capote*, or boneless, fatless meat, such as legs, whole loins and tongues. They then cut the larger pieces into retail pieces, such as chops and loins. The Mexican consumer favours boneless fresh lean meats with no visible fat.

THE MEXICO CITY MARKET

Mexico City consumers are responsible for about 60 percent of Mexican pork consumption. The government is building nine or ten slaughterhouses that conform to *Tipo Inspección Federal (TIF)*, sanitary inspection standards, around Mexico City and more in the main pork producing centres to try to stop the underground market for "warm" meat.

A significant part of the Mexican meat trade goes through the *Central de Abastos*, perishable food terminal, in Mexico City, enroute to small retailers.

The Mexican Government and the *Comisión Nacional de Porcicultores (CONAPOR)*, National Commission for Pork Producers, have embarked on a national campaign to promote the consumption of *TIF* pork, using point-of-sale promotions and discounts.

Total consumption in Mexico City is about 50,000 tonnes per month. Interviews with industry experts suggested that consumption should increase by 40 percent to 70,000 tonnes by 1996, but this was prior to the December 1994 devaluation.