

SLAUGHTERHOUSES

In 1993, there were 444 municipal and private pork slaughterhouses, about two-thirds of which were in the states of Jalisco, México, Michoacán, Sinaloa, Nayarit and Puebla. In addition, there were 109 plants complying with Mexico's *Tipo Inspección Federal (TIF)*, sanitary inspection standards. Twenty-five of these, representing 11 companies, are exclusively pork plants. The others are mainly beef and poultry plants, although some slaughter both beef and pork.

Ten of the 109 *TIF* plants are accredited by the United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) to ship meat to the United States. About 80 percent of all *TIF* plants are owned and operated by the regional livestock producers unions.

PROCESSORS

There are an estimated 150 meat processing companies in Mexico producing a wide variety of fresh pork cuts and processed pork products from domestic and imported half-carasses and imported carcasses as well as prime cuts.

The processing sector is about 85 percent Mexican-owned, and consists mostly of large companies. Foreign multinationals account for about 15 percent of production. The domestic firms benefit from a detailed knowledge of local tastes that is needed to produce many popular value-added cuts.

DISTRIBUTION

Distribution channels vary according to cut, quality and price. There are two market segments with approximately equal shares of the market:

- the "formal" market, formed by large firms, focusses mainly on supplying the supermarkets and large wholesalers; and
- the "informal" market, composed of a large number of small companies, caters to minor retail stores in urban areas and small towns.

There are an estimated 600 sausage and packing plants that range from highly sophisticated, world-class operations to small-scale operators.

Small packers and processors prefer to deal with minor retailers because they represent a cash market. Supermarkets use discounts that are charged back to the processor. Furthermore, they take 40 days or more to pay and have demanding service requirements.