



compiled by
Herman Zaccarelli

Fast food forecast: 62% growth by 1985

Twenty fast food companies surveyed by the Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, report they anticipate a 62 percent expansion by 1980, despite a slowing of the growth rate of the fast food industry in 1974-75.

Sales volume increases for 1972-74 showed annual gains of at least 20 percent each year, it was reported. For 1975-76, gains slowed to an annual 10 percent, it was estimated.

The lesser rate of gain, as the total base grows bigger, reflects higher capital expansion costs as well as market saturation.

Projected 1980 sales are \$16.3 billion domestically and an additional \$1.6 billion for foreign affiliates of the fast food chains.

Eating and drinking sales: steady upward trend

Bureau of the Census advance data indicates October 1976 sales for U.S. eating and drinking places were \$4.481 billion, or 6.5 percent ahead of the comparable month last year, the National Restaurant Association reports.

Total retail sales advanced 6.4 percent from October 1975.

For the first 10 months of 1976, eating and drinking place sales totalled \$43.4 billion, up 10.3 percent from last year, while total retail sales were up 11.3 percent and foodstore sales were up 6.6 percent.

U.S. eating place sales for September 1976 totalled \$3.690 billion, an 11.2 percent increase from the previous September.

Real sales, expressed in 1967 dollars to adjust for rising menu prices, rose 5 percent from the first 9 months of 1975.

Foodservice bulletin

"Refreezing meat does not affect quality"

Below zero temperatures (the lower the better) are best for holding frozen meat, according to John R. Romans, associate professor of animal science, University of Illinois, and P. Thomas Ziegler, professor emeritus of animal husbandry, Pennsylvania State University, in their book *The Meat We Eat*.

Frozen meat that has been thawed under refrigeration need not be used immediately as is commonly recommended, they advise, because repeated tests have shown that such meat will keep as long as fresh meat properly refrigerated.

They also state that refreezing meat does not materially affect its quality. This does not mean that one should become careless, but it also suggests one need not panic about using all the meat in a package that has been thawed if it is more than needed for the meal. Rewrap it, refreeze it, and use it at another time, they say.

They do point out that every time frozen meat is thawed it will lose some of the meat juices. If the position of the thawed meat package is reversed — that is, turned over — when replaced in the freezer for refreezing, these juices will be reabsorbed to a large extent, Romans and Ziegler advise.

Working women, more foodservice

The growing number of women in the workforce is among reasons the foodservice industry continues strong growth. It is reported that 35 percent of women today view their work as a career, not just a job till they get married or, if married, just to help pay the family bills.

By 1985 women will probably constitute half the national workforce between ages 35 and 44.

The price of meat: where do we stand?

Among predictions for meat supplies and prices in 1977:

U.S. per capita consumption of beef in 1976 reached a record high of 127.5 pounds

(carcass weight).

Beef slaughter production is expected to decline 5 percent in 1977 compared with 1976, while pork slaughter production will increase 15 percent.

Actual beef production will be down about 2 to 3 percent, due to heavier weights of cattle marketed.

Lower beef production means per capita consumption of beef will decline to about 123 pounds in 1977.

U.S. per capita pork consumption in 1975 reached a 40-year low at 54.8 pounds (carcass weight). It was up in 1976 to approximately 56.6 pounds. Pork supplies through 1977 could go up 15 to 20 percent over 1976, to about 64 pounds per capita consumption.

Calf slaughter is expected to be down 15 to 20 percent in 1977, to 3 pounds of veal per capita.

Lamb production is expected to continue its downward trend, to 1.8 pounds per capita, 10 percent under 1976.

With the increase forecast for pork, total red meat consumption in 1977 could almost equal the record of 191.8 pounds per capita set in 1971. The components round out to about 120 to 122 pounds of beef, 3 pounds of veal, 64 pounds of pork, and less than 2 pounds of lamb.

Beef prices will average about 10 cents per pound retail higher in 1977 than in 1976, while pork prices may average 5 cents or more lower.

The demand for sausage and processed meats will be very high in 1977.

The primary market for sausage and processed meats is that segment of the U.S. population 25 to 34 years of age, and this segment increased 23 percent during the past 5 years.

Increases in per capita consumption of red meat will be at a slower rate through 1990, due to slower population growth, among other reasons. For instance, the percentage of young men as part of the total population will decline, and this is the group which historically consumes meat at an above average rate.

38 cents of meat dollar to foodservice

About 38 percent of all money spent for meat by U.S. consumers goes to away-from-home eating establishments.