

Cattle Feeding in the Nine States. As indicated earlier, relatively few cattle are fed out in the South. Texas is the only exception to this. The area finishes about 16 to 18 per cent of the cattle fed in the nation with Texas accounting for 80 per cent (or more) of the total fed in the area. The number of cattle on feed in the area during 1977 to January, 1981, is shown in Table 4.

The Structure of Cattle Production in the Nine States. The United States Department of Agriculture reported that 444,800 farm operations in the nine states had cattle in 1979. This was 26 per cent of the operations with cattle reported in the United States for that year. Texas and Florida have the largest operations in the area. About 14 per cent of the operations in Florida have 100 or more head of cattle, but these herds comprise approximately 83 per cent of that state's cattle inventory. The situation is similar in Texas as about 75 per cent of the cattle inventory of the state is in the herds of 100 or more. These herds are in the hands of 15 per cent of the operations in the state that have cattle. The concentration of cattle in these states differs markedly from the situation in some other southern states. The reports show that in Tennessee for example, only about five per cent of the cattle operations have more than 100 head and only about 33 per cent of the cattle of the state are in these herds (Table 5).

#### PROJECTIONS FOR THE BEEF INDUSTRY IN THE NINE STATES, 1981-1985

Beef Consumption. Per capita consumption of beef in the nine states is typically below the national average. Mississippi has the lowest per capita consumption of any state in the area and is among the lowest nationally. While also below the national average, Florida and Texas have the highest per capita consumption of the area (Table 6).