

Beef prices

Steer prices in Toronto will probably remain in the range of \$62 to \$65 a hundredweight during July-September, says Agriculture Canada economist Gordon Pugh, who predicts some price strengthening, owing to reduced supply, during October-November. Good feeder steer calf prices at western markets should be about \$70 a hundredweight. However, prices in the balance of 1978 are not expected to return to the levels rated in June.

Prices received by beef producers in the second quarter of 1978 surpassed all records. Says Mr. Pugh: "The abruptness, the rapidity and the magnitude of these recent price increases are surprising, especially in view of the rather modest reductions in beef production and supplies which have occurred on a North American basis, particularly in the United States."

Beef prices hit a record price of \$72 a hundredweight for steers at Toronto this spring.

"Barring a major shortfall in cattle slaughter over the next three to four months, the softening of cattle prices which occurred in June is likely to continue for the next three to four months," says Mr. Pugh.

Lower than U.S. prices

He expects that Canadian cattle slaughter rates will fall proportionately lower than those in the U.S. because of heavy exports of feeder cattle during 1977-78. As a result, Canadian cattle prices will probably remain higher than American prices. U.S. live cattle imports are expected.

North American cattle numbers have been declining for three years, and there should be a sharper reduction in the number of slaughter cattle on offer in the second half of 1978 compared to that in the first half.

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Algunos números de esta publicación aparecen también en español bajo el título Noticiero de Canadá.

News briefs

Dr. Robert Elgie has been appointed to the Ontario provincial Cabinet as Minister of Labour, replacing Dr. Bette Stephenson, who will assume responsibility for education and colleges and universities. It is the second time in eight months that Premier William Davis has conducted a major Cabinet shuffle. Seven ministers have been given new portfolios.

The Export Development Corporation and the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce have signed a \$4.4-million loan agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture of Greece for the sale of two *CL-215* waterbombers for use in fighting forest fires. The sale, by Canadair Ltd., Montreal, has generated 196 man-years of employment at Canadair and four major sub-suppliers in Canada and includes spare parts and related equipment.

Ontario Treasurer Darcy McKeough announced his resignation from politics on August 16, after 15 years in the provincial legislature. The MPP for Kent West cited personal reasons for his decision. Former Minister of Natural Resources Frank Miller has been sworn in as the new Treasurer and Minister of Economic Affairs.

Mobil Oil Canada Ltd. plans to begin a \$15-million, five-year project to test the recovery of heavy oil at the Celtic field in Saskatchewan.

Ontario Ombudsman Arthur Maloney has announced his intention to resign on October 9. He did not specifically state the reasons for his decision, but said he intended to return to practising law.

Seasonally-adjusted retail sales for June were \$5,782.4 million, an increase of 2.3 per cent from the \$5,650.4 million recorded in May. Sales were up in 21 of the 28 trade groups. Eight provinces reported increased sales over May, ranging from 5.3 per cent for Ontario to 0.1 per cent for Alberta; the only decreases were in Prince Edward Island (-2.2 per cent) and Manitoba (-0.3 per cent). Total retail trade without seasonal adjustment reached \$6,271.5 million, up 17.0 percent over the amount recorded in June 1977. Sales increased in 27 of the 28 trade groups. All provinces had increased sales over business in June 1977, ranging from 24.3 per cent for Nova Scotia to 11.8 per cent for Manitoba. Montreal sales rose 13.4 per cent; Toronto, 18.5 per cent; Winnipeg, 10.4 per cent; and Vancouver, 22.5

per cent. Revised total retail trade, unadjusted for seasonal influences, for May was \$5,971.4 million, an increase of 4.6 percent over the figure in May 1977.

Courses on Canadian history, compulsory for Ontario's Grades Seven and Eight students, will offer a new unit called social reform this year, emphasizing the development of trade unionism and women's suffrage as agents of social change. Ontario's Ministry of Education has prepared a resource guide with suggested topics and materials for classroom discussion which labour organizations hope will acquaint students with the role played by unions in Canadian history.

Thanks to research by Agriculture Canada, the first commercially produced mechanized two-row burley tobacco cutters in North America are being manufactured in Tillsonburg, Ontario, this year. (Burley tobacco differs from flue-cured tobacco in that burley is harvested by cutting the whole plant at the base. Flue-cured tobacco is harvested leaf by leaf.) Mechanical harvesting takes less than 2.5 man hours a hectare — unlike the 20 man hours required for normal harvesting. The Tillsonburg company has a production run of 30 machines underway for the 1978 harvesting of the burley tobacco, most of which is exported and used in a blend with other tobaccos for cigarettes and pipe tobacco.

The Federal Government and Alberta have agreed not to increase the ratio of natural gas to crude oil prices in central Canada from the present 85 per cent. The agreement, effective for one year from August 1, 1978, results in a new wholesale price of natural gas at Toronto of \$2 a million BTUs. Natural gas-pricing policy will be reviewed jointly by the two governments before the end of 1978. Particular attention will be given to the development of markets for Canadian gas in eastern Canada to replace imported oil.

City children, many of whom have never seen or touched a farm animal, have discovered a farm in metropolitan Toronto that is designed just for them. A renovated 1830 barn, a farmhouse in the style of the mid-nineteenth century and a small animal barn have been moved to the site of a former zoo for the September opening. Toronto's parks department is responsible for the new attraction, which has elicited squeals of surprise and delight from children amazed to discover that the animals on the farm are alive.