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CONSUMER AFFAIRS IN THE USDA

by Nancy H. Steorts

Special Assistant to the Secretary for Consumer Affairs

This is the "Age of the Consumer." The consumer movement is one of the most vitally important happenings in America today. It challenges industry and Government to reach new levels of excellence, and it is involving more and more people in the decision-making process in our country.

As Special Assistant for Consumer Affairs in the Office of the Secretary of Agriculture, I am excited to be working with this movement. As most of you know, my position was created only last summer. I view my role as a dual one: first, to help the consumer understand what is happening in the Nation today that is affecting the home, the pocketbook, and the dinner table; and second, to listen to what the consumer is saying and then relay it to the Secretary, the Assistant Secretaries, and to other decisionmakers in Government. Whenever possible, I would like to also relay consumer concerns directly to agribusiness and to industry.

To carry out my role, I have been assigned some specific responsibilities. At the time of my appointment, Secretary Butz announced that I would serve a threefold purpose. First, I would be responsible for representing—at the highest levels of the Department—the concerns of consumers as they relate to all USDA programs. Second, I would advise agency administrators on issues and actions that concern consumers. Third, but certainly not last, I would serve as the consumer's special representative in USDA.

As I see it, my role within USDA is getting the Department to "think consumer." All over the Department people have felt and are feeling the need for a more coordinated approach to the issues and programs that concern consumers.

Since coming to USDA, I've been particularly impressed by the number of programs the Department actually has in operation that directly benefit the consumer. Let's look briefly at a number of the consumer-oriented programs now in effect.

The *Extension Service*, working with Cooperative Extension Services in the States,

probably has more direct contact with consumers than any other agency. Its programs help consumers adjust to the problems of rising living costs, new technology, and the changing availability of goods and services.

At the national level, an Extension Consumer Education Committee was appointed in April 1973 to focus attention on consumer problems. Since then, newsletters have been prepared for the State Home Economics Program Leaders or State Consumer Education Coordinator. A slide presentation, "Extension Helps Today's Food Shopper," has been prepared and distributed.

At the State level, a highly intensified effort has been undertaken to aid consumers who have current food problems. Included in this effort are: training professional and paraprofessional staff to work with low-income families on food and nutrition problems; preparing and distributing of weekly food messages to the local media, and the producing of radio and television programs to reach people about current food alternatives; distributing of USDA and State Extension Service publications; the sharing of educational materials among States—including TV spots, fact sheets, correspondence courses, and slide presentations on food shopping; and developing of cooperative programs with business.

Other agencies have also been doing their part. The *National Agricultural Library* at Beltsville, Md., has revised its automated information retrieval system to enhance its ability to retrieve consumer information. Over 4,000 such citations have been added during the past 2 years.

A major program of the *Food and Nutrition Service* is the Food Stamp Program, which is the prime delivery system for providing food help to needy families all over the country. It is currently reaching some 12.5 million Americans. As of January 1, 1974, the value of food stamp coupons that a family can receive increased. A participating family of four is now eligible for \$142 worth of food coupons monthly, an increase of \$26 over the past \$116. The maximum income that a family of

four can have and still be eligible for food stamps has now climbed to \$473 monthly—an increase of \$86 over the former \$387 ceiling. These program changes have been made to help needy families keep up with the higher costs of food. The USDA-State Child Nutrition Programs—the largest of which is the National School Lunch Program—help to underwrite the cost of lunches for children, whether they can pay or not. Of a total 24.4 million children participating in the School Lunch Program in October 1973, 8.6 million were from poor families.

Another agency whose programs directly affect the consumer is the *Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)*. Under this regulatory agency, new labeling regulations covering hotdogs and other cooked sausages went into effect on January 1 1974. Strict limitations were placed upon the amount of byproducts and nonmeat binders that can be used. Packages of bacon that show at least 70 percent of a representative slice appeared on grocery shelves this past fall as a result of another change in regulations.

A newly proposed system for enforcing net weights on meat and poultry products was announced on November 30, 1973. It will provide for uniform labeling of net weights and uniform procedures for checking the accuracy of these net-weight declarations at both the processor and the retail levels. Several other labeling changes are also being proposed or adapted. APHIS is also carrying out programs to eradicate brucellosis and tuberculosis in livestock. It continues to oversee many other animal disease control activities that have an impact on the consumer by keeping this Nation's livestock healthy and free of any diseases that might be passed on to man or that might affect the quality of the meat we eat.

The *Agricultural Marketing Service* develops food grade standards for quality grading of foods. Uniform grading of all agricultural commodities is an important consumer-related concern that must be improved. In many cases, both the consumer and the producer would like to see similar changes; a more meaningful meat-grading system is one such area. AMS also administers positive preventive programs to control salmonella in eggs and egg products and in nonfat dry milk. AMS sanitation require-

ments regulate processors of fruit, vegetables, and dairy products.

Much research conducted by the *Agricultural Research Service (ARS)* has a direct bearing on the well-being of consumers. This includes work on development of new and improved foods, feeds, fabrics, and industrial products and processes for agricultural commodities. It also includes the processing, transporting, storing, wholesaling, and retailing of agricultural products. For example, a ground-meat analyzer has been developed that gives an instant reading of the fat content of a package of ground beef. Commercial models are being developed for use in grocery stores, thus eliminating the "eyeball" test for fat content of ground beef now commonly used by butchers. The consumer will benefit by being able to tell accurately what the product contains.

ARS also prepares research-based publications and guides to help families at various income and age levels with money management and the selection of nutritious foods. Specific information provided includes budgeting at various stages of the family life-cycle, selecting and financing a home, money-saving recipes, using selected foods in family meals, and relating food to one's weight.

ARS scientists are compiling information on the nutritive values of food and studying the effects of low-fat diets on blood. Research is underway to develop new high-protein foods from cottonseed and by adding proteins to carbonated and noncarbonated beverages. This opens new possibilities for the nutritional fortification of snack foods.

A considerable amount of work in ARS has gone into the development of treatments and finishes for fabrics, including wash-and-wear cottons, washable wools and leathers, and flame-retardant finishes for fabrics used in clothing, upholstery, and bedding.

The *Economic Research Service* gathers a wide variety of information relating to agricultural production, consumption of agricultural products, and the agricultural sector in general. This effort includes providing information to enhance agricultural output and marketing and to upgrade human nutrition and food-aid programs. For example, ERS economists are examining the factors—such as family income

and background—that determine why eligible recipients do or do not participate in food-aid programs.

ERS information becomes the basis for decisions by Congress, the Cost of Living Council, and the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service when farm and food policies are formulated. ERS also conducts surveys to determine consumer response to food-marketing practices such as food dating and labeling of meat cuts. ERS research is also aimed at the economic development of rural America and at improving living conditions of rural people—those in small towns as well as on farms.

The *Cooperative State Research Service* administers Federal funds that support research in State Agricultural Experiment Stations. Home economics research scientists at the stations study many consumer problems involving basic human needs in food, housing, and clothing. Agricultural scientists also keep the welfare of the consumer in mind while engaging in research to ensure an abundance of high-quality foods and fibers.

I see the need for more cooperation and planning between the USDA and other departments of the Government. My office has started a Food Safety Campaign with the Food and Drug Administration. I consider this extremely important and the beginning of far greater coordination and cooperation in the future.

In the final analysis, how much useful information we can disseminate to the consumers who actually need it will be a large measure of our success. If we want to serve the consumers, we have to communicate with them. This leads me right back to my overall responsibility—to open a two-way flow of information and dialogue with consumers. This is my key role, and it is the central focus for the consumer coordination efforts that we are attempting.

The Department of Agriculture must make a new thrust in the consumer's direction in the coming months, seeking new channels and methods of communication.

We must make every effort to know what the consumers want, then work with them to reach complimentary goals. Industry must be involved in this, and the producers must play their parts. Most of all, each agency within USDA must make its individual effort to serve consumers better, then make certain that these individual efforts are coordinated into a USDA-wide plan. Coordination, cooperation, and communication are the three essential factors in bringing this about. My office will continue to zero in on these factors as all of us in USDA focus more closely on meeting consumer needs in the future. We have a lot of good things already going for the consumer here in USDA, and we need to see that everyone knows that they are available.

NATIONAL FOOD SITUATION¹

Average retail food prices are likely to post sharper increases during the early months of 1974 than in late 1973. Grocery store food prices this winter may average around 5 percent above the fourth quarter of 1973. Prices for practically all major categories of food will be increasing, reflecting tightening supplies, higher farm prices, and rising costs of processing, transporting, and distributing food products.

¹Summary of the NATIONAL FOOD SITUATION, NFS-147, prepared by the Economic Research Service of the Department. Copies of the complete text are available from Division of Information, Economic Research Service, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

The outlook for food prices after the first quarter is much less certain. Upward pressure will continue to be exerted on food prices in the form of higher marketing and distribution costs, partly as a reflection of the energy situation. Reduced stocks of major farm commodities and processed food products, following 2 years in which total use exceeded production, will add further strength to food prices, at least until the size of new crops becomes apparent.

While food prices for all of 1974 will average higher than in 1973, the extent of increase will depend on three major factors: How much food output is stepped up this year, the strength of foreign demand for food commodi-

ties, and conditions in the U.S. economy.

Under the expected or most likely conditions for each of these factors, retail food prices for all of 1974 may average about 12 percent above 1973, less than the 14½ percent increase a year earlier. In contrast to 1973, most of the annual increase will result from increased marketing costs. The rate of increase is expected to slow during the spring with second quarter prices averaging 2 to 3 percent above the first quarter. Little change is anticipated in food-at-home prices during the third quarter, likely followed by a small decline for the last quarter. Away-from-home food prices may continue upward throughout the year at a rate of about 2 to 3 percent per quarter.

If food output increases much more than present indications suggest and at the same time foreign and domestic demand falls below current indications, food prices for all of 1974 may average about 8 percent above 1973 due to the increases through midyear. On the other hand, if 1974 food output turns out much below what is now indicated and demand proves to be stronger than expected, prices could average as much as 15 percent higher for the year.

In 1973, retail food prices averaged 14½ percent above the year-earlier average. This represented the largest increase in a quarter century. Away-from-home food prices averaged almost 8 percent higher, while grocery store food prices were up about 16 percent. A large part of this rise reflected the 22 percent increase for foods derived from livestock products. Prices of crop related foods advanced at about half that pace. Among livestock related products, prices of poultry and eggs were up 40 to 50 percent, while red meat prices increased about 25 percent. Fish and dairy prices advanced less sharply. Among crop related foods, fresh prod-

uce prices averaged 18 percent higher, while cereal and bakery products were up 11½ percent due to a sharp increase in the fourth quarter. Retail prices for fats and oils, sugar and sweets and nonalcoholic beverages rose by less than the average.

For all of 1973, food expenditures rose over 11 percent to \$139 billion, the largest annual increase since 1951. All of last year's advance resulted from higher prices. After adjustment for price increases, real food purchases showed the sharpest decline in over four decades.

Monthly participation in the USDA family food programs averaged 14.8 million persons, the same as in 1972. Increases in Food Stamp Program participation offset declines in the family food distribution program participation. The value of bonus stamps rose about 12 percent to almost \$2.2 billion, reflecting higher participation and adjustments due to cost of living increases.

Per capita food consumption declined 2 percent in 1973, with all of the decline due to lower consumption of livestock related foods. Consumption of crop foods rose 1 percent due to increases for processed fruits and vegetables, with restrained price rises for these items encouraging at least some of the gain.

Per capita consumption of livestock related food in 1974 is expected to exceed the low 1973 levels. However, first quarter levels will be less, due to reduced meat and dairy product consumption. Poultry and egg consumption, as well as meat after the first quarter, will probably gain over year-earlier rates by a progressively wider margin throughout the year. Per capita dairy supplies will about equal those of last year.

Reduced domestic food use slowed the gain in total net utilization of farm food commodities to 2.7 percent in 1973 from 3.2 percent a year earlier. Exports were up a third compared to a 22 percent gain in 1972. For commodities having a predominantly direct food use, the rise in exports was somewhat sharper. Production of these commodities was unchanged from a year earlier, although total production for all commodities with any food use rose 2½ percent.

The sharp increase in farm production projected for 1974 will be heavily in feed-type commodities. Still, production of commodities

| Food price | 1973 | 1974 (estimated) | | |
|-------------------------|------|---|------|-----|
| | | Most likely | High | Low |
| | | <i>Percent increase over year earlier</i> | | |
| Food at home | 16 | 12 | 16 | 8 |
| Food away from home . . | 8 | 12 | 14 | 10 |
| All food | 14½ | 12 | 15 | 8 |

directly pertinent to the supply of food available for consumption this year is also expected to be up significantly. Total use of farm food commodities should remain close to the 1973

level, with an increase in domestic food use about balanced by reduced exports. Stock levels are expected to rise somewhat by the end of the year.

USDA MEAT AND POULTRY INSPECTION: CURRENT INTEREST IN PRODUCT LABELING

by Harry Mussman
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

The Meat and Poultry Inspection Program of the Department's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is mandated by two landmark pieces of consumer protection legislation—the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act. These laws provide that only safe and wholesome products be allowed in commerce.

Under these acts, well-defined inspection procedures have been developed to ensure safety and wholesomeness of meat and poultry. This consumer protection service is carried out by a field operations force of approximately 8,000 inspectors, backed by an extensive scientific and technical support group. Our inspection program calls for a rigid ante mortem and post mortem inspection of each animal and bird. Equally well-defined requirements make high standards of sanitation mandatory in all processing plants.

The meat and poultry inspection laws specifically require that all labeling be truthful and not misleading. The Department requires that all labeling material be approved prior to use. This ensures that misbranded products are kept from the market. The label review procedure, conducted by a Washington, D.C., staff, provides uniform interpretation and application of labeling regulations. Such aspects as adherence to standards and proper presentation of information are essential to meet the requirements of the acts and to provide consumers with mandatory information.

Requests for more informative labeling are becoming widespread as consumers are presented with an increasing number of new products. These new products, often featuring added convenience or novel combinations, are becoming more significant in the American diet as they supplement or replace traditional, basic foods.

Nutrition labeling, percentage labeling, labeling associated with vegetable protein use, and open dating are examples of changes we can expect in future labels on meat and poultry products. As the nature of our food supply changes and as new meat and poultry products find their place in the American diet, other new and informative methods of presenting information by labeling will emerge.

Nutrition Labeling

As a regulatory agency, we are involved with problems and interpretations relating to all aspects of nutritional characterization. We are constantly being asked by consumers and food processors about the restoration, enrichment, and fortification of meat and poultry products with vitamins and minerals. Much of this interest has evolved as a result of institutional feeding programs in which supplementation has been introduced successfully.

Meat and poultry processors have shown a great deal of interest in nutrition labeling of their products, and many are already active in this area. A proposal to include specific nutrition labeling specifications in the meat and poultry regulations is being published. All interested parties will be asked to comment on this proposal. Until such regulations can be made final, we are permitting nutrition labeling similar to that required by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA); over 70 meat and poultry product labels currently carry nutrition labeling.

The USDA program differs from the FDA program in several respects. The major program differences are: (1) We require, because of prior approval authority, that all label claims be substantiated by adequate analytical base; (2) we require that products that are cooked

after purchase must declare the nutrition information on an "as purchased" and on an "as prepared" basis, with cooking instructions adjacent to the nutrition information; and (3) we require that processors have an approved inplant quality control program that will ensure that products meet the label declaration.

Percentage Labeling

Another fairly new labeling feature that is receiving considerable attention is percentage labeling. We have issued guidelines to the meat and poultry industries regarding percentage labeling practices and have prepared proposed regulations for publication in the near future. In the meantime, in order that information be presented in a uniform, informative manner to serve both the consumer and industry, we are adhering to the following guidelines:

1. Percentage labeling, like nutrition labeling, is voluntary.
2. Percentage labeling consists of a declaration of quantities of significant, characterizing components as a percentage of total weight.
 - a. Significant characterizing ingredients have a material bearing on product character, consumer acceptance, or price.
 - b. Listing must be in descending order of predominance by weight.
 - c. All meat and/or poultry ingredients must be listed.
 - d. Components of a like nature may be grouped for purposes of listing, provided such grouping is not misleading.
3. Percentage labeling of ingredients must be on the principal display panel and adjacent to the product name.
4. Processors must have an approved inplant quality control program that will ensure that products meet the label declaration.

Labeling of Textured Vegetable Protein (TVP)

In recent months, there has been an increasing concern over the growing animal

protein shortage. Much attention has been turned to vegetable protein—either as an adjunct to animal protein, or substitute for it. Recognizing the importance of vegetable protein as a means of bringing into balance the total world protein supply, we developed a series of three proposals for rulemaking on TVP usage and published these in the Federal Register in May 1973. Briefly, these proposals covered beef patties with TVP, definition of TVP itself, and regulations governing the manufacture of products that resemble familiar meat products.

Comments on these proposals have been numerous, and we are now evaluating them. It's a bit early to get into a discussion of how final regulations will be formulated; we are still considering the comments. However, we can make two specific points:

1. Vegetable protein is here to stay and is being well accepted by consumers.
2. When TVP is used in traditional meat products—as an adjunct or substitute—we will require that its presence be identified by appropriate labeling.

Open Dating

On March 21, 1973, the USDA published a proposal to amend the meat and poultry products regulations to provide for open dating of perishable products. As written, this proposal required that whenever open dating was used, it would provide precise information in a specific manner. This would be a voluntary program, as are nutrition and percentage labeling.

The general response to the proposal was favorable, with consumers overwhelmingly in favor of a calendar date accompanied by a clear statement of the meaning of the date. This is a strong indication that consumers want to know more about the food products they purchase. The open dating requirements have since been prepared for publication as a final regulation and are in the process of receiving final administrative clearance. This final rule will reflect the many consumer comments that were received in this matter.

FOOD ADDITIVES AND FORTIFICATION

by Corbin I. Miles
GRAS Review Branch
Bureau of Foods, Food and Drug Administration

I believe it is apparent to all of us that we are now in a new era of consumerism. This is an era characterized by consumers and by a public that questions the credibility and expertise of persons and institutions at every level. No longer can the food and medical industries, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), or any other institution, tell the public, "take it, or eat it; it's good for you." The consuming public asks: "Why is it good for me and what are my alternatives?" The public expects answers to these questions, and they want to be informed and to decide for themselves.

The FDA acts primarily to assure that our food supply is safe. However, "safety" is a relative subject and can be measured and evaluated only by the scientific technology of today. Therefore, as technology is refined and becomes more highly developed, today's definition of safety will not be good enough for tomorrow. For this reason, we will undoubtedly see a few of today's food additives and ingredients of today removed or limited in the foods of tomorrow. These anticipated actions will not necessarily be cause for alarm, however, because there are generally large margins of safety between consumer use and experimental test levels.

The current FDA GRAS Review is an example of FDA's efforts to update past definitions of safety. GRAS stands for those food ingredients that were defined as "Generally Recognized as Safe" when the 1958 Food Additives Amendment was enacted. These GRAS ingredients were exempt from the legal definition of "food additive," principally because of their "demonstrated safe" historic use in food. Therefore, they did not have to be tested and were not subject to FDA preclearance, as were all legally defined food additives since 1958. However, when the cyclamate problems occurred in 1969 (cyclamates were considered GRAS), President Nixon gave the FDA a mandate to reevaluate the safety of all GRAS food ingredients. Since that time, the GRAS review program has represented a large

part of FDA efforts. There are about 675 listed GRAS food ingredients.

At the completion of the GRAS review, each of these ingredients will have been the subject of the following: a 50-year literature search; studies designed to determine the exposure of the population to the ingredient; animal feeding studies; and an evaluation by a select committee of expert toxicologists, working as an advisory committee to the Commissioner of FDA. From this evaluation, these ingredients will either be affirmed as GRAS, regulated with limitations for use in foods, subjected to further study, or removed from use in food. Thus, all of these food ingredients will have "safety," proved by today's standards, before they can continue to be used in foods.

To date, the Commissioner of FDA has proposed new regulatory action for five listed GRAS food ingredients. *Carob bean gum* has been proposed for regulation at current levels of use as a food additive. This action was taken primarily because there were inadequate published safety data to permit the Commissioner to foresee "safe" use of this ingredient at higher levels of use than now practiced. Carob bean gum has been used as a stabilizer and thickener in many foods for over 50 years, and carob beans are also eaten as a raw agricultural commodity. Nevertheless, until the safety of this substance can be demonstrated in the published scientific literature at higher levels than now tested, it is unlikely that this ingredient will ever again be "generally recognized as safe" for use in foods. This is the type of limitation expected for some other ingredients currently on the GRAS list. The limitation is based on the absence of substantial evidence of safety for human consumption at higher levels of use than now practiced, and not on any known hazard.

In other actions the Commissioner has proposed affirmation of GRAS status for four food ingredients. These proposals also include a provision for limited use. *Methyl* and *propyl parabens* are limited to one-tenth of one per-

cent when used in foods, because that is the maximum amount needed to serve as a preservative in food. There is demonstrated safety for use of these compounds at considerably higher levels than this, but because higher levels are not necessary, there is no reason to sanction such use. Thus, this is a good manufacturing practice limitation. *Mannitol* and *sorbitol* also have good manufacturing practice limitations on their use for various food categories. Limitations for specific food categories are based on obvious evidence that there are extreme differences in amounts needed to accomplish an intended effect in various food categories. Thus, mannitol and sorbitol, which are used principally as low-bulk sweeteners, would naturally be used at different levels in candy and bakery products. The important difference is that good manufacturing practice limitations are not limitations in the interest of safety. They are limitations that provide a universal definition of the levels of use that were considered when affirmation of "general recognition of safety" was granted. Expanded levels of use will require further consideration of the GRAS status of these ingredients.

In addition to the safety review of currently listed GRAS substances, FDA has recently established a petition procedure for adding substances to the list of those defined as "generally recognized as safe."

Beginning in 1974, FDA will begin to reevaluate the safety of presently regulated food additives. By the time that this effort has been completed, it will undoubtedly be time to begin the evaluation of all food additives over again. This effort will continue, with the purpose of insuring the safety of the American food supply by the most modern techniques available. An important part of this evaluation and reevaluation process, will include public opportunity to present oral views and judgments to the FDA Advisory Committee on each ingredient. FDA wants to be sure that all the evidence available on each food ingredient is presented to all segments of the public, and that the public has the opportunity to respond, before any action is taken on that ingredient.

The same FDA public availability policy is reflected in many other recent agency actions. These actions are taken to provide consumers

with the nutritional and economic information they want, and have a right to know. The actions are also taken to eliminate deception and misrepresentation of some food and food supplement products, and to provide consumers with sufficient information to make wise choices of various foods.

Nutrition food labeling is an example of such a recent action. Although recent regulations specify that nutrition labeling will be optional for most foods, current indications are that many foods will contain this information because of competitive pressures. The regulations specify a format that must be used whenever nutrition labeling is used on a food product, and require manufacturers to use this labeling when they add any nutrient to the food or make any nutritional claim for it on the label. Other recent food labeling regulations will: Require specific information on the labels of dietary supplements of vitamins and minerals; outline conditions under which foods may be labeled for saturated and unsaturated fat content and cholesterol; and prescribe more informative labeling of flavors and spices in food—to tell the consumer whether the characterizing flavor is natural or artificial, for example.

The usefulness of these regulations will depend on an informed public. Beginning in the Spring of 1974, FDA will be using public service media time to explain these programs and many food companies will be conducting their own educational campaigns.

We will still be faced with the task of informing the public on other important matters. Some of this information will bring criticism, because age-old myths, and the incomes of many who profit from these myths, will be destroyed. For instance, we must inform the public that "natural" is not necessarily better, and that "imitation" or "synthetic" vitamins, nutrients, and flavors are often made by using the same constituents and processes that are used in nature's laboratory.

We must also inform the public that food additives are not necessarily bad, that vitamins in all doses are not necessarily good, and that there are toxic levels of both food additives and vitamins.

FREEZER FOOD CONCERNS

by Josephine H. Lawyer
Extension Service

Rising living costs and inflation are affecting consumer buying, and many families had to make changes in 1973. More families stored food, and at times supplies of canning jars and freezers were depleted in some areas. The trend to store food with the intent of extending economic resources is expected to continue throughout 1974.

Many families will be interested in exploring whether or not they can save money by storing food. If they choose to freeze food, it is important that they make informed decisions—that they

- Freeze foods the family prefers and will eat, and ones that save the most money.
- Understand seasonality of meat, fruits, and vegetables, and take advantage of supplies and prices.
- Be familiar with beef grades and cuts.
- Know the freezing and storage capacity of their appliances, and adhere to these when buying food for freezing.
- Understand selling practices of firms that sell freezer meat and freezer food plans, and recognize misleading advertising.
- Deal with reliable businesses when selecting food, a freezer, or both.

Beef Grades and Cuts

Consumers may have problems with freezer meats, particularly beef, because they do not understand quality and yield grades and meat cuts.

Beef quality grades range from USDA Prime, which is highest, to USDA Canner, which is lowest. These indicate degrees of tenderness, juiciness, and flavor. Most beef in supermarkets today is USDA Choice. However, some freezer firms highly advertise meat that is below USDA Choice. Yield Grade 1 reflects the highest yield of closely trimmed retail cuts and the least waste; yield Grade 5 reflects the lowest yield. It is important to understand this when reading advertising and looking at wholesale cuts.

A 1,000-pound Choice steer yields about 600 pounds carcass weight or 300 pounds per

side. Each side is divided into a hindquarter and a frontquarter. The consumer can count on approximately 25-percent waste as a Choice grade side is cut into retail or take-home cuts. For example, the consumer paying \$1.00 per pound for a side is actually paying \$1.25 for the cuts he takes home.

Cuts in the hindquarter include the round, short loin, sirloin, rump, flank steak, and ground meat; the short loin is divided into porterhouse, T-bone, and club steaks. The forequarter includes the chuck, ground beef, rib roast, brisket, and short ribs.

Wise Buying

Meat supplies differ through a calendar year, with more beef and pork generally available during winter months. When supplies are largest, prices are generally lower than at other times; however, consumer demand and preference for specific cuts also affect price. During periods when steaks are on "special," a consumer could save money by freezing them for later use. The same principle applies to chuck roasts. Consumers will usually find chuck and perhaps other long cooking roasts at lower prices in July and August. Chicken supplies are relatively constant; however, consumers may save by watching for "special" prices and freezing a supply at those times.

If a consumer uses credit to purchase meat in quantity, the finance charges need to be added to determine total cost. Only then is it possible to make an accurate comparison of prices with those in the supermarket.

Another factor in making a decision to buy meat for freezing is the space available. A consumer needs about 3½ cubic feet of freezer space to store 100 pounds of meat. A side of beef may be stored in a full-sized freezer, but it might not fit into a refrigerator-freezer combination.

Other questions are: How much can a family afford to invest all at once for meat? Is the family willing to eat all the retail cuts from a wholesale cut it might purchase for freezing?

Freezer Meat Firms

Freezer meat sales can be reliable, or very misleading, depending on the owner-operator. Some firms have processed and sold freezer meat successfully over a number of years in their respective communities. Satisfied customers, service, and reputable business ethics are reasons for their success.

A Federal Trade Commission survey of freezer meat firms in early 1973 indicates that there has been much misleading advertising across the Nation. The extent of such advertising indicates that many consumers are unaware and uninformed. The uninformed consumer, at all income and education levels, can be victimized by unethical firms that resort to misleading advertising; "bait-and-switch" selling; inadequate information on trim loss and on finance charges; and short weight, grade substitution, and failure to deliver some cuts.

Misleading advertising usually sounds too good to be true—and this should be a warning. For example: "beef sides," "freezer packs," "free," "special bonus," "bundles," and "no money down" tell the consumer little about what he will get or how much he will pay.

Meat advertised at a "low price" may be of low-quality and low-yield grade—undesirable in appearance and appeal to the prospective customer. Consumers asking about the advertised meat are frequently shown meat of higher quality and of a higher price.

Information given the consumer may be confusing. It is difficult to know how much beef sold as a "bundle," or by "hanging weight," or with additional "bonuses of chicken or bacon" actually costs.

Unscrupulous freezer meat firms sometimes deliver short weight or a product of lower value than the customer was led to believe he was purchasing.

Consumers are often reluctant to report problems they encounter when buying freezer meat. They are somewhat embarrassed to admit their gullibility in getting involved. The Federal Trade Commission indicates that consumers most often complain about finance charges of freezer food concerns. The annual percentage rate is usually higher than what they might have paid had they borrowed from some other source.

Freezer Food Plans

Freezer food plans generally involve the sale of a freezer along with frozen foods at "discount" prices. Usually, a package program is sold. Such a package might include the freezer, "free" cookware, and a "lifetime" membership allowing the customer special discounts on food purchases. These plans also involve finance charges.

Consumers investing in such plans usually pay more for the freezer than for one of comparable size and quality from a department, appliance, or mail order store. The "lifetime" agreement may represent the period of time the firm is in business in that particular area.

Consumer complaints about these plans include late or irregular delivery dates; high overall costs (freezer, food, and financing); inadequate food for the family's needs; delivery of short quantity or weight; and variation between quality ordered and that received.

Families buying freezer food plans have a substantial investment in equipment and food far into their future. Before becoming committed to the financial obligations, it is important that they

- Consider other alternatives for buying food.
- Compare freezer costs from several sources, and consider the cost of operating a freezer.
- Investigate credit availability and cost from other sources.
- Analyze whether they can afford the initial cost and payments for an extended period.

Consumer Protection and Recourse

Reliable businesses and consumers have a right to protection from unethical businesses. Starting at the local level, misrepresentation and questionable practices should be reported as written complaints to better business bureaus, consumer affairs offices, city/county attorneys, department of weights and measures (if applicable), and other appropriate agencies.

If State consumer protection laws are insufficient, consumers can work with local government to pass ordinances controlling unethical business practices. Consumers can also work to

get needed State consumer protection legislation. Within State Government, consumers may direct concerns to the division of consumer protection in the State attorney general's office, the department of agriculture, and the department of health, if applicable.

The Federal Trade Commission is responsible for regulating false and deceptive advertising and selling practices if interstate commerce is involved. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is the agency with authority over sanitation, wholesomeness, inspection, and grading of meat and poultry products that cross state lines.

It is important that a consumer recognize misleading advertising and selling practices in freezer meats and freezer food plans that may exist in his community. The consumer's right to information on which to base economic and management decisions is automatically canceled if he is unaware and uninformed of marketplace problems.

References

1. "Buying Beef For Your Freezer"—Self-Teaching Program (without slides), Cornell University, Mailing Room, Building 7, Research Park, Ithaca, N.Y. 14850. \$1.50.
Complete Program Kit with 40 35-mm color slides, Cornell University, Visual

Communications, Communication Arts, 412 Roberts Hall, Ithaca, N.Y. 14850. \$10.00.

2. • Bargain? Freezer Meats. Transparency Masters
• Freezer Meat Bargains. Consumer Bulletin No. 5
• Freezer Meat Bargains. FTC Buyer's Guide No. 5
Federal Trade Commission, 6th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20580.
3. • "How to Buy Meat For The Freezer"—HG 166, 20 cents.
• "How to Buy Beef Steaks"—HG 145, 10 cents.
• "How To Buy Beef Roasts"—HG 146, 10 cents.
• "How To Buy Lamb"—HG 195, 15 cents.
• "USDA Yield Grades for Beef"—Marketing Bulletin 45, 15 cents.

Consumer and Marketing Service, USDA. For sale by Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

4. USDA Color Film—"Buying Meat For The Freezer"—4 min. 13 s. Cooperating Film Libraries located at land-grant universities.

ENERGY OUTLOOK AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FAMILY

by Marilyn Doss Ruffin

Energy supplies fell short of needs this past winter and may be even further strained this summer when gasoline and electricity consumption reach their seasonal peaks. The immediate concern is petroleum, which supplies 46 percent of our energy needs and serves as the raw material, or "feedstock," for a long list of synthetic organic "petrochemicals." The remainder of our energy is supplied by natural gas—32 percent, coal—17 percent, hydro-power—4 percent, and nuclear power—1 percent.

The President has asked Congress to pass

legislation to establish a new agency, the Federal Energy Administration, to consolidate Federal energy activities. Federal energy efforts now are being coordinated by the Federal Energy Office, established by Executive order on December 4, 1973.

The Emergency Petroleum Allocation Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-159) authorizes mandatory allocation programs for petroleum and petroleum products. Regulations for crude oil, propane, butane, motor gasoline, middle distillates, aviation fuels, residual fuel oil, and petro-

chemical feedstocks were published in the Federal Register on January 15, 1974. Generally speaking, priority is being given to fuel production activities, public passenger transportation, food production and processing, and essential community services.¹

Conservation of energy is an important part of the strategy for dealing with the crisis. Policy for the short term is: "to minimize the impact of energy shortages on the economy, to maintain production and employment to the maximum extent possible, and to spread the impact of shortages over less essential energy consuming activities."² Over the longer term, energy self-sufficiency is the goal.

The real concern, of course, goes beyond being comfortable in our homes and having enough gas for our cars. Energy means fuel and fertilizer for farming and fuel for processing

and transporting our food supply. It means electricity for our homes and businesses.³ It means the ability to produce goods and services, including vital community services such as education, health services, and protection of our homes and communities. Energy means Gross National Product. Energy means jobs.

For the family, the energy crisis has broad implications. It will mean inconvenience and discomfort. For some, it will mean loss of income. It will mean confusion, as patterns we've become accustomed to are questioned. It will mean rethinking the family budget as price relationships change. Specifically, it will mean—

- **Higher prices for fuel and electricity.** Prices for fuel oil and coal, as measured by the consumer price index, have risen sharply (see table). In many areas rate

¹For more specific information see FEDERAL REGISTER, v. 39, No. 10, January 15, 1974, pp. 1924-1949.

²The White House, Fact Sheet on Federal Energy Organization, December 4, 1973.

³For information on electricity, see "Electric Power: A Crisis Ahead?", FAMILY ECONOMICS REVIEW, September 1972.

*Consumer Price Index, for selected energy-related items,
U.S. city average
(1967=100)*

| Item | Jan. 1974 | Dec. 1973 | Nov. 1973 | Oct. 1973 | Jan. 1973 | Percent change from Jan. 1973 to Jan. 1974 |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---|
| ALL ITEMS | 139.7 | 138.5 | 137.6 | 136.6 | 127.7 | 9.4 |
| Housing | | | | | | |
| Fuel oil and coal | 194.6 | 172.8 | 155.6 | 141.1 | 120.7 | 61.2 |
| Gas and electricity | 134.3 | 131.0 | 129.8 | 127.4 | 124.1 | 8.2 |
| Electricity | 133.5 | 129.0 | 127.5 | 126.5 | 122.1 | 9.3 |
| Gas | 135.1 | 133.1 | 132.3 | 128.4 | 126.2 | 7.1 |
| Transportation | 128.1 | 126.7 | 125.8 | 125.0 | 121.0 | 5.9 |
| Private | 126.2 | 124.6 | 123.8 | 122.9 | 118.5 | 6.5 |
| Gasoline, regular and premium | 140.1 | 131.9 | 126.3 | 121.8 | 110.7 | 26.6 |
| Motor oil, premium | 134.9 | 132.1 | 130.4 | 129.2 | 125.1 | 7.8 |
| Parking fees | 155.8 | 154.4 | 155.5 | 153.8 | 149.7 | 4.1 |
| Public | 146.0 | 146.5 | 144.6 | 145.2 | 144.3 | 1.2 |
| Local transit fares | 148.4 | 149.2 | 149.2 | 150.2 | 150.6 | -1.5 |
| Taxicab fares | 145.3 | 145.3 | 138.3 | 138.3 | 135.6 | 7.2 |
| Railroad fares, coach | 126.8 | 126.7 | 122.6 | 122.6 | 122.2 | 3.8 |
| Airplane fares, chiefly coach | 141.4 | 141.4 | 137.1 | 137.1 | 132.1 | 7.0 |
| Bus fares, intercity | 150.9 | 150.9 | 145.9 | 145.9 | 144.0 | 4.8 |

increases for electricity have been granted; the policy of discounts to volume users is under scrutiny. The Administration is considering surcharges to discourage excessive use of gas and electricity.

- **Reduced supplies of gasoline, higher prices, perhaps rationing.** Families will need to reduce their consumption of gasoline. Rationing at the consumer level is a possibility. A December 4, 1973 White House press release stated that measures being considered include "Use of coupons, price increases, taxes, or a combination of the three, to bring gasoline consumption in line with demand at the lower levels of expected supply." A gasoline-rationing contingency plan was published in the Federal Register on January 16 "as a vehicle for further comment and discussion."
- **Higher prices and tighter supplies for many consumer goods.** Particularly

affected are products with high energy inputs in production or transportation as well as the synthetics made from petroleum or natural gas. These include paints and varnishes, glues, dyes and colorings, medicinal chemicals, flavorings, perfumes, plastics, synthetic rubber, agricultural chemicals, surface active ingredients used in detergents, and the synthetic fibers used in textiles.

In the year ahead, families will need information on how their consuming activities relate to petroleum and to the total energy picture. As they look for ways to reduce their energy consumption, they will need guidance materials on careful selection and use of household equipment and automobiles, and on energy-saving improvements to housing. They will need to be aware of the possibility of shortages and the need for better management. They will need to rework the total family budget as they adjust to rising prices and changing consumption needs.

RECOMMENDED READING

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

- **ELEVEN WAYS TO REDUCE ENERGY CONSUMPTION AND INCREASE COMFORT IN HOUSEHOLD COOLING.** 1972. Stock Number 0303-0876. 30 cents.
- **ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT—ELECTRIC POWER.** 1973. Stock Number 4111-00019. 85 cents.
- **SEVEN WAYS TO REDUCE FUEL CONSUMPTION IN HOUSEHOLD HEATING THROUGH ENERGY CONSERVATION.** 1972. Stock Number 0303-01086. 35 cents.
- **THE POTENTIAL FOR ENERGY CONSERVATION, A STAFF STUDY.** 1972. Stock Number 4102-00009. \$3.00. (Technical report)
- **CITIZEN ACTION GUIDE TO ENERGY CONSERVATION.** 1973. Stock Number 4000-00300. \$1.75.

Single copies available free:

From Public Affairs Office, Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation.

- **THE EFFECT OF SPEED ON AUTOMOBILE GASOLINE CONSUMPTION RATES.** 1973. From Circulation Branch, Office of Public Affairs, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, D.C. 20460.

- **1974 GAS MILEAGE GUIDE FOR CAR BUYERS.** (1975 GAS MILEAGE GUIDE FOR CAR BUYERS. Available August 1974)

From the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, Mail Room, Hutcheson Hall, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (VPI&SU), Blacksburg, VA. 24061.

- **HOW TO SAVE ON YOUR ELECTRIC BILL.** 1972. CES 512.

ENERGY CONSERVATION IN AND AROUND THE HOME

by Glenda Pifer
Extension Service

The energy crunch is forcing all sectors of the economy to utilize energy more efficiently. In and around the home, there are many areas of energy use by the family where reductions are possible.

Temperature Control in the Home

Climate control, in the form of heating and cooling the home, is the largest energy consumption category. Turning the thermostat down in winter and up in summer will mean lower heating and cooling bills. In winter, maintaining a humidity level of 30 to 35 percent, or in very cold weather about 15 points higher than the outside temperature reading, will increase comfort at the lowered temperature. Keep the heating and air-conditioning systems clean and in good operating condition for maximum efficiency.

Adequate insulation and tight-fitting storm or double-glazed windows and doors will increase comfort and save energy both winter and summer. Loose-fitting window panes should be caulked, and loose-fitting window and door frames should be weatherstripped. Unused outside doors can be sealed. Unused rooms should be closed off. Closing draperies or shades at night or in unused rooms will be helpful. Where there is a sunny exposure, open draperies or shades in the daytime to take advantage of solar heat in winter; in summer, close shades to keep heat out. If the garage is attached to the house, keep the garage door closed.

If you are selecting an air conditioner, check the Energy Efficiency Ratio (EER)—the energy used by the appliance relative to its output of service. The higher the EER of a given sized unit, the more efficiently it will operate.

Food Storage and Preparation

Refrigerators and freezers are big energy consumers in the home. These units will use less energy if located away from the range, hot-air register, or other heat sources. Placing the freezer in a location cooler than the kitchen is desirable. Also, there should be a

free flow of air around the motors and compressors of both appliances. Refrigerator or freezer doors sometimes need to be adjusted so that they close tightly. You can test the door fit and the gasket seal by closing the door on a dollar bill; if the bill can be removed, check the gasket and door fit. If the gasket around the door has become damaged or is otherwise ineffective, replace it.

Avoid unnecessarily opening the refrigerator and freezer by removing several items for the meal at the same time. If you defrost manually, do it before frost buildup is greater than one-fourth inch. If you are going to be away from home for an extended period of time, unplug the refrigerator, empty it, clean it, and leave the door open.

Food preparation usually involves the use of heat-producing appliances, which generally require more energy than motor-driven or motion appliances. When using the range, place the utensil on the burner before turning on the heat. Start most foods at a higher temperature, then reduce the heat to maintain the desired cooking temperature. Use utensils that fit the range burners or surface units; pans with flat bottoms will absorb more heat. Less heat will be lost in cooking if tight-fitting lids are used on pans. Food will usually continue to cook 3 to 5 minutes after the electrical unit is turned off.

If using the oven, plan to use it to capacity. When preparing only one item, a small, portable appliance may be more efficient. Unnecessary opening of the oven door lowers the temperature, prolongs the cooking or baking time, and may cause a less desirable finished product. Preheating is unnecessary for some foods. Ovens that self-clean (pyrolytic method) should be cleaned following use to take advantage of the heat already there. In any oven, the frequency and amount of cleaning may be reduced by using the correct size baking utensils.

Heating Water

Heating water for various household and personal uses accounts for a large part of the

energy used in the home. A temperature setting that provides water at a minimum of 140° F for the dishwasher and for laundering is essential. Conserving energy can be accomplished more effectively other ways.

The water heater should be located near the area where the hottest water is needed. If the house is large and plumbing is needed at extreme ends, a second water heater may improve the efficiency of the system. Leaking faucets should be given prompt attention. It is amazing how much water can be wasted this way.

If you wash dishes by hand, you may find that you can limit washing dishes to once a day, thus saving more energy by using less hot water and less of your time, too. If you have a dishwasher, wash full loads to conserve hot water and operational costs. Don't wash the dishes by hand before putting them in the dishwasher.

Miscellaneous Uses

When using the clothes dryer, avoid over-drying or drying only one or two items at one time.

If you use a car to take laundry to a coin-operated laundry, avoid extra trips to conserve both gasoline and your time.

Reduce ironing as much as possible. Don't heat the iron to iron only one piece at a time.

Vacuum cleaners are far more efficient if the dust bag is emptied or replaced frequently and filters are kept clean. Some vacuum cleaners have belts and brushes that need to be examined from time to time.

Do household tasks that require more light during daylight hours. In some instances, it may help to move a task to a different location—such as moving the sewing machine into a room where there is a sunny exposure. This will take advantage of both the extra heat and light.

SOME NEW USDA PUBLICATIONS

(Please give your ZIP code in your return address when you order these.)

The following are for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402:

- MAJOR USES OF LAND IN THE UNITED STATES—SUMMARY FOR 1969. AER 247. December 1973. 85 cents.
- TREES FOR POLLUTED AIR. M 1230. October 1973. 25 cents.
- COOKING FOR TWO. PA 1043. November 1973. \$1.10.
- HANDBOOK FOR THE HOME. 1973 Yearbook of Agriculture. \$5.70 (hardback).

Single copies of the following are available free:

From Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250:

- LAWN DISEASES. G 61. Revised December 1973.
- GROWING LILACS. G 199. August 1973.

From Economic Research Service, Division of Information, Washington, D.C. 20250:

- CONSUMERS' BUYING PRACTICES, USES, AND PREFERENCES FOR FIBERS IN RETAIL PIECE GOODS. MRR 1013. February 1974.

From Consumer Product Information Center—Nutrition, Pueblo, Colo. 81009:

- FOOD IS MORE THAN JUST SOMETHING TO EAT. (Prepared jointly by USDA and HEW in cooperation with the Grocery Manufacturers of America and The Advertising Council.)

CLOTHING AND TEXTILES: SUPPLIES, PRICES, AND OUTLOOK FOR 1974

by Virginia Britton

Clothing Expenditures and Prices

Consumers spent \$332 per person on clothing and shoes in 1973, according to preliminary figures. This was \$34 higher than in 1972. Although part of the increase was caused by higher price levels in 1973, there was an increase of about 6 percent in terms of dollars of constant value (table 1).

The price level for apparel and upkeep averaged 3.7 percent higher in 1973 than in 1972. As usual, the rise for clothing was less than for the all-items index of the Consumer Price Index (table 2).

Among the three apparel subgroups, footwear continued to lead the price advance. The price level for footwear averaged 4.2 percent higher in 1973 than in 1972. Increases were somewhat less for men's and boys' clothing and for women's and girls' clothing.

Recent reports from trade sources anticipate changing clothing purchases as a result of fuel cutbacks: Heat reductions last winter increased purchases of heavier garments for indoor use,

such as pantsuits, sweaters, and heavyweight hosiery, underwear, pajamas, and robes, as well as blankets. Decreases in gasoline for travel this summer could decrease purchases of sportswear. Fuel cutbacks may decrease apparel purchases, in general, if retail stores are required to operate fewer hours, if people cannot go shopping because of gasoline shortages, and if employment and incomes decline. Shopping will be concentrated at shopping centers in the midst of populated areas.

Trade sources have recently noted probable price changes during the year ahead: Some department stores curtailed traditional January "white sales." Prices for cotton outerwear, underwear, towels, and other items are expected to be higher by fall 1974 than in fall 1973. Consumers may resist these increased prices by postponing purchases when they have supplies of towels or underwear that they can continue to use.

Trade papers report that clothing manufacturers expect higher costs of fabrics and perhaps labor for garments for fall 1974 than

Table 1.—Annual expenditures on clothing and shoes

| Years | Per capita expenditures | | Percent of expenditures for personal consumption | | Aggregate expenditures | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | 1958 dollars | Current dollars | 1958 dollars | Current dollars | Billions of 1958 dollars | Billions of current dollars |
| 1929 | 149 | 77 | 13.0 | 12.1 | 18.2 | 9.4 |
| 1930-40 | 122 | 51 | 11.8 | 10.7 | 15.6 | 6.5 |
| 1941-46 | 151 | 100 | 11.8 | 12.9 | 20.7 | 13.7 |
| 1947-61 | 144 | 140 | 9.0 | 9.4 | 23.5 | 22.9 |
| 1962-65 | 160 | 170 | 8.4 | 8.3 | 30.6 | 32.4 |
| 1966 | 185 | 204 | 8.7 | 8.6 | 36.4 | 40.3 |
| 1967 | 184 | 213 | 8.5 | 8.6 | 36.6 | 42.3 |
| 1968 | 188 | 231 | 8.3 | 8.6 | 37.8 | 46.3 |
| 1969 | 191 | 248 | 8.3 | 8.7 | 38.8 | 50.2 |
| 1970 ² | 191 | 258 | 8.2 | 8.6 | 39.1 | 52.8 |
| 1971 | 197 | 276 | 8.2 | 8.6 | 40.7 | 57.0 |
| 1972 | 208 | 298 | 8.2 | 8.6 | 43.4 | 62.3 |
| 1973 ³ | 221 | 332 | 8.4 | 8.7 | 46.5 | 69.8 |

¹ Earlier years are grouped on basis of similarity in level of per capita expenditures in 1958 dollars.

² Revised data for 1970 to 1972.

³ Preliminary figures.

Table 2.—Annual percentage change in selected indexes of consumer prices

| Index | 1969 | 1970 | 1971 | 1972 | 1973 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|
| Consumer Price Index | +5.4 | +5.9 | +4.3 | +3.3 | +6.2 |
| Apparel and Upkeep Index ² | +5.8 | +4.1 | +3.2 | +2.1 | +3.7 |
| Men's and boys' clothing | +6.3 | +4.2 | +2.7 | +1.3 | +3.7 |
| Women's and girls' clothing | +5.5 | +3.8 | +3.5 | +2.4 | +3.5 |
| Footwear | +6.2 | +5.3 | +3.2 | +2.8 | +4.2 |

¹ Also includes infants' wear, sewing materials, jewelry, and apparel upkeep services, for which separate indexes are not available.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

for fall 1973. Some manufacturers of men's clothing expect to "remerchandise" their lines to maintain certain price lines as much as possible, which may require economizing on fabrics and tailoring. Manufacturers of women's clothing say they will have to raise prices, particularly because of increases in fabric prices that they can no longer absorb, and they may have to omit lower priced lines.

It appears, then, that we can expect some increase in retail price levels for clothing in 1974—but perhaps less than the industry would like. Because of other pressures on consumer incomes, discretionary spending on clothing may be curtailed. The average person may spend no more or even less on clothing in 1974 than in 1973 in terms of dollars of constant value.

Supplies of Raw Materials

U.S. mill use of *total fibers* in 1973 was about 7.7 percent higher than in 1972 on a per capita basis. The preliminary estimate is a total mill use of 60 pounds of fiber per capita in the calendar year 1973 including about 17 pounds of cotton, 1 pound of wool, and 42 pounds of manmade fibers.

U.S. *cotton* supplies of the medium and longer staples (used for printcloth, blends, and 100-percent cotton fabrics) will be much tighter during the crop year August 1, 1973, to July 31, 1974, than in the previous year. U.S. output is expected to be smaller because of spring flooding in the Delta; also, stocks on last August 1 were relatively small. Tight supplies and high prices may result in some reduction in U.S. mill use of cotton for textiles. Mounting foreign demand for U.S. cotton reflects limited stocks of manmade fibers and rising competition for land from food crops. Some U.S. mills

have been lobbying for restrictions on U.S. cotton exports to enlarge supplies available for domestic use.

Mills are faced with cutbacks in supplies of *manmade fibers* because of limited supplies of petrochemical and other inputs—a reversal from the dependable supplies of recent years. U.S. mills, as well as mills in Europe and Japan, from which we import textiles and apparel, are affected. Eastman Chemical Products reduced polyester production 18 percent in June 1973, and several other producers followed. On November 8, 1973, DuPont announced a cut of about 10 percent in production of polyester for November, December, and January because of the "overall tight supply situation in oil and natural gas." DuPont had earlier slowed production of chemicals needed for the manufacture of nylon.

A Shell Chemical manager was quoted in September 1973 as saying that the United States will be short of petrochemical products for years to come because of problems with feedstock supplies, fuel shortages, and construction, and because the prices of petrochemicals are bound to soar. A general energy shortage would affect all industries, and the textile industry is energy intensive. Furthermore, the textile-dyeing-and-finishing-plant operators need natural gas, propane, and heating oil as raw materials and say there is no point in the mills producing gray goods if finishing plants cannot operate. In addition, the shortage of petroleum as a raw material feedstock would affect clothing and textiles through curtailment of production of important manmade fibers for fabrics, threads, and zippers. Examples of such fibers are polyester (the major manmade fiber), acrylics, and nylon 66 (from products derived from coal, gas, and

seawater). Cuts in petroleum feedstocks would affect plastics such as inyl for shoe uppers and products for nonleather shoe soles, and synthetic rubber for footwear and foam for coats and furniture. Also of importance to consumers of clothing and textiles are the uses of petroleum feedstocks for detergents and drycleaning fluids, as well as for fertilizers important in cotton production.

U.S. wool production (apparel class) in 1973 dropped about 9 percent from the previous year, the 13th successive annual drop. High prices of U.S. and imported wool are expected to reduce use of wool by U.S. mills. World production of wool seems likely to stabilize or increase only slightly in 1973-74. Although world growers are delighted by high wool prices, they are uncertain whether they would do better to cash in on high meat prices by slaughtering sheep or by switching to cattle.

U.S. production of *hides* (chiefly from cattle) in the fall of 1973 was less than in the fall of 1972 as fewer cattle went to market. However, this was 10 percent more than in the summer of 1973. Cattle marketings last winter were down from fall and year-earlier levels, but are expected to rise sharply in spring 1974.

In 1972, U.S. producers sold nearly 37 million cattle hides—20 million to the domestic

tanning industry and 17 million as exports. U.S. tanners and producers of shoes and other leather goods want restricted exports of hides since the United States, the world's largest producer, is now the only major cattle-raising country that imposes no export quotas on hides. Shoe producers claim that they have not been able to pass along to consumers the total increases in leather costs.

Conclusion

What does this mean to us as consumers? Some things seem rather obvious. We need to take special care of the clothing and household textiles we have and make fullest use of them, at the same time conserving water, fuel, energy, detergents, and cleaning fluids. We need to plan thoughtfully any purchases necessary to supplement the wardrobes of various family members to fit the purchases into our budgets. Then we must shop wisely for fabrics, styles, and tailoring that are appropriately durable without using an excess of gasoline for our shopping trips. Saving our money and the Nation's scarce resources may mean that we have to use more of our own time and energy, acquire more knowledge and skills, and simplify our standards.

FTC ISSUES GUIDES FOR HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE INDUSTRY

The Federal Trade Commission has issued new guides for the Household Furniture Industry. The guides, which are a revision of the 1963 trade practice rules for industry, became effective March 21, 1974.

The guides include provisions for:

- Disclosing the use of materials such as plastic, vinyl, or marble dust that simulate wood, leather, marble, or slate.
- Eliminating the practice among retailers of removing manufacturer's tags and labels that disclose information about the construction and composition of furniture.
- Describing the style of furniture. For example, furniture in Danish style manu-

factured in the United States may not be referred to as "Danish," but may be described as "Danish design" or "Danish style." The guides would permit use of commonly accepted terms such as "Chinese Chippendale," "French Provincial," and "Italian Provincial."

- Disclosing test results, in layman's language, when a representation is made that an upholstery fabric has been tested. Advertisers making claims for the performance characteristics of fabrics may be required to submit documentation to the FTC substantiating such claims.

Copies of the guides are available from the Bureau of Consumer Protection, Federal Trade Commission, Washington, D.C. 20580.

FTC TRADE REGULATION RULES

Two new trade regulation rules issued by the Federal Trade Commission will become effective on June 7, 1974: a Cooling-Off Period for Door-to-Door Sales and the Use of Negative Option Plans by Sellers in Commerce.

The Door-to-Door Sales Rule requires door-to-door sellers and others who make sales outside their places of business to give consumers a 3-day period in which they may elect to cancel a sale without penalty or fee. The rule applies to sales of consumer goods or services that have a purchase price of \$25 or more.

The Negative Option Sales Rule applies to merchandising plans where a subscriber is notified of the periodic selection of merchandise

that will be shipped unless the subscriber instructs that the merchandise not be shipped. Book and record clubs frequently use this merchandising method. The rule requires: that all promotional material clearly disclose the terms of the plan; that the subscriber be given a minimum of 10 days in which to instruct the seller not to mail the selection; and that the seller give full credit and guarantee postage for merchandise returned by subscribers who were not obligated to receive it.

Source: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Food and Drug Administration, HEW NEWS, October 12, 1973.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX BY REGION

The Bureau of Labor Statistics has developed a new set of consumer price indexes that measure price changes in urban areas grouped by regions. The new indexes will be published for March, June, September, and December. For each region, indexes will be available for all items and for food, housing, apparel and upkeep, transportation, and health and recreation. The indexes cannot be used to determine differences in price level among regions at any particular time. They indicate only that prices in a region have changed more

than, less than, or as much as in another region. The regional indexes for December 1967 and December 1973 are shown below.

The indexes for all items and for all subgroups of goods and services except apparel and upkeep increased more (in percentage terms) in the Northeast than in the other regions over the 6-year period. The indexes for apparel and upkeep increased most in the South. The smallest increases were in the West except for housing which increased least in the North Central region.

(1967=100)

| Item | United States | North-east | North Central | South | West |
|-----------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|-------|-------|
| All items | | | | | |
| December 1967 | 101.6 | 101.4 | 101.9 | 101.6 | 101.7 |
| December 1973 | 138.5 | 142.5 | 136.6 | 138.8 | 134.0 |
| Food | | | | | |
| December 1967 | 100.9 | 100.7 | 100.9 | 100.7 | 101.9 |
| December 1973 | 151.3 | 152.9 | 151.5 | 153.1 | 145.6 |
| Housing | | | | | |
| December 1967 | 101.5 | 101.0 | 101.6 | 101.9 | 101.3 |
| December 1973 | 140.5 | 146.9 | 134.4 | 141.8 | 138.2 |
| Apparel and upkeep | | | | | |
| December 1967 | 102.5 | 102.3 | 102.9 | 101.8 | 102.3 |
| December 1973 | 130.5 | 131.2 | 130.4 | 131.5 | 127.1 |
| Transportation | | | | | |
| December 1967 | 101.7 | 101.7 | 102.3 | 101.9 | 100.8 |
| December 1973 | 126.7 | 131.4 | 127.1 | 123.5 | 122.1 |
| Health and recreation | | | | | |
| December 1967 | 102.3 | 102.0 | 102.8 | 102.0 | 102.3 |
| December 1973 | 133.0 | 136.2 | 133.6 | 132.9 | 126.6 |

CONSUMER PRICES

Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers
(1967 = 100)

| | Jan. 1974 | Dec. 1973 | Nov. 1973 | Jan. 1973 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| All items | 139.7 | 138.5 | 137.6 | 127.7 |
| Food | 153.7 | 151.3 | 150.0 | 128.6 |
| Food at home | 154.3 | 151.5 | 150.1 | 127.2 |
| Food away from home | 151.6 | 150.7 | 149.7 | 134.2 |
| Housing | 142.2 | 140.6 | 139.4 | 131.4 |
| Shelter | 147.4 | 146.4 | 145.6 | 136.9 |
| Rent | 127.3 | 126.9 | 126.3 | 121.5 |
| Homeownership | 154.8 | 153.6 | 152.6 | 142.6 |
| Fuel and utilities | 140.8 | 135.9 | 132.1 | 122.8 |
| Fuel oil and coal | 194.6 | 172.8 | 155.6 | 120.7 |
| Gas and electricity | 134.3 | 131.0 | 129.8 | 124.1 |
| Household furnishings and operations | 129.0 | 128.0 | 127.5 | 122.2 |
| Apparel and upkeep | 128.8 | 130.5 | 130.5 | 123.0 |
| Men's and boys' | 127.7 | 129.1 | 128.9 | 123.5 |
| Women's and girls' | 127.8 | 131.8 | 132.2 | 122.2 |
| Footwear | 133.0 | 132.6 | 132.6 | 126.6 |
| Transportation | 128.1 | 126.7 | 125.8 | 121.0 |
| Private | 126.2 | 124.6 | 123.8 | 118.5 |
| Public | 146.0 | 146.5 | 144.6 | 144.3 |
| Health and recreation | 133.7 | 133.0 | 132.6 | 127.8 |
| Medical care | 142.2 | 141.4 | 140.9 | 134.9 |
| Personal care | 129.8 | 129.2 | 128.1 | 121.8 |
| Reading and recreation | 128.3 | 127.6 | 127.5 | 124.1 |
| Other goods and services | 131.8 | 131.3 | 130.8 | 126.7 |

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Index of Prices Paid by Farmers for Family Living Items
(1967 = 100)

| Item | Feb. 1974 | Jan 1974 | Dec. 1973 | Nov. 1973 | Oct. 1973 | Sept. 1973 | Feb. 1973 |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| All items | 153 | 149 | 147 | 146 | 142 | 142 | 131 |
| Food and tobacco | --- | --- | 151 | --- | --- | 146 | --- |
| Clothing | --- | --- | 154 | --- | --- | 148 | --- |
| Household operation | --- | --- | 135 | --- | --- | 129 | --- |
| Household furnishings | --- | --- | 130 | --- | --- | 127 | --- |
| Building materials, house | --- | --- | 163 | --- | --- | 159 | --- |

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

COST OF FOOD AT HOME, U.S. AND REGIONS

*Cost of Food at Home,¹ Estimated for Food Plans at Three Cost Levels,
January 1974, U. S. average*

| Sex-age groups ² | Cost for 1 week | | | Cost for 1 month | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| | Low-cost plan | Moderate-cost plan | Liberal plan | Low-cost plan | Moderate cost plan | Liberal plan |
| | Dollars | Dollars | Dollars | Dollars | Dollars | Dollars |
| FAMILIES | | | | | | |
| Family of 2: | | | | | | |
| 20 to 35 years ³ | 24.70 | 31.50 | 38.20 | 107.50 | 136.00 | 165.00 |
| 55 to 75 years ³ | 20.10 | 26.20 | 31.20 | 87.70 | 113.60 | 135.00 |
| Family of 4: | | | | | | |
| Preschool children ⁴ | 35.90 | 45.60 | 55.00 | 155.70 | 197.10 | 237.60 |
| School children ⁵ | 41.70 | 53.20 | 64.60 | 180.80 | 230.00 | 279.40 |
| INDIVIDUALS⁶ | | | | | | |
| Children, under 1 year | 4.80 | 6.00 | 6.70 | 20.80 | 26.00 | 28.90 |
| 1 to 3 years | 6.10 | 7.70 | 9.20 | 26.50 | 33.20 | 39.70 |
| 3 to 6 years | 7.30 | 9.30 | 11.10 | 31.50 | 40.30 | 47.90 |
| 6 to 9 years | 8.90 | 11.30 | 14.00 | 38.40 | 48.90 | 60.60 |
| Girls, 9 to 12 years | 10.10 | 13.00 | 15.10 | 43.70 | 56.30 | 65.30 |
| 12 to 15 years | 11.10 | 14.40 | 17.20 | 47.90 | 62.20 | 74.70 |
| 15 to 20 years | 11.30 | 14.20 | 16.80 | 49.00 | 61.70 | 72.80 |
| Boys, 9 to 12 years | 10.30 | 13.30 | 15.90 | 44.70 | 57.50 | 68.80 |
| 12 to 15 years | 12.00 | 15.80 | 18.70 | 52.20 | 68.60 | 81.00 |
| 15 to 20 years | 13.90 | 17.70 | 21.10 | 60.40 | 76.60 | 91.50 |
| Women, 20 to 35 years | 10.40 | 13.30 | 15.80 | 45.30 | 57.40 | 68.30 |
| 35 to 55 years | 10.00 | 12.80 | 15.20 | 43.50 | 55.50 | 65.90 |
| 55 to 75 years | 8.40 | 11.00 | 13.00 | 36.60 | 47.60 | 56.20 |
| 75 years and over | 7.70 | 9.70 | 11.80 | 33.20 | 42.10 | 51.20 |
| Pregnant | 12.30 | 15.50 | 18.10 | 53.50 | 66.90 | 78.50 |
| Nursing | 14.30 | 17.80 | 20.60 | 62.10 | 77.00 | 89.20 |
| Men, 20-35 years | 12.10 | 15.30 | 18.90 | 52.40 | 66.20 | 81.70 |
| 35 to 55 years | 11.20 | 14.20 | 17.20 | 48.70 | 61.70 | 74.50 |
| 55 to 75 years | 9.90 | 12.80 | 15.40 | 43.10 | 55.70 | 66.50 |
| 75 years and over | 9.30 | 12.40 | 14.80 | 40.30 | 53.70 | 64.10 |

¹These estimates were computed from quantities in food plans published in *Family Economics Review*, October 1964. The costs of the food plans were first estimated by using the average price per pound of each food group paid by urban survey families at three selected income levels in 1965. These prices were adjusted to current levels by use of *Retail Food Prices by Cities* released periodically by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

²Age groups include the persons of the first age listed up to but not including those of the second age listed.

³Ten percent added for family size adjustment.

⁴Man and woman, 20-35 years; children, 1-3 and 3-6 years.

⁵Man and woman, 20-35; child, 6-9 and boy 9-12 years.

⁶The costs given are for individuals in 4-person families. For individuals in other size families, the following adjustments are suggested: 1-person—add 20 percent; 2-person—add 10 percent; 3-person—add 5 percent? 5-person—subtract 5 percent; 6-or-more-person—subtract 10 percent.

*Cost of 1 Week's Food at Home¹ Estimated for Food Plans
at Three Cost Levels, January 1974, for Northeast Region*

| Sex-age groups ² | Low-cost plan | Moderate- cost plan | Liberal plan |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| | <i>Dollars</i> | <i>Dollars</i> | <i>Dollars</i> |
| FAMILIES | | | |
| Family of two: | | | |
| 20 to 35 years ³ | 27.40 | 34.50 | 40.60 |
| 55 to 75 years ³ | 22.30 | 28.70 | 33.10 |
| Family of 4: | | | |
| Preschool children ⁴ | 39.60 | 50.10 | 58.40 |
| School children ⁵ | 46.10 | 58.60 | 68.70 |
| INDIVIDUALS⁶ | | | |
| Children, under 1 year | 5.20 | 6.60 | 7.10 |
| 1 to 3 years | 6.70 | 8.40 | 9.70 |
| 3 to 6 years | 8.00 | 10.30 | 11.80 |
| 6 to 9 years | 9.80 | 12.50 | 14.90 |
| Girls, 9 to 12 years | 11.10 | 14.40 | 16.00 |
| 12 to 15 years | 12.20 | 15.90 | 18.50 |
| 15 to 20 years | 12.40 | 15.70 | 18.00 |
| Boys, 9 to 12 years | 11.40 | 14.70 | 16.90 |
| 12 to 15 years | 13.30 | 17.60 | 20.00 |
| 15 to 20 years | 15.50 | 19.60 | 22.50 |
| Women, 20 to 35 years | 11.50 | 14.50 | 16.80 |
| 35 to 55 years | 11.00 | 14.10 | 16.20 |
| 55 to 75 years | 9.30 | 12.00 | 13.80 |
| 75 years and over | 8.40 | 10.60 | 12.60 |
| Pregnant | 13.50 | 17.00 | 19.20 |
| Nursing | 15.70 | 19.60 | 21.90 |
| Men, 20 to 35 years | 13.40 | 16.90 | 20.10 |
| 35 to 55 years | 12.40 | 15.70 | 18.30 |
| 55 to 75 years | 11.00 | 14.10 | 16.30 |
| 75 years and over | 10.20 | 13.60 | 15.70 |

¹These estimates were computed from quantities of food plans published in *Family Economics Review*, October 1964. The costs of the food plans were first estimated by using the average price per pound of each food group paid by urban survey families at three selected income levels in 1965. These prices were adjusted to current levels by use of *Retail Food Prices by Cities* (Boston) released periodically by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

²Age groups include the persons of the first age listed up to but not including those of the second age listed.

³Ten percent added for family size adjustment.

⁴Man and woman, 20-35 years; children, 1-3 and 3-6 years.

⁵Man and woman, 20-35 years; child, 6-9 and boy, 9-12.

⁶The costs given are for individuals in 4-person families. For individuals in other size families, the following adjustments are suggested: 1-person—add 20 percent; 2-person—add 10 percent; 3-person—add 5 percent; 5-person—subtract 5 percent; 6-or-more—subtract 10 percent.

*Cost of 1 Week's Food at Home¹ Estimated for Food Plans
at Three Cost Levels, January 1974, for North Central Region*

| Sex-age groups ² | Low-cost plan | Moderate- cost plan | Liberal plan |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| | <i>Dollars</i> | <i>Dollars</i> | <i>Dollars</i> |
| FAMILIES | | | |
| Family of two: | | | |
| 20 to 35 years ³ | 24.50 | 30.10 | 36.50 |
| 55 to 75 years ³ | 20.10 | 25.10 | 29.70 |
| Family of four: | | | |
| Preschool children ⁴ | 35.60 | 43.50 | 52.60 |
| School children ⁵ | 41.20 | 50.70 | 61.90 |
| INDIVIDUALS⁶ | | | |
| Children, under 1 year | 4.70 | 5.70 | 6.40 |
| 1 to 3 years | 6.10 | 7.30 | 8.80 |
| 3 to 6 years | 7.20 | 8.80 | 10.60 |
| 6 to 9 years | 8.70 | 10.70 | 13.40 |
| Girls, 9 to 12 years | 9.90 | 12.30 | 14.40 |
| 12 to 15 years | 10.90 | 13.60 | 16.40 |
| 15 to 20 years | 11.10 | 13.50 | 16.00 |
| Boys, 9 to 12 years | 10.20 | 12.60 | 15.30 |
| 12 to 15 years | 11.90 | 15.10 | 18.00 |
| 15 to 20 years | 13.80 | 16.80 | 20.40 |
| Women, 20 to 35 years | 10.30 | 12.70 | 15.00 |
| 35 to 55 years | 9.90 | 12.20 | 14.50 |
| 55 to 75 years | 8.40 | 10.50 | 12.30 |
| 75 years and over | 7.60 | 9.30 | 11.20 |
| Pregnant | 12.30 | 14.70 | 17.30 |
| Nursing | 14.30 | 17.00 | 19.80 |
| Men, 20 to 35 years | 12.00 | 14.70 | 18.20 |
| 35 to 75 years | 11.20 | 13.60 | 16.60 |
| 55 to 75 years | 9.90 | 12.30 | 14.70 |
| 75 years and over | 9.30 | 11.90 | 14.20 |

¹ These estimates were computed from quantities in food plans published in *Family Economics Review*, October 1964. The costs of the food plans were first estimated by using the average price per pound of each food group paid by urban survey families at three selected income levels in 1965. These prices were adjusted to current levels by use of *Retail Food Prices by Cities* (St. Louis) released periodically by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

² Age groups include the persons of the first age listed up to but not including those of the second age listed.

³ Ten percent added for family size adjustment.

⁴ Man and woman, 20-35 years; children, 1-3 and 3-6 years.

⁵ Man and woman, 20-35 years; child, 6-9 and boy, 9-12 years.

⁶ The costs given are for individuals in 4-person families. For individuals in other size families, the following adjustments are suggested: 1-person—add 20 percent; 2-person—add 10 percent; 3-person—add 5 percent; 5-person—subtract 5 percent; 6-or-more—subtract 10 percent.

*Cost of 1 Week's Food at Home¹ Estimated for Food Plans
at Different Cost Levels, January 1974, for Southern Region*

| Sex-age groups Sex-age groups ² | Low-cost plan | Another low-cost plan ³ | Moderate- cost plan | Liberal cost plan |
|---|------------------|--|------------------------|----------------------|
| | <i>Dollars</i> | <i>Dollars</i> | <i>Dollars</i> | <i>Dollars</i> |
| FAMILIES | | | | |
| Family of two: | | | | |
| 20 to 35 years ⁴ | 23.20 | 22.10 | 29.50 | 35.70 |
| 55 to 75 years ⁴ | 18.90 | 17.70 | 24.70 | 29.30 |
| Family of 4: | | | | |
| Preschool children ⁵ | 33.60 | 32.20 | 42.80 | 51.70 |
| School children ⁶ | 39.10 | 37.30 | 49.90 | 60.70 |
| INDIVIDUALS⁷ | | | | |
| Children, under 1 year | 4.50 | 4.40 | 5.70 | 6.40 |
| 1 to 3 years | 5.70 | 5.50 | 7.20 | 8.70 |
| 3 to 6 years | 6.80 | 6.60 | 8.80 | 10.50 |
| 6 to 9 years | 8.30 | 8.10 | 10.60 | 13.20 |
| Girls, 9 to 12 years | 9.40 | 8.90 | 12.30 | 14.20 |
| 12 to 15 years | 10.40 | 9.90 | 13.60 | 16.40 |
| 15 to 20 years | 10.60 | 10.10 | 13.60 | 16.00 |
| Boys, 9 to 12 years | 9.70 | 9.10 | 12.50 | 15.00 |
| 12 to 15 years | 11.20 | 11.00 | 14.90 | 17.60 |
| 15 to 20 years | 13.00 | 12.50 | 16.60 | 19.90 |
| Women, 20 to 35 years | 9.80 | 9.30 | 12.50 | 14.90 |
| 35 to 55 years | 9.40 | 8.90 | 12.10 | 14.40 |
| 55 to 75 years | 7.90 | 7.20 | 10.40 | 12.20 |
| 75 years and over | 7.20 | 6.70 | 9.30 | 11.20 |
| Pregnant | 11.60 | 11.30 | 14.60 | 17.10 |
| Nursing | 13.40 | 13.10 | 16.80 | 19.30 |
| Men, 20 to 35 years | 11.30 | 10.80 | 14.30 | 17.60 |
| 35 to 55 years | 10.50 | 10.10 | 13.40 | 16.10 |
| 55 to 75 years | 9.30 | 8.90 | 12.10 | 14.40 |
| 75 years and over | 8.70 | 8.30 | 11.70 | 13.90 |

¹These estimates were computed from quantities in food plans published in *Family Economics Review*, October 1964. The costs of the food plans were first estimated by using the average price per pound of each food group paid by urban survey families at three selected income levels in 1965. These prices were adjusted to current levels by use of *Retail Food Prices by Cities* (Atlanta) released periodically by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

²Age groups include the persons of the first age listed up to but not including those of the second age listed.

³Special adaptation of low-cost plan especially suitable for food habits of families in the Southeastern States.

⁴Ten percent added for family size adjustment.

⁵Man and woman, 20-35 years; children, 1-3 and 3-6 years.

⁶Man and woman, 20-35 years; child, 6-9 and boy, 9-12.

⁷The costs given are for individuals in 4-person families. For individuals in other size families, the following adjustments are suggested: 1-person—add 20 percent; 2-person—add 10 percent; 3-person—add 5 percent; 5-person—subtract 5 percent; 6-or-more person—subtract 10 percent.

*Cost of 1 Week's Food at Home¹ Estimated for Food Plans
at Three Cost Levels, January 1974, for Western Region*

| Sex-age groups ² | Low-cost plan | Moderate- cost plan | Liberal plan |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| | <i>Dollars</i> | <i>Dollars</i> | <i>Dollars</i> |
| FAMILIES | | | |
| Family of two: | | | |
| 20 to 35 years ³ | 25.30 | 30.80 | 37.60 |
| 55 to 75 years ³ | 20.60 | 25.70 | 30.70 |
| Family of 4: | | | |
| Preschool children ⁴ | 36.70 | 44.60 | 53.90 |
| School children ⁵ | 42.70 | 52.00 | 63.30 |
| INDIVIDUALS⁶ | | | |
| Children, under 1 year | 4.90 | 5.80 | 6.30 |
| 1 to 3 years | 6.30 | 7.50 | 8.90 |
| 3 to 6 years | 7.40 | 9.10 | 10.80 |
| 6 to 9 years | 9.10 | 11.00 | 13.60 |
| Girls, 9 to 12 years | 10.30 | 12.70 | 14.70 |
| 12 to 15 years | 11.30 | 14.00 | 16.90 |
| 15 to 20 years | 11.40 | 13.90 | 16.40 |
| Boys, 9 to 12 years | 10.60 | 13.00 | 15.50 |
| 12 to 15 years | 12.30 | 15.50 | 18.20 |
| 15 to 20 years | 14.20 | 17.20 | 20.60 |
| Women, 20 to 35 years | 10.60 | 13.00 | 15.60 |
| 35 to 55 years | 10.20 | 12.60 | 15.10 |
| 55 to 75 years | 8.60 | 10.80 | 12.80 |
| 75 years and over | 7.70 | 9.50 | 11.70 |
| Pregnant | 12.60 | 15.10 | 17.80 |
| Nursing | 14.60 | 17.30 | 20.10 |
| Men, 20 to 35 years | 12.40 | 15.00 | 18.60 |
| 35 to 55 years | 11.50 | 13.90 | 16.90 |
| 55 to 75 years | 10.10 | 12.60 | 15.10 |
| 75 years and over | 9.50 | 12.20 | 14.60 |

¹These estimates were computed from quantities in food plans published in *Family Economics Review*, October 1964. The costs of the food plans were first estimated by using the average price per pound of each food group paid by urban survey families at three selected income levels in 1965. These prices were adjusted to current levels by use of *Retail Food Prices by Cities* (Los Angeles) released periodically by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

²Age groups include the persons of the first age listed up to but not including those of the second age listed.

³Ten percent added for family size adjustment.

⁴Man and woman, 20-35 years; children, 1-3 and 3-6 years.

⁵Man and woman, 20-35 years; child, 6-9 and boy, 9-12.

⁶The costs given are for individuals in 4-person families. For individuals in other size families, the following adjustments are suggested: 1-person—add 20 percent; 2-person—add 10 percent; 3-person—add 5 percent; 5-person—subtract 5 percent; 6-or-more—subtract 10 percent.

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This issue is made up, for the most part, of condensations of papers prepared for the National Agricultural Outlook Conference, held in Washington, D.C., December 17-19, 1973. For a free copy of the complete text, send your request—giving title and author of the Article—to the Consumer and Food Economics Institute, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Federal Building, Hyattsville, MD 20782. Please give your ZIP code with your return address.