Pork Prices Up; Beef Down; Sugar Co.'s Plead Innocent

Sharply higher pork prices appear to be a certainty this year, industry and government analysts say. The reason — the supply of pork in 1975 is expected to be the lowest in 37 years.

In related food industry news, wholesale beef prices last month dropped to their lowest levels in two years, and six sugar companies last month entered innocent pleas in a price-fixing case against them.

Many observers expect as much as a 10 percent rise in retail pork prices. A few say prices may even top the records, set in August 1973, though the economic recession and record beef supplies are likely to prevent that. Also, industry sources say there is little chance of rebuilding pork supplies to price-depressing levels until perhaps 1977. The reason for this outlook is last year's disappointing corn crop, soaring feed prices and resulting wide-scale liquidation of breeding stock by hog producers.

The six sugar companies in-