

Meat-production in the Argentine Republic.

As the Argentine is a competitor with New Zealand in the meat-export trade, it may be well to consider a few facts regarding it. The area of the Argentine is eleven times larger than that of New Zealand. On this area there are 29,000,000 cattle, 80,000,000 sheep, and 3,000,000 swine. Its population is about 9,000,000. The growth of the meat industry in the Argentine Republic has been remarkable. In the world's commerce its importance is the greatest in beef products. Its export of mutton was less than 200,000 carcasses in 1884, and rose to 2,000,000 carcasses in 1895. Since that year on it has grown slowly to 1902, when over 3,000,000 carcasses were exported, and reached the highest point of 3,679,587 carcasses in 1904. From then on to 1913 the number of carcasses exported annually fluctuated from a little less to somewhat more than 3,000,000. In 1913 there was a decided decline in numbers. It would seem, therefore, that the maximum output of mutton has been reached in the Argentine.

The export of frozen beef from Argentina started in 1884, when 112 quarters were shipped. From that year onwards the frozen-beef trade grew rather spasmodically until 1899, when exported frozen beef-quarters jumped from 71,463 to 113,984. In 1904 over 1,000,000 quarters were exported, and in 1912 over 2,000,000 quarters were exported. In 1913 the export declined to 1,100,000 quarters.

In 1901 the chilled-beef industry had a beginning in the Argentine, when 24,919 quarters were exported. This trade has grown with only one set-back (in 1908) until, in 1913, 2,989,805 quarters were exported. The great change in 1913 in quantity of frozen beef and chilled beef exported doubtless indicates that Argentine exports will tend in the future to the chilled-beef class. The combined figures of frozen beef and chilled beef, however, in 1913 show a decrease of 263,511 quarters below 1912, which may indicate that slaughterings in Argentina are as great as present breeding-stock will permit.

Nearly all the Argentine beef is shipped to Great Britain. Argentina is now the mainstay of the British beef-market, as shown by the following figures for 1913:—

IMPORTS OF MEAT INTO GREAT BRITAIN.

Source.	Beef Chilled. Cwt.	Beef Frozen. Cwt.	Mutton Frozen. Cwt.
Argentina	5,216,022	1,955,853	1,012,347
Other countries	31,982	398,840	4,191,900

In the Argentine the increase in the supply of breeding-animals does not appear to be keeping pace with the slaughter of animals for beef. The sale and slaughter of females has been a matter of public investigation in Argentina. It is believed, however, that high prices have checked this practice, and that now there is a tendency to retain these for breeding purposes.

Breeding methods in Argentina are on a high plane. The universal custom of buying the best animals and best blood regardless of price, with highly enlightened and long-continued experience in breeding operations have given Argentina a stock of beef cattle of very high excellence.

In order the better to appreciate the position in regard to cattle that New Zealand holds, the following figures taken from reliable sources show the percentage of cattle compared with population in different countries:—

	Number of Cattle to every 100 of Population.
Argentina	322
New Zealand	197
Denmark	83
United States	69
Sweden	48
Switzerland	38
Canada	36
France	36
Austria	32
Germany	31
United Kingdom	27

Baby Beef.

This is a phase of beef-production in America the demand for which is increasing yearly. Baby beefs eighteen to twenty months of age which will dress 500 lb. to 600 lb. of beef are preferred by the packers, can be handled to best advantage by the local butchers, and command, when finished, the highest prices. Baby beef means two things—viz., good blood and high feeding. Low down, blocky, purebred bulls that will produce calves capable of early finish are essential. The market will not tolerate poorly finished “babies.” Early-maturing qualities are obtained only from the blood of one of the improved purebred beef breeds.

There are two main causes operating amongst feeders to put prime finish on yearlings of high quality—viz., a demand by consumers for small cuts of high-quality beef, and changes in beef-production brought about through increased cost of production.

In the early days cattle were kept on the ranges until three to five years of age, and then fattened. The use of suitable purebred bulls of high quality, and a general all-round improvement and early-maturing ability of market cattle, with heavier grain feeding, has revolutionized