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Food Dollars and Sense

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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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FOOD DOLLARS and SENSE

By Ruth B. Amidon,
Extension Nutritionist

Having enough money to "eat as you please" is no assurance of an adequate diet. Dollars spent for food without a consideration of food and health needs of the family are dollars spent without "sense." The purpose here is not to propose spending less money for food but to discover how to get more value for the money spent.

Many families overspend for meat, desserts, sweets, and food accessories which can leave their meals lacking in important nutrients, particularly those from milk, vegetables, and fruits.

Learning to eat a wide variety of foods prepared in a wide variety of ways is as valuable equipment for enjoyment, good health, and social success as a family can provide for its young people. Inherited family prejudices rather than inherited family physical traits are too often the cause of malnutrition, obesity and lack of physical stamina.

The "Basic Four Food Guide" has been devised to make choosing an adequate well balanced diet easy for anyone. The variety of foods within each group, makes it possible to choose a well balanced diet to suit almost any taste or pocketbook. Each food group has its own special merit and purpose, and one group of foods cannot be substitut-

ed for another without making expert nutritional calculations. For example, an 80 calorie potato from the vegetable-fruit group and an 80 calorie slice of bread from the cereal group are not nutritional equivalents although both are starchy foods.

basic four food groups

I. Milk and Milk Products: Budget for milk first. Allow 1 quart for each child and for pregnant or nursing mother, 1 pint for each other adult. Budget adequately then see that it is all used. Money spent for milk more than carries its share of nutrient value per dollar spent for it.

II. Fruits and Vegetables: Use 4 servings per person per day.

An average serving is $\frac{1}{2}$ cup or an ordinary serving, such as 1 apple, $\frac{1}{2}$ grapefruit, or 1 banana.

Include one serving of a good source of vitamin C.

Include a dark green or deep yellow vegetable at least every other day for vitamin A.

The remaining servings may be any vegetable or fruit, including potatoes.

III. Meat and Meat Products including poultry, fish, and eggs: Use 2 servings per person per day.

Three ounces of lean meat, or 2 eggs are counted as one serving. Use from 4 to 7 eggs per person per week.

Dried beans, peas or other legumes and nuts are alternates *occasionally* used for meats.

IV. Cereals and Breads: Use 4 servings per person per day.

Choosing foods from the food groups in the right proportions helps to balance the main nutrients for the diet, but each food within the food groups provides many other nutrients and to get a good balance of all elements both known and unknown choose as wide a variety of different foods within each group as possible.

what to consider when buying food

I. MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS

In South Dakota, only Grade A pasteurized milk can be *legally* sold for consumption in the fluid state. Both the State Department of Agriculture and the State Department of Health are responsible for milk inspection in South Dakota. In the larger cities where there is an organized and active Department of Health, they usually make the inspections. In other places the Department of Agriculture does this work. To produce milk for the fresh milk market, farms must have healthy cows and must meet certain sanitary requirements. These farms are inspected by representatives of the State Department of Agriculture.

Farms producing milk for the manufacture of milk products such as dry milk, cheese, and butter are not necessarily inspected; but the finished products must pass strict inspection, and any product not meeting the standards can be confiscated.

Non-fat dry milk. Only a limited amount of non-fat dry milk is being graded at present. The appearance of the official emblem will assure the consumer of dependable quality and compliance with sanitary requirements.

Cottage Cheese — Milk to be made into cottage cheese must first be pasteurized then made into cottage cheese.

Sour Cream—is also pasteurized before the culture is put into it. Sour cream as sold today is 30% cream and has about 50 calories per tablespoon.

Whipping cream—is 35% cream and has 55 calories per tablespoon. It doubles in bulk when whipped so that one level tablespoon of whipped cream has 28 calories.

Cheese — Cheddar and Swiss cheese are graded mainly on flavor, body, and texture. Swiss cheese is also graded on eye formation. Grades of Cheddar are U. S. Grades AA, A, B, and C. Grades of Swiss are U. S. Grades A, B, C, and D. Processed cheeses and cheese foods have no grades established but appreciable quantities are processed under Federal inspection and have an official inspection emblem.

What to look for in buying cheese.

The labels of natural cheese, pasteurized cheese, and related prod-

ucts carry important descriptive information. The name of a natural cheese will appear as the variety such as "Cheddar Cheese," "Swiss Cheese," or "Blue Cheese."

Pasteurized process cheese labels will always include the words "pasteurized process" together with the name of the variety.

Cheese food contains ingredients other than cheese and is labeled as "pasteurized process cheese food." Cheese spreads have a different composition from cheese foods and are labeled as "process pasteurized cheese spread." All ingredients used in the preparation of these products are listed on the respective label along with the kinds or varieties of cheese used in the mixture. Also the milkfat and moisture content may be shown.

Coldpack cheese and coldpack cheese food is made in the same manner as process (pasteurized) cheese except that it is not heated. They are labeled in the same manner as other cheese and cheese foods except that "club cheese" or "comminuted cheese" may be substituted for the name "coldpack cheese."

Butter—All butter made for the market must be made from pasteurized cream.

In South Dakota, both U.S. and S.D. grades of butter are on the market. Both have grades AA (93 score), A (92 score), and B (90 score). U.S. grades have U.S.D.A. on the grade shield, South Dakota grades have the letters S.D. and the grade.

Butter is scored and graded on aroma, flavor, texture and blend, and salt. Grade AA and A are made from sweet cream; Grade B is very

good butter, but it usually is made from sour cream. It is readily acceptable and even preferred by some consumers. In South Dakota, butter that is below grade yet fit for human consumption may be sold, but it must be labeled "undergrade." This butter may have a stronger flavor or an off-flavor which may be due to metallic flavor from the equipment, unclean utensils, weeds, poor sanitation, and a storage flavor.

Notice that the U.S. grade label states the grade as "*when graded.*" You may not have the good quality that you have paid for due to poor storage or care either at the market or at home.

Use of your own home produced unpasteurized milk, even if the cows are regularly tested, is risky business. Many people have found to their sorrow that cows, like people, can become ill after testing and when there seemingly has been no exposure to the disease. Home produced raw milk can be safely used in cooking if it is brought to the boiling point, but raw milk should not be drunk or used in coffee, uncooked salad dressings, puddings, or whipped cream. And it is unkind, if not illegal, to expose others to the dangers of raw milk by using it in uncooked dishes at community affairs.

II. Buying Meat

The cost of meat is determined by its tenderness, appearance, and demand, not by the nutritive value. Less expensive cuts require longer and more careful cooking but are just as nutritious, and when properly prepared are very flavorful. To



get the most from the money spent for meat, buy by grade and learn what to expect from the grades you buy; learn the cuts of meat and use cooking methods suited to the cut and grade.

Choice grades of meat have a marbled appearance where streaks of fat run through the lean. Lean meat from older animals is darker red and the fat more yellow than that from younger animals.

In selecting meat the amount of bone and fat in proportion to the lean should be considered in relation to the price.

Meat Inspection and Grading:

All meat and poultry, and meat and poultry products, that are handled in interstate commerce must be federally inspected and approved for wholesomeness.

Approximately one-half of the beef, one-eighth of the veal and calf, and one-third of the lamb and mutton produced by commercial slaughterers are federally graded. Federally inspected and graded fresh meats are easy to identify from the purple stamp you see on the meat. The inspection stamp is round.

This inspection stamp means that the meat was prepared under sanitary conditions and was wholesome for food when it was inspected.

The grade stamp consists of a shield enclosing the letters U.S.D.A. and the grade. Only stamps bearing the letters U.S. are federal stamps.

Grades of Beef

U.S. grades of beef are (1) prime, (2) choice, (3) good, (4) standard, (5) commercial, and (6)

utility. The standard and commercial grades are used for sausage and processed meat items. Beef without a grade stamp may come from a local slaughterer or a packing company within the state.

The basis for grading beef is the tenderness, amount and distribution of the fat, and the texture of the meat. Grades of beef usually carried in local markets are choice, good, and standard. Many people prefer the leaner "good" grade to the "choice" grade because even though the choice grade is more tender and juicy, it does have more fat.

A meat tenderizer made from a vegetable enzyme will help to make tougher cuts more tender and very acceptable to most people. It can be bought plain or seasoned. Follow the directions on the label.

Pork

Pork handled in interstate or foreign commerce must pass federal inspection but there is no federally graded pork available to consumers at the present time. Federal grades for pork carcasses have been published and some states and individual buyers do use them, but they do not appear on retail cuts. Because most of the pork is now marketed at an age young enough to be tender, carcass grades are based on the proportionate yields of lean and fat cuts. This reflects the trend now for consumer preference for leaner cuts.

Lamb, Yearling Mutton, and Mutton

Official grades for lamb and yearling mutton are U.S.D.A. Prime, Choice, Good, Utility, and Cull. For mutton the grades are U.S.D.A. Choice, Good, Utility, and Cull.

Meat from lamb is usually light red and fine in texture. Because lamb is produced from young animals, most cuts are sufficiently tender to cook by dry heat methods, roasting, broiling, pan broiling.

Typically mutton is dark red in color and because it is from mature animals it lacks natural tenderness. Braising and pot roasting (moist heat methods) are best for cooking it.

Many people are prejudiced against lamb and mutton without having eaten enough of it to know whether they like it or not; they are cheating themselves of some very tasty and economical dishes. Lamb is also a meat that is safe to eat cooked medium or rare, so makes very tender juicy chops and roasts.

III. BUYING POULTRY

Since 1959, all poultry moving in interstate commerce must undergo Federal inspection for wholesomeness. It is not required to carry U.S. Department of Agriculture grade for quality but most of it does. The U.S. grades of ready-to-cook poultry are U.S. grades A, B, and C. U.S. grade A is of excellent quality, has a high proportion of edible meat, and is well processed. U.S. grade B is good table quality, but as a rule is not as well fleshed or finished and may have some dressing defects such as skin tears and broken bones. You may find a bird that is grade A in every respect except the skin is slightly torn on the breast. If you find such a bird it will be a good bargain. Grade C may have still more serious dressing defects such as larger skin tears and protruding broken bones. It may have still less meat in

proportion to the bone than the B grade bird. All grades are wholesome food and even the C grade when properly prepared makes tasty dishes, however, you will find very little C grade poultry on the retail counter. Whether graded or not we need to know the different classes of poultry and what to expect from each if we are to get the most from our poultry food dollar.

Broilers—young chickens 8 to 12 weeks old, of either sex, weighing from 2 to 2½ pounds dressed weight, are soft meated enough to broil. Their skin is thin, smooth, and translucent. The breast bone is soft from end to end and the wing and leg bones are easily broken.

Fryers—young chickens from 12 to 20 weeks old, of either sex, weighing from 2½ to 3½ pounds dressed weight, are soft meated enough to be cooked tender by frying. The skin is a little coarser and thicker than a broiler, but is still smooth and translucent. The breast bone will show hardening at the front and will be flexible and soft at the rear.

Roasters—young chickens 4 to 9 months old, of either sex, weighing over 3½ pounds dressed weight, are soft meated enough to cook tender by roasting. Roasters have thicker translucent skin with coarser texture than friers. It should be soft and pliable and uniform color over the entire carcass. The breast and legs should be plump and well filled out. The breast bone should be pliable for an inch or so at the rear of the tip.

Pullets—young female chickens that weigh over 3½ pounds dressed

weight and that have never laid an egg. These are classified as roasters but may be sold separately. Pullets should be plump and round and even in color. The skin is soft textured and the breast bone should show as a tender streak of cartilage along the breast, and should be flexible in the rear.

Stags—young male birds that are showing some darkening and toughness of flesh. The skin is tough and shows reddening at the rear of the carcass. The breast bone is hard. The breast and legs should be well filled out.

Capons—unsexed male birds between 7-10 months old weighing over 4 pounds, soft and tender fleshed enough to be cooked tender by roasting.

Fowl or Stewing Chicken—mature female bird of any age or weight that can be cooked by stewing. Old fowl may have long hairs and scuffed wrinkled skin. The back end of the breast bone will be hard and may be flattened and extend downward. The abdomen may be baggy due to excess fat in the body cavity.

IV. BUYING EGGS

In South Dakota, eggs are sold under two labels—graded and ungraded. Eggs sold under either label are candled and the inedible eggs are removed from the pack.

When you purchase eggs labeled “ungraded” there is no guarantee of the quality or weight. If you want known quality then you should buy eggs that are marked Grade A, B or C.

Grade A eggs should be used for boiling, poaching or frying. They

will have a firm, high yolk with much of the thick white clinging in close around the yolk. Grade B and C can be used for baking and cooking. These eggs will have a flatter yolk and the white will be thin and watery.

The grade label is only part of the indication of the value of a dozen eggs. Weight classes are also established for the various grades. In South Dakota, a “Grade A extra large” dozen of eggs will weigh a minimum of 27 ounces. “Grade A large” will weigh a minimum of 24 ounces per dozen. “Grade A medium,” a minimum of 21 ounces per dozen; and “Grade A small,” a minimum of 18 ounces per dozen.

South Dakota Grade B eggs must weigh 24 ounces per dozen and the South Dakota C Grade includes all edible eggs not included in Grade A and B.

There is some similarity between U.S.D.A. Grades and South Dakota grades. South Dakota Grade A Extra Large, Large, Medium and Small are similar to U.S.D.A. grades by the same designations. The U.S.D.A. Grade B Large is about the same as South Dakota Grade B.

Size can influence the value of eggs within a grade. For instance, in the any one grade, medium size eggs are the same value as large eggs if the price is one-eighth less than large eggs; small eggs are the same value as medium eggs if the price is one-eighth less, and they are the same value as large eggs if the price is one-fourth less. For example if large eggs are 48c per dozen, medium eggs are the same value if they are 6c less or 42c per dozen

and small eggs are the same value if they are 12c less in price or 36c per dozen.

Care of eggs—Eggs deteriorate rapidly at room temperature and they absorb odors, so keep them covered and in the refrigerator.

V. BUYING FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

There are many problems connected with applying consumer grades to fresh fruits and vegetables. The perishable nature of the commodity is the most limiting factor, a package of fresh tomatoes, for instance, might meet requirements for consumer grade at the time it is packed, but by the time it reaches the store counter the product may have deteriorated.

The phenomenal growth in recent years of the prepackaging industry may eventually provide a way to make consumer grades more practical.

Even though you may not be able to buy fresh fruits and vegetables marked with consumer grades the widespread use of wholesale grades does work to your advantage. In general, U. S. No. 1 wholesale grade is comparable to U. S. Consumer Grade A. Wholesale grades run U. S. No. 1, 2, 3, and as far as 5 for some things.

For some things there are grades with descriptive terms. For example: Apples—wholesale grades (there are no consumer grades) are U. S. Extra Fancy; U. S. Fancy; U. S. No. 1 and U. S. Utility.

Potatoes—*Wholesale grades* are U. S. Fancy; U. S. No. 1; U. S. Commercial; and U. S. No. 2. *Consumer*

grades are U.S. Grade A large, medium, and small; U.S. Grade B large, medium, and small.

Consumer grades for broccoli, Brussels sprouts, corn (husked on the cob), kale, parsnips, spinach, tomatoes, and turnips are U. S. Grade A and Grade B. Celery has U. S. Grade AA, Grade A, and Grade B.

Basis for Grades

Grades for fresh fruits and vegetables are based on the products color, size, shape, degree of maturity, and freedom from defect. Defects may be caused by dirt, freezing, disease, or mechanical injury. There is no marked difference in nutritional value of a No. 1 or a No. 2 grade product. The difference is mainly in appearance, taste, and preference. A knowledgeable and careful purchaser may get some very good bargains in a No. 2 grade product.

VI. BUYING PROCESSED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Grades have been developed for canned, dried, and frozen fruits and vegetables and for related products. These are U.S. Grade A (Fancy), U.S. Grade B (Choice or Extra Standard), and U. S. Grade C (Standard). They may run through D or E, and sometimes a grade is omitted; for example, there may be an A and C grade and no B.

What the Grade Represents

U.S. Grade A or Fancy denotes practically uniform size and color, freedom from blemishes, and proper degree of maturity and tenderness.

U.S. Grade B—most processed fruits and vegetables are this grade

—not uniform in size or color or as tender or as free from blemishes.

U.S. Grade C or Standard means fairly good quality, just as wholesome and nutritious as higher grades. They have definite value as thrifty buys where tenderness or appearance is not too important.

All products of one grade need not be the same quality. The grade sets the minimum for quality within the grade so a grade can vary from year to year or from brand to brand but must always meet the minimum requirements.

Federal inspection of processed fruits and vegetables is not required but some processing plants operate voluntarily under continuous Federal inspection—a service offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at a nominal fee to packers. Only fruits and vegetables packed under continuous U.S.D.A. inspection may be marked with the U.S. Grades.

labeling

GRADES OTHER THAN U.S.D.A.

Processors or distributors may grade their own products, and they may label them Grades A-B-C or Fancy, Choice, etc. These grades are not preceded by the letters "U.S." They are not federally inspected but they must meet the Department of Agriculture standards for the grades claimed or they may be considered mislabeled and confiscated.

WHAT A LABEL TELLS

Since so much of our food is now purchased canned or packaged with the contents invisible to the consum-

er it is important that the label should give specific and reliable information about the contents. The Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act has specified a list of facts that labels must include in order to make the product legal for interstate commerce. The following facts must be on the label.

1. The usual or common name of the product in clear type.
2. Name and address of manufacturer, packer or distributor.
3. The *net* contents of the container by weight or liquid measure according to the nature of the product. (This assures you of getting full measure for your money.)
4. The variety, style, and packing medium of the product when relevant. (A shopper wants to know whether she is buying fruit in thin, medium, or heavy syrup, etc.)
5. Dietary properties if important. (For example, "salt free" or "no sugar added" on a can of vegetables or juice.)
6. Any artificial color or flavor or preservative must be stated.
7. If quality or filling standards fall below those set by the F.D.A. the label must say so. The government has arrived at reasonable quality standards and how much each container should hold. A product below these standards is perfectly wholesome and may be distributed as long as the label makes it clear to the consumer. Depending upon the price and your need, these products may be good buys.
8. All information must be in English.

9. A list of ingredients, unless the government has set a standard of identity for the product. This "standard of identity" lists the basic ingredients and sometimes the proportions that should be used. It also lists optional ingredients the packer may use if he chooses. He need not list on the label the basic ingredients, but must state those on the optional list if they are included.

WHAT THE LABEL TAKES FOR GRANTED

The F.T.C. has the authority to confiscate a product or bring charges against a packer or manufacturer who does not meet these standards.

1. Food must be processed from pure, wholesome, undamaged, raw product.
2. The processing plant must be clean.
3. Workers must be supervised to insure sanitary food handling.
4. Container must be of safe material that can have no harmful effect upon the food.
5. No harmful preservatives, and harmless preservatives or additives must be in minimal quantities and listed on the label.
6. A package must not be designed to look as if it contains more than it does.
7. The label may not make any misleading statements either directly or by intimation. This takes in a lot of territory.
 - (a) A brand name may not be used to suggest a more costly or authentic product.
 - (b) All information must be printed in clear legible type.

(c) Ingredients must be listed in their order of importance.

LABELS CAN HELP TO GUIDE YOU

Take time to read the label so you will know whether you are getting what you need in the quality, variety, style, color, and packing medium. (Sometimes the proportion between liquid and juice is also given.)

THINGS TO LOOK FOR

1. Tuna is packed solid and chunk style. The solid style is good for patties and sandwiches. Chunk is better for casseroles, salads, etc.
2. Pineapple is whole or broken slices, crushed, tidbits, spears or chunks. Broken slices and crushed should be cheaper. You can select the style to suit the purpose.
3. Salmon comes pink or red. Pink is cheaper, has the same food value and makes very good loaves, patties, and salad.
4. Beets come whole, sliced, and shredded. Whole beets are small, younger, and more expensive. Whole beets are nice for garnishes or special occasions; sliced or cubed or shredded are acceptable for serving as a vegetable or in salads.
5. The general standards allow salt to be added to vegetables, so expect them to be salted unless the label states that they are not.
6. Fruit juices and fruit drinks are not the same. Some juices are sweetened, some are not. Fruit drinks may have water, artificial flavoring, citric acid, and sugar added. They are cheaper than juices. Check the label.

HOW TO USE LABELS

Despite Mrs. Homemaker's knowledge of grades and careful reading of labels she may still be bewildered if confronted by brands with which she is not familiar, for most processed food still is not labeled with any standard grading, and descriptive terms are far from being standardized. How red is bright red or deep red, how sweet are early sweet garden peas and actually what does full vine-ripened flavor mean? The best a housewife can do is to get her grocer's opinion of the grades of the goods he carries; next, to purchase according to her needs, a small amount at a time; and then as she uses the food to carefully file the labels with notes for future reference. She will soon remember the brands she uses frequently; those which she wishes to buy occasionally or finds useful for special occasions should be filed.

To make things a bit more confusing a distributor may have the same food under different labels or brands. When this is done each name may stand for a different quality of food. For example a processor might call his coffees, "American" (69c per lb.), "Breakfast" (59c per lb.), and "Columbia" (49c per lb.). The price of these coffees is no indication as to which you would prefer but they are distinctly different grades. Actually the 59c coffee is by far the most popular, it suits the taste of the people of a mideastern state much better. The 69c coffee has too heavy and strong a flavor, and the 49c just doesn't sell as well despite its cheaper price.

And between a standard or na-

tionally advertised brand and private label brand, how do you choose? A nationally advertised brand can usually be depended upon for a definite standard all the time. They have built a reputation which cost them money and they strive to maintain it. These may or may not cost a little more. A private brand may be just as good, sometimes better quality for the same or less money. Buy and examine one unit before purchasing a quantity. These private brands also may or may not vary from season to season. At the beginning of a new season it is always prudent to first buy a few units rather than a quantity.

packaging

Modern packaging is becoming an increasingly large industry in itself; and manufacturers are taking advantage of it, both to the advantage and disadvantage of the consumer. The development of plastics, foil, laminated material, and new can and glass containers make it possible for products to be shipped great distances and arrive in good condition. We are grateful for the clean, fresh, safe food this helps to make available in the markets of any city or village of our country.

With our modern serve-your-self marketing, the package is the salesman; competition for space on the shelf and for the consumer's attention is keen. An ever changing succession of larger, brighter, and more elaborate packages scream to the customer "take me." These changes in packaging cost money and the consumer pays this whether he

knows it or not, and whether the "new" package is any special advantage to him. Since the real purpose of a package is to keep the product sanitary and in good condition, it is the opinion of the author that most packages have been adequate for some time and that changes now made are of more benefit to the manufacturer than to the consumer.

Often the costs of such changes do not result in a unit price rise but the cost is increased in more subtle ways. For example, not long ago one cereal manufacturer changed his package, kept the old price but reduced the contents $1\frac{1}{4}$ ounces. At the price of 25c per package this means 16% increase in the cost of the cereal. Not only does the consumer pay for this but with such fractional changes she needs a computer to tell her how much increase she is paying. While many of these practices meet the letter of the law, consumers do and should continue to complain about them.

Watch for the reports of Senator Philip A. Hart's committee which is currently investigating such complaints. Also watch for the reports of the Federal Drug Administration and the Federal Trade Commission on indictments and seizures which they are continually making. Read them carefully to see just how what "wool" can be "pulled over your eyes" and by whom.

Consider these things when purchasing. Read the labels and hunt until you find the information you want.

1. Net weights are hard to find; they may be printed in small type with colored ink on a similar colored back ground.

2. Check misleading quantity terminology; such as "giant," "super," "king" sizes, "jumbo" quart, and "imperial" quart.
3. Odd sizes and misleading packages are "near" gallon (12-13C), "hungry" quart (30 oz.), and "stingy" pint (14 to 15 oz.)
4. Misleading art on packages may show full size pieces, when odd shaped and broken pieces are in the package. (The print may say "broken pieces," but you see the picture first.)
5. "Cents off" sales legend printed on the package is not a sale price in the usual sense. When a price remains month after month it becomes *the price*, not a sale price and any increase in that price is a price rise.
6. Package content may be misrepresented, as "meaty and delicious" in stew when there is very little meat. "Chicken and noodle" when you have to hunt for the chicken.

spending food dollars with sense

PLAN AHEAD

Plan a week's menus ahead to insure their being well balanced, and to have better variety of foods and methods of preparation. Without this, there is a tendency to get in a "rut."

Study advertisements and take advantage of specials. Compare prices, brands, and quality both in the ads and in the store.

Check the food on hand; make an order list of supplies needed, both of staples and what is needed for the menus.

Plan possible menu substitutes to take advantage of "good buys."

Make a note of satisfactory and unsatisfactory brands. Become familiar with sizes of containers, grades, and labels. Learn which of the cheaper grades are suitable for, and just as good used in stews, soups, sauces, etc. Make a file of labels jotting on each the quality and the use you have for it.

HELPFUL HINTS

If possible, do most of your shopping on the days and during the hours when the stores are less crowded and when you won't have feel too hurried to compare brands and prices. It pays to shop personally at least part of the time, to compare stores, services, and prices. Whether you should usually do all your shopping in one store or in several will depend on the time and energy you have and whether by shopping in several stores the saving made on cost of food will be spent on gasoline.

Keep records of the cost of home canned and commercially canned products. Compare on the basis of the number of servings per jar or can, and the cost per average servings.

Plan an emergency shelf for unexpected guests or occasions but make definite plans to use and replace the food so that it is not too long on the shelf.

Make good use of leftovers. If it is advantageous to cook a larger

quantity than for one meal, make a definite plan for its use or for freezing it. (Leftovers to be frozen should be properly wrapped, immediately frozen and used within a week or two.)

Low cost cuts of meat are just as nutritious as more expensive ones, though they may take longer cooking.

Use all liquids and juices from meat, vegetables, and fruits in gravies, sauces, soups, desserts, or beverages.

BUYING POINTERS

Buy fresh foods in season when the quality is best and the price lowest. Know the market situation. The U.S. Department of Agriculture puts out a list of plentiful foods every month. The Extension Service sends this to newspapers and magazines, and many of them publish it.

Perishable foods frequently must be moved quickly, and if you are in position to take advantage of this you may get some bargains. Be sure, however, the quality is satisfactory and do not buy more than you can use advantageously.

At the end of a season before a new crop moves on the market, frozen and canned goods are put on sale. Usually these are good buys. Check the quality of the product before buying a large quantity. (Frozen food occasionally may have been poorly handled and may have deteriorated.)

Large-size packages usually give a cheaper per unit price. This is not always true, particularly if there is a "special" on a smaller size. Compare the price and the weight or measure of the sizes.

Buy large sizes or in bulk, only if you have good storage and if you can use the product to good advantage in reasonable time.

In selecting vegetables and fruits, compare price and quality of the fresh, frozen, or canned product with your particular purpose in mind. Know how many servings there are per unit and compare cost per serving. For example: a no. 2 can green beans yielding 2 cups at 24c costs 6c per $\frac{1}{2}$ cup serving; 1 lb. green beans (cooked) yielding 2 cups at 24c costs 6c per $\frac{1}{2}$ cup serving; 1 box (10 oz.) frozen beans yielding $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups at 18c costs 6c per $\frac{1}{2}$ cup serving.

Home-prepared foods are usually, but not always, cheaper and better. Calculate the costs of foods prepared at home and compare with the cost of a satisfactory brand both at the regular price and at "special" prices. If you find mixes or prepared food advantageous to buy on "specials" be careful not to overbuy. Sometimes these foods are on "special" because, while still good, they may be coming close to the end of their shelf life and should soon be used.

YOUR BUILT-IN MAID SERVICE

It has been said that ready-to-eat foods have been made for those who have more money than time. They certainly are convenient for most people to serve occasionally; and for older people and people living alone or those who are ill or unable to prepare food, ready-to-eat foods are a real blessing. In the beginning of the era of prepared foods, they were expensive compared to the same foods prepared at home.

But as the processes are perfected and mechanized, and with quantity production prepared foods are becoming more reasonably priced.

Some foods, which maintain good quality when produced in quantity may at times even be cheaper or just as cheap as home-prepared. Examples are frozen orange juice, frozen lemonade, canned juices, and shelled peanuts which usually are cheaper than when prepared at home. Reduction in bulk which makes transportation costs less is the reason.

Some foods that may be just as cheap as home prepared are cake mix, pie crust mix, instant coffee, and some frozen pies.

Some foods that are quite a bit cheaper if prepared at home are biscuits, biscuit mix, rolls (plain and sweet), bread, cooked potatoes, tea (tea bags are expensive), cookies, and salad dressings.

Canning or freezing food from your own garden or orchard is always a saving; but unless you live where orchard produce is sold in bulk lots, the cost of the canned fruit and vegetables of comparable quality may be just about as cheap.

To know whether or not it pays to do your own canning and freezing keep records and compare commercially canned and frozen foods not only on cost per unit (quart or can) but on cost per serving. Don't can more than will be used in a reasonable time and will be properly stored.

As to acceptability of ready-to-eat foods, many people find them inferior in quality and flavor to home produced foods. However, some are good enough quality to

be generally acceptable, such as bread and canned soup. Others are occasionally acceptable to most people and are being steadily improved. These include most of the ready-to-serve frozen meals and main dishes.

Reasons why "convenience" food may be purchased cheaper than fresh or home prepared foods:

1. Transportation costs are less due to concentration of such things as juice, milk, soup, and because of trimming of waste; drying and dehydrating of foods, such as potatoes.
2. Lower original cost-bulk purchasing, canning, and freezing in the area of production at the peak of the harvest season.
3. Reduced waste by lengthening the period of time the food can be kept in usable form.
4. Increased consumption of foods

which have previously taken too much time to prepare.

The above comparisons of the cost of convenience foods have been made with little consideration of the value of the homemaker's time and energy. If this were included in the cost of home prepared food, and the homemaker was paid only the legal minimum wage, we probably would find much home prepared food too expensive to eat. And indeed this could well be the situation of a working mother, whose time in the home is so limited that it would be better spent "mothering" her family and caring for their spiritual, moral, and social welfare, rather than catering to their appetites.

However, the homemaker, who has the time, can create with good cooking an aura of home which her family will always treasure.

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