

Beef herd enjoy mixed menu

By EVE-LYN DOBIE
Not many beef feedlot operators feed their steers a combination of grapefruit, oranges, melons, watermelons, honeydew and pineapples every day. However, Churchill area resident Don Taber combines byproducts and innovative marketing methods to keep his operation in the black, something few beef farmers accomplish today.

"I'm a free market man," he says with confidence. "My dad left the dairy business when the Milk Marketing Board was created because he didn't like being told how much he was to produce. He's since found ways to make the unregulated business of beef production pay."

Don's father, Gordon, and two

capable hired men grow corn, wheat and soya beans for sale off the farm. Corn is sold to a local mill where high moisture corn screenings can be purchased as a byproduct and fed to the 800 short keep steers in the Taber lot. Lower quality crops and hay remain on the farm, or are purchased from neighbors at lower cost than purchased feeds.

The steer's are also fed a mixed diet consisting of silage, cull potatoes, bread, bean cake, wet brewers yeast, citrus fruits, and dry hay.

"We consult with the Ministry of Agriculture a lot and have our feed analyzed regularly. It's also weighed out every day so we know how the feed is performing," says Don.

While feeding waste products helps keep the cost of feed down, Don has also found a way to put better quality steers on the killing floor by selling his cattle through an electronic livestock exchange each week.

"Buyers at packing houses are given a description of Don's cattle along with his estimate of their eventual grade. An auction takes place via computer and, if the price is right, the Taber cattle are loaded onto trucks bound for the packing plant the next day.

"The cattle go directly onto the killing floor, without the bruising and shrinkage that trips through the stockyard incur. Consequently, the cattle grade A1 and A2 and are higher quality on the counter. Buyers are coming back every

week for our cattle, so I'm satisfied with the system," says Don. The Guelph Agricultural College Class of '68 grad is also pleased with the business itself.

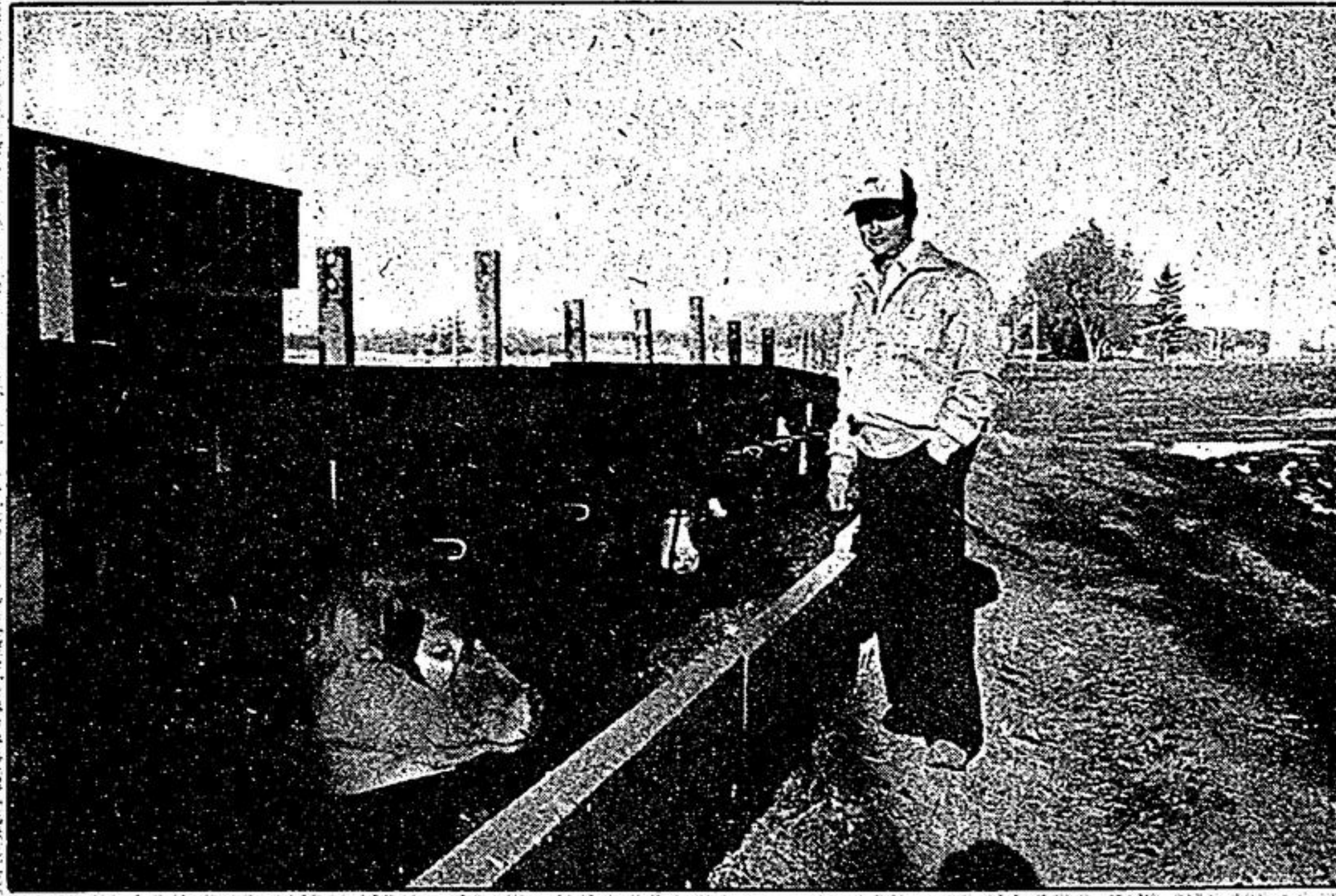
"The farm has strengths and weaknesses," he said. "But we do have an accountant and my wife Louise does the books. I'm not

good at everything," says Don with a smile.

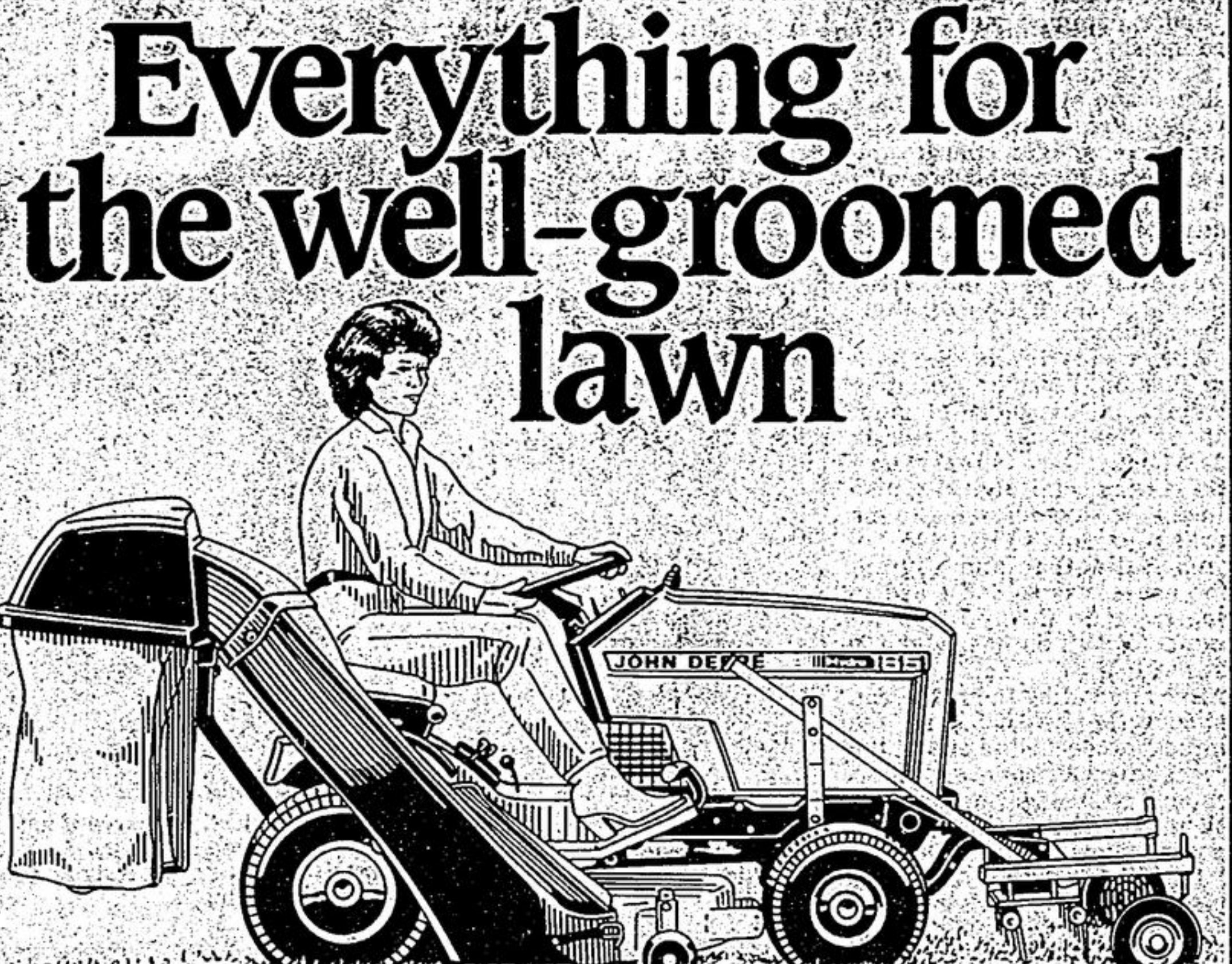
Their three boys, Jeff, Ted and Jim, will eventually have the same chance to farm the 1,400 acre operation if they are inclined to.

Until then, Don Taber will continue to promote free enterprise

with snow plowing, custom trucking, and Louise's small flock of laying hens and roasting chickens providing extra income. And Don, as President of the York County Cattleman's Association, will keep on promoting beef farming as a profitable way of life, without production quotas.



A mixed menu of grapefruit, oranges, watermelon and pineapples along with silage, potatoes, bread and bean cake helps keep costs down for beef feedlot operator Don Taber of R.R. 3, Stouffville. His practise of selling cattle every week through an electronic livestock exchange, is also a more profitable way of doing business, Don says. In addition to his many farm duties, Don is also the 1987 President of the York Region Cattleman's Association. —Eve-Lynn Dobie



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Courts register convictions

Infractions uncovered by federal inspectors from Agriculture Canada have led to four convictions in the provinces of Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba.

In Ontario, the firm of Globe Wholesale Meats Inc., carrying on business under the names of Bright Veal Meat Packers and White Carnation Meat Packers of Toronto, entered a plea of guilty and was fined \$500 for shipping meat inter-provincially that did not conform to the Meat Inspection Act.

The meat was confiscated by Agriculture Canada inspectors.

The other Ontario case involved Norfolk Co-operative Company Limited of Simcoe. They were fined \$250 for selling medicated pig feed without the required data on the invoice warning of its withdrawal period and potential dangers.

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