This is a healthy development, considered to be of great benefit to those engaged in the production and feeding business and, at the same time, a more regular supply of food is being made available to consumers. More and more cattle feeders are feeding cattle in all months of the year and tend to maintain a rather stable number in their lots. This is in contrast to a situation years ago when many cattle feeders would buy only one or two shipments of cattle a year and after they were finished, their lots would be empty for a period of time.

Likewise, swine production has tended to be more nearly stable throughout a year. Formerly we had a rather huge spring pig crop reaching the market in heavy volume during the fall and winter, with a much lesser crop in the fall arriving at the market in lower numbers in the following spring and summer. We still have a larger pig crop in the first two quarters than in the last two quarters of a year, but we no longer have the great differences that existed years ago. There are many swine producers who are farrowing sows at regular intervals of four months, three months, and two months, and some have their operation geared to farrowing every month in the year.

At least some credit for more stabilization can be claimed by livestock organizations for their recognition of problems arising from irregular production and their consistent recommendations that production be stabilized as much as possible. For quite a number of years, the National Livestock Feeders Association has urged its members and others in the industry to feed cattle more consistently throughout the year and has pointed out the very definite advantages of this type of operation. At the same time, we have engaged in campaigns encouraging the orderly and regular marketing of fed animals, not only from week to week throughout each year, but from day to day throughout the week. We are happy to note there has evidently been considerable response to those recommendations and to these campaigns.

At the same time, this Association has been intensely engaged in programs encouraging swine producers to voluntarily farrow sows at more intervals throughout each year, and thus spread out the nation's pig crop as evenly as possible. Hogs generally reach market weight from five to seven months after they are born and thus the farrowing pattern rather definitely dictates the market availability. Again, we can point with some pride to the developments and feel we can claim some credit for them.

Along with these programs just explained which have been conducted by the National Livestock Feeders Association, we have also encouraged the marketing of cattle at lighter and more uniform weights. This for the purpose of holding domestic beef production to a volume that will be accepted in the market at prices more favorable to feeders and producers and more equitable in relation to costs and prices of other commodities in this economy.

Early in 1967, when the fed cattle market was seriously depressed and rather severe losses were again being sustained by cattle feeders, this Association intensified its campaign on the weight problem. Average weights of slaughter steers were running much too high and, during the second week of January, the average weight of all steers sold at seven major markets was 1,160 lbs. Again, there has been definite response to such a campaign and by the week ending October 2, the average weight of all steers at these same markets, was 1,108 pounds. In the continuance of this educational effort, we hope it will be possible to hold average weights at, or below, present levels, and thus contribute to the more favorable price level for fed steers and heifers which we are seeking and are so necessary.

Other organizations representing cattle growers are engaged in similar activities with respect to the production of cattle in an attempt to stabilize numbers and thus contribute to the solution of the problems we have when domestic supplies of beef may exceed what the market will absorb at favorable prices. They encourage the sale of feeder cattle at younger ages and lighter weights so the cattle feeder can finish the animals to the grade desired before they can reach an excessive slaughter weight. We join in these campaigns as well, but as an organization of livestock feeders, we emphasize more the matter of orderly and regular marketing of slaughter cattle and the average slaughter weight, because this is the particular area of our member's operations.

All of these are in the nature of self-help programs being conducted by this Association and others in an attempt, through voluntary cooperation and realizations, to improve the financial climate for livestock people. While we feel we can point to some measure of success up to this time, and expect to be even more successful in the future, we certainly cannot depend on such cooperation from foreign nations with respect to products exported to the United States. These