Gentlemen, I am happy for the opportunity to speak to such a learned group of people. If the average consumer only knew how much is done in her behalf in the scientific community, maybe she would be more assured. It is too bad that her exposure to all these efforts is so minimal. And, of course, vice versa, that it often takes very long for your efforts to bear fruit.

I was asked to talk about "Trends in Meat Marketing." Now trends are slow in forming—and slow in changing.

Consumerism really is no longer a trend. It is here—and it has been with us for some time. What is maybe a more recent trend is that finally supermarkets are taking up the battle cry of consumerism. Manufacturers, being somewhat more insulated from the public have not always responded. One aspect of this trend, therefore, is a needed awareness of the manufacturer about the condition of their product—not only at the time that it is sold to wholesalers or going to supermarkets, but all the way until the time it is purchased by the ultimate consumer. Completely through the distribution cycle to the consumer.

Another way of expressing this is that attention should be paid to the actual use rather than the intended use of the product. Does the supplier know how the retailer uses and abuses its product? Does the manufacturer feel responsible to the public? Especially in this perishable field. Does the supermarket understand the capabilities of the manufacturers enough to ask for improved services—services which benefit the consumer?

I also believe that Dr. Wodicka's recent speech is causing reverberations and may be trend setting. In this speech he placed the ultimate responsibility of quality of products squarely in the lap of the supermarket. In the past, retailers have not felt responsible and customer dissatisfaction was often passed on to the manufacturer.

The implications to you, my audience, can be outlined as follows:

Starting at the breeding of cattle, there should be a complete job done—and coordinated—to arrive at a conclusion as to the entire spectrum of customer wants.

Whereas today the breeder is most concerned with feed conversion rates, we should really find out what the customer prefers in areas of tenderness, color, and flavor.

The effects of stress of the animal on subsequent customer satisfaction of the meat from the animal. Could we develop ways to identify dark cutters and PSE meat before slaughter?--A so-called "on the hoof" or "on the feet"--test?

During the processing step, starting at slaughter, we should study subsequent cooling rates and cleanliness in the abattoir. What effects are irrevocably established here which can change the desirability of a cut of meat bought by the customer? There are many technical innovations and handling procedures which could stand closer scrutiny since we really do not know how each and everyone affects the marketability of the meat.

As a general statement, we certainly should ask ourselves, "How long can we allow pork with possible Trichinosis and chicken with Salmonella be handled with the same equipment and hands in the one supermarket backroom? To say nothing of fish, ham, cole slaw, etc.

But before passing rules and regulations, facts should be collected by the government and the scientific community. The pork industry in turn should be prepared to follow the lead of the chicken industry.

Having been involved in the supermarket industry, and more specifically in a complete central meat retail prepackaging plant for the past few years, it became obvious that we were the last link in a long chain, this meat marketing chain.

And it is obvious to me that most supermarkets are very limited in their outlook regarding this entire long chain.

The sudden large jump in the wholesale price of meat has literally shocked the merchandisers. While we had a "creeping inflation" they more or less got used to one increase before the next one came along, and they did not basically alter their habits or ideas.

But the sudden leaps have rudely awakened them so that they are now convinced new marketing methods have to be tried.

From the point of view of increased control alone, more centralized processing and packaging is a most logical step. Maybe a combination of consumerism, regulations by the government and high meat prices will be sufficient for many to realize that they have to make this step.

Any man knowledgeable of meat, and which cuts come from which part of the animal, will agree with me that there is a great mystery about the price the customer apparently is willing to pay for a particular cut of meat.

Any New York butcher knows the magic of a name or the "looks" of a cut of meat in selling a similar cut for more money. That is called salesmanship and will be a thing of the past.
But this may show the artificiality of present retail pricing.

The variability of cut-outs of carcass beef is also an area worthy of investigation, especially as it relates to the present grading standards.

There is nothing new about the money which can be saved by improved sanitation at retail. Consumer pressure will demand it, and supermarkets will use it as a marketing tool. It would not surprise me to see advertising slogans to read "we sell the cleanest meat in town." And that will attract customers—or "we run the cleanest butchershop in town."

I have always been somewhat prejudiced toward the importance of temperature control as a means to provide marketing flexibility, through longer shelf life of meat.

If there is one trend clearly visible, then it is an increased awareness at the operating level of the importance of longer shelflife, through a combination of lower tonnage sales at higher unit prices.

So, I predict that more and more people will begin to heed temperature throughout the entire cycle, not just in the supermarket itself.

The atomic energy commission did good work in spoilage-retarding studies using radiation. This work was dropped by the AEC. The industry should revive it if there is any hope that this scientific improvement will have any impact on the future of meat handling and marketing.

To sum up, therefore, the present economy is forcing the meat industry to make some drastic management decisions fast. The future is for those companies who will dare to make the big steps forward.

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W. E. POWELL: Thank you, Bert. I'm sure that stimulated some thought and some questions and I would like to remind you to jot them down now if you would like to ask Bert at the end of the next talk.

The second speaker on our panel before we get into some questions, is Karl Hoke, who is another noted Dutchman but from here in Pennsylvania, being a native son of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Karl is an alumnus of Penn State and received his undergraduate training here in meat science. He conducted graduate studies for the M.S. degree at Iowa State before going to work with the Livestock Division of the USDA. He transferred to the Market Quality Research Division of ARS and is presently under the recently reorganized Transportation and Packaging Laboratory of the Agricultural Marketing Research Institute, USDA. Karl will speak to us on the trends of marketing, emphasizing the need for new and improved transportation systems. Karl.