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UNITED STATES SUPPLIES AND CONSUMER
DEMAND FACTORS CONTROL IMPORT VOLUME

The production of meat is subject to many of the same external forces which affect agricultural commodities generally. Such factors as drought, unseasonably warm or cold weather, and other conditions, affect the ability of the farmer or rancher to deliver his cattle. The same is true of imports. It has been alleged that import fluctuations have a detrimental effect on the cattleman and feeder. It has also been averred that imports alone cause major problems. Such charges are incorrect.

No one contends that variations in month-to-month imports are totally non-existent, but they do not approach the level of significance alleged and do not have any negative effect on total domestic supplies and prices. Peaks and valleys in total domestic supply, reflecting seasonal patterns and market trends, are ever present, as demonstrated by the following Table 2. Note that domestic production is the major factor. While stocks remain fairly consistent, imports, which of course do vary from time to time, merely follow the general pattern in the industry.

Import Share of U.S. Market Is More Stable
Than Domestic Supplies

Imports are small when compared to domestic production. Variations in the volume of domestic production are frequently four to five times greater than moderate fluctuations in the volume of imports. Demand for meat dictates the level of