

OPENING SPEECH.

Laurits Tørnæs, Minister of Agriculture.

I am very pleased to be here today at the 35th International Congress of Meat Science and Technology, and to have the opportunity to tell you a bit about the Danish production and our policies in the food sector.

Danish meat producers, their slaughterhouses and their follow-up industries together with the Danish Meat Research Institute have for a long period played a leading role in their respective fields.

World-wide - Danish cuttings and meat products are recognized for the homogeneous standard and high quality. This is a result of research and development of among other things classification instruments of a very high technological standard, which guarantee an optimum use of the available raw materials.

The Danish Meat Research Institute has contributed substantially to these results especially in the process technology field, where the institute has developed measure and classification equipment for Danish and foreign meat-producing plants.

Development in the slaughterhouse sector has moved towards still bigger units. The Danish slaughterhouses have been united and merged in such a way that only nine pig slaughterhouses and sixteen cattle slaughterhouses were left at the end of 1988.

The size of Danish pig slaughterhouses enables them to deliver large quantities to the big international supermarket chains.

The high technological level, the high quality, and the Danish veterinary status compared to our competitors make Danish meat products, especially pigmeat, highly demanded world-wide. From a Community perspective Danish export of pigmeat is of great importance, as it reduces the pressure on the common market and allows the Community to have a greater pig production than would have been the case without the export.

We do recognize however, that the Danish production of food in general is facing significant challenges in the future in the form of increased competition both on prices and on quality.

The Danish government therefore puts great emphasis on research and development in the food sector and this has resulted in several research programmes.

In connection with the Strategic research and development programme for 1990-93 the government has designated food-technology as a new target-area. We aim towards improving the manufacturing process as such, and we intend to intensify research in more nutritious food produced with due consideration for the environment.

We have set aside 40 mill. Danish kroner for a special research programme for food science and technology during the next 4 years.

The objectives for this programme are

- improved efficiency and competitiveness through research in basic processing technologies
- increased development through research in interactions between different components and the structure of the final product,
- research in storage - and preservation - techniques as well as new biotechnological methods to improve product-quality.

Furthermore it is the intention to increase and ensure the nutritional value and wholesomeness of food

- through development of quick microbiological and chemical methods for the assesment of the hygienic quality
- through research concerning the nutritional value and bioavailability of food constituents
- and through research concerning the relationship between diet and general state of health in cooperation with scientists in the medical field. Part of the programme concerns determination of consumer-preferences.

We have also within the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture earmarked 15 mill. Danish kroner for a research programme in the quality aspects of raw materials as they affect processing and end product quality.

Finally let me mention that over the period 1988-93 a sum of 395 mill. Danish kroner will be granted to development of new processed products in the agricultural sector. Up to 40% of the developments expenses will be covered. I might mention that the slaughterhouses in 1988 subscribed for 42% of the total grant.

I have mentioned some of the government initiatives in the research and development field. This does not mean that all research and development in the food sector is carried out under government auspices. As I have already mentioned, our host today - The Danish Meat Research Institute - belonging to the Danish slaughterhouses - carries out a major effort especially concerning the quality of raw materials and processing technologies.

We are convinced that the possibilities for growth in the food industry are closely linked to an increased effort in research and development.

The effort should not concentrate wholly on producing well-defined uniform products, but should equally aim at producing wholesome food under due consideration for the environment, for instance by using lesser amounts of additives, by complete usage of raw materials and so on. Our aim should at the same time be to produce food that is tasty, fast and easy to prepare, fresh and subject to severe hygienic controls. Combining these objectives with a rational production process, certainly provides our industry with a great challenge.

It is our hope that the various government initiatives will lead to an intensified research and development effort within the industry and to further international cooperation. We are looking forward to broad participation in the upcoming EEC-programme on Food Linked Agro-Industrial Research (FLAIR) which provides for cooperation between both EEC-countries and other European countries.

My observations today have concerned both the Danish food industry in general and the meat processing industry as such. A condition for reaching our goals is a wide range of cooperation on all levels both horizontally and vertically.

It is also a prerequisite that the industries have the right size to be able to handle the

enhanced competition within the EEC. Further restructuring in the form of mergers might be necessary.

As a final point I should like to mention the possibility of taking out patents on both new products and new processing technologies. This possibility which is new in Denmark, as far as products are concerned, might become an incentive for an increased effort in research and development in the meat sector.

With my best wishes for the congress - I hope you will all find your stay in Denmark rewarding both as professionals and as visitors - I hereby open the 35th International Congress of Meat Science and Technology.