

are persistent advertisers. From a competitive standpoint, they influence to some extent the activities of certain other dealers who under normal trading conditions would prefer to deal honestly with the trade.

Such dealers are known locally as "clean-up" men. In all their contacts with the public, especially in advertising, they stress exceptionally high-quality meats handled, yet limit their purchases to meats of the most inferior quality. The fact that customers generally are uninformed regarding meats and meat cuts makes this deception possible. Because of the dissatisfaction which results this practice may tend gradually to decrease the demand for meats.

Local associations comprising both retail grocery men and meat dealers of exceptionally high character and ability are active in most of the cities studied. In every case they stand for honest methods and are doing effective work along educational lines, and are raising the standard of merchandising, but so far have found no effective means of combating this undesirable element in the retail-meat trade which is now known to be one of the undermining factors in the advancement of a large and necessary industry. The deceptive methods generally used comprise false advertising, misleading displays, substitution, and short weighing.

Terms used to represent meats of highest quality occupy prominent places in all their advertisements. Some of those commonly used are "Finest Meats Market Affords," "Meats of Highest Quality," "Prime Native Steer Beef," "Genuine Spring Lamb," "Milk Fed Veal," "Young Pig Pork," etc. Coupled with these terms are very low prices. In many cases investigated, prices quoted for preferred cuts were lower than the cost of live animals of grades comparable with the terms used. For instance, during the progress of this study stores in different cities advertised "lamb legs" from 12½ to 17½ cents per pound. Live lambs at the time were worth from 13 to 15 cents and their dressed carcasses were offered wholesale around 26 cents. During the period when live hogs were costing around 14 cents, "pork sausage" was offered freely at 2 pounds for 25 cents, and, in at least two cities, at 3 pounds for 25 cents. This sausage was made from beef suet, beef fat, tripe, and cereal. In such stores, in every case the meat actually being offered for sale was very inferior to that advertised. Common and medium grades of steer beef, cow beef, or bull beef were offered as prime beef; mutton of low quality or goat was offered for lamb; heavy carcasses from grass calves were offered as milk-fed veal, and cuts from stags and old sows were sold as young pig pork.

To the uninitiated, misleading displays are the same as false advertising except that the product or article is used in connection with a product which has similar characteristics but is of lower value. The most common display of meats designed to mislead the public are center cuts of pork loins and end-cuts displayed on same platter. The price cards "center cuts," but end cuts are supplied. The same applies to loin lamb, or lamb rib chops and shoulder chops. In some instances picnic shoulders were found displayed and placarded as "picnic ham" and surrounded by genuine hams. Relatively low prices are used in all such displays. Window displays of retail cuts of beef of good quality were found marked at unusually low prices, quality considered, but in the store beef of very low grade was offered, in most instances not worth the asking price.