

SWINE PRODUCTION IN THE NINE-STATE AREA

The nine states included in this study have historically been deficit states as more pork is consumed in the area than is produced.

A situation whereby a region has high per capita consumption of a food product and simultaneously has relatively low production of the product is something of an abnormality. The pork consumption and production relationship in the South can be explained through a historical perspective. The population of the region was predominately rural until recent decades. Most of the families raised a few hogs that were slaughtered for home consumption. A taste for pork evolved, but large scale commercial production units were slow to develop. Pork processing facilities were also retarded as pork was traditionally processed on farms.

The consumption-production situation that currently exists in the region has also been strongly influenced by the South being a seriously deficit area in feed grain production. It has been necessary to ship large quantities of grain in from midwestern states (Midwest). There seem to be few developments to suggest that the South will not continue to be deficit in grain and hence in pork production. Indeed, some livestock specialists project that increasing transportation costs will result in a higher portion of the pork consumed in the South being shipped in from the Midwest. They suggest that as transportation rates rise it will become more advantageous to ship the finished product (pork) compared to shipping the raw material (corn).

The 1976-1980 Period. While the long-term future of the pork industry in the South is open to question, increases in production have taken place in recent years. Growth has occurred in Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee in particular (Table 5).