



## Students Learn Varied Lessons In New Meats Laboratory

**C. B. Roubicek**

**Animal Science Department**

The College of Agriculture has again expanded to include a new and important phase of work. A new meats laboratory is now in operation at the Animal Science Farm at Tucson. Actually the term "meats laboratory" is not quite accurate. It is much more than a laboratory. Perhaps a brief description of the unit and its uses will show what we mean.

The main structure consists of a large room for slaughtering and for complete processing of cattle, swine, sheep and poultry. In our slaughtering operation, the animals are first taken into the knocking pen, where they are stunned. They are then lifted by an electric hoist to a bleeding rail. Cattle and sheep are then moved down this rail to the skinning bed. From the skinning bed another electric hoist places the carcass on the dressing rail. Here the carcasses are dressed, split and washed. They move on this rail into the refrigerated "chill" room.

### No Hand Scraping

Hogs are dropped from the bleeding rail to a rolling table and on into a

scalding vat. From the scalding vat they are tipped into a dehairing machine. This device consists of a series of paddles on a long shaft which bounce the hog around and scrape off all the hair. This operation takes about two or three minutes per pig. This is certainly a lot easier than the way we have all had to do it in the past, with little hand scrapers and lots of elbow grease. From the dehairer, the pig is hoisted to the dressing rail, and then follows the same rail as cattle and sheep.

### Much Equipment

We are especially proud of the refrigerated section of this new laboratory. It includes a chill room, where carcasses are kept for about 24 hours after slaughter. The temperature is a cool 32° to 33°. Overhead rails permit us to move the chilled carcasses directly into the adjacent holding room. Beef can be held here for three to five weeks for aging at a temperature of 33° to 34°. We have a capacity of about 25 carcasses in the holding room. The refrigerated section also includes a freezer. There, at a temperature of 25° to 30° below zero, we can store meat almost indefinitely.

A smokehouse and incinerator as well as showers and dressing rooms are also part of the new laboratory. There is other equipment including an electric meat saw, meat grinder, steak cubing machine, lard rendering kettle, meat cutting and

"Cutting down through here, you'll miss that big knuckle bone," Dr. Roubicek tells students in a meats class.



wrapping tables and a number of various kinds of scales. In the cupboards are knives, saws, steels, and a good supply of bandages and bandaids.

How is all of this going to be used? First, we have instruction. Students can take a course in meats which includes slaughtering and complete processing of all classes of animals. This is not only of value for the knowledge they get about meat, but it serves to tie in the training they have received in livestock judging and other production courses. Here the student can estimate live weight, dressing percentage, and carcass grade for the live animal, then check out his judgment by actually seeing the dressed carcass on the rail. Home Economics foods classes will also have the opportunity to learn how and why meat is prepared by the retailer in the cuts these future homemakers will be purchasing.

### New Research Projects

We also have plans for a number of research projects for our meats laboratory. Such items as meat tenderness, the effects of various rations on meat quality, and new ways of processing and preparing beef will receive early consideration.

**OUR COVER PICTURE** shows Ray Honnas, left, and Paul Hatcher making chops and roasts, cutting the hog carcass as was taught by their instructor.

