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Food and Nutrition

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**FOOD
FACTS
CAN BE
FUN!**

ASE

how food stamp mail issuance works!

By June R. Wyman

THE SIGN IN THE WINDOW of the Huntington, West Virginia, area welfare office said it all: "Tired of waiting in line for your food stamps? See your worker about having them mailed to you."

That simple notice masked months of planning, working, and finger-crossing by the State of West Virginia and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to implement the Nation's first statewide system for the mail issuance of food stamps.

The effort has proved its worth: the State now boasts a smoothly functioning mailout system for food stamps and a staggeringly low loss rate of .08 of one percent.

On March 2-3, the West Virginia Department of Welfare in cooperation with USDA sponsored a national workshop on the public assistance withholding requirement of the 1971 amendments to food stamp legislation. Held in Charleston, the workshop demonstrated to the 27 attending State delegations the system West Virginia uses to withhold food stamp "purchase requirements" from public assistance grants.

West Virginia's history of innovation in the food stamp program goes back to May 1961, when McDowell County became the first county in the Nation to enter the program. By April 1968 every county in the State had a program. A fair hearing option for food stamp recipients who felt they had been treated unfairly was offered in January 1969. In July of that year, the State merged welfare and food stamp eligibility functions to increase efficiency. Bank issuance began in January 1970.

The State began to experiment with public assistance withholding in August 1970. This meant that any welfare recipient could have the pur-

chase requirement of his food stamps deducted automatically from his welfare check and receive his stamps in the mail. About one year later, the mailout option was offered to non-welfare recipients.

The behind-the-scenes story is this: After experimenting with mail issuance for awhile on their own, the State planners approached the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. USDA had no objections, but HEW at first questioned the wisdom of deducting money from a welfare check. What if the recipient changes his mind?

Further objections came from local postal officials who were concerned about security. How could \$2,000,000 worth of food stamps be mailed safely? West Virginia went straight to the top: the U.S. Postmaster General. The State won its case, and the present mailing system was arranged.

Why did West Virginia fight so hard for the chance to prove that food stamps could be mailed successfully? As Deputy Commissioner of Welfare Dr. John Yankey says, a big factor was the huge number of food stamp thefts. The State lost \$600,000 in food stamps in 1969, more than all other States combined.

In addition, West Virginia's food stamp caseload had increased con-

siderably. Lines were long at issuance centers. In large counties a recipient might have to travel 50 miles to the issuance center at a cost of \$5 to \$10 a month. Banks had a problem in storing the stamps. Mailing, it was felt, might alleviate these difficulties.

Finally, advances in data processing made it possible to implement a highly automated welfare program, which enables the central office in Charleston to handle information on the State's 270,000 food stamp recipients with a relatively small staff.

How does mail issuance work?

Public assistance recipients can choose one of two methods. They can authorize the Department of Welfare to deduct their purchase requirement from the monthly welfare check and receive the stamps from the State office with their check; or they can reject the withholding option, receiving the usual authorization-to-purchase (ATP) card, and buying the stamps at either a bank or local welfare office.

Those who select the first option may notify the department to stop withholding the food stamp purchase requirement from their check up to a half-day before their stamps are mailed. They must, however, buy the full food stamp allotment; the variable purchase option, which enables the recipient to buy a fraction of the



With a highly automated welfare program, West Virginia is able to handle information on the State's 270,000 food stamp recipients with a relatively small staff. Here, a staff assistant checks an IBM print-out of names and addresses.

full stamp allotment, does not apply to mailed stamps.

Recipients not on public assistance can also get their stamps in the mail by sending their ATP cards with a certified check or money order to the area welfare office, which mails the stamps on the day the envelope is received. Those eligible for free food stamps receive the mailed stamps directly from the State office.

Any food stamp recipient may ask for a cash refund for his stamps; however, the State averages only five refunds a month. Recipients may buy one-quarter, one-half, three-quarters, or the full allotment of stamps at time of purchase, provided that they purchase the coupons in person.

Besides mail issuance, West Virginia now offers bank and local welfare office issuance and plans to pilot post offices as issuance centers this year. Cost figures per recipient are these: the State pays \$1.44 per household for local welfare office issuance, 75 cents for bank issuance, and 45 cents for mail issuance.

The cost of mail issuance will go down to about 37 cents, State officials say, with the use of four new USDA family-sized coupon books, which contain the exact amount of coupons allotted for households of one to four persons. Introduced in March, these books will go to about 57 percent of

the caseload. The 8 cent cost reduction is possible because the new books will reduce local issuance and office mailing time and almost eliminate cashier errors.

The backbone of the mailout system is the central computer in the State welfare department at Charleston. It calculates and prints all welfare checks and ATP cards. It is connected to small terminals in each of the 27 area welfare offices.

Changes in any food stamp case are transmitted on these terminals via leased telephone wires to the central computer in Charleston. A terminal operator in the area office can check any information on a food stamp case by "asking" the Charleston computer through the terminal. Any area office can "speak" to another area office through the central computer. And a newly certified recipient can receive his identification card in a matter of minutes; his ATP card will be printed by the computer using information on his case transmitted by the area office.

West Virginia is using this data processing system to full advantage. For example, a print-out of all people in the State eligible for food stamps is being made using tax records. Each office will receive a listing for its area. Before certifying someone, the area office staff can check his name

against this list. If he is not on the list, they will know something is wrong.

Mailing of stamps is done from two vaults in the same building that houses the computer. Stamps are stored in one of the vaults and hand-stuffed from a second. Envelopes are sorted by zip code, budget group, and category and bagged by zip code. Bags then go directly to the 15 regional post offices. Mailing is staggered and occurs on the 1st, 10th, 15th, and 20th of every month. If the stamps are returned, the county office is notified to check the address, and they are remailed. If no one claims them, the stamps go back into the inventory. Refunds on mailed stamps are handled on a local basis.

Out of almost \$7 million sold in food stamps every month, \$2.2 million are now mailed from the State office. This includes both public assistance withholdings and free food stamps. Altogether in State and local mailings, 82,834 people now get their food stamps in the mail, which is 32 percent of the total food stamp caseload. Forty-seven percent of the 122,314 public assistance recipients elect withholding.

Both USDA and State welfare officials caution that the computer cannot work miracles, though it may sometimes seem that way. As Dr.



A member of the data processing unit of the Department of Welfare works at the central control panel. This is the main control unit for the main terminal and computer operation.



Workshop participants watch a demonstration of the 2260 IBM terminal, which enables the Department to enter and retrieve information on food stamp cases.

Yankey said, "There is no foolproof system. Whether data processing or manual, it can be *had*."

On the positive side, many people directly affected by mail issuance have hailed the innovation as a major improvement. It has released local staff somewhat from the burden of issuance, freeing them to perform more services for the client (such as regular recertification). Clients no longer have to wait on long lines to buy stamps or go to the bank to cash a welfare check before buying them. They do not have to spend money for transportation to the issuance office.

Food stamp workers also endorse the withholding-mailout system. Said the Kanawha County office supervisor: "I'd much rather do it this way." And an eligibility specialist in the Huntington area office said that most people she had talked to readily accept the idea.

Delegates to the recent Charleston workshop, however, did have some reservations about mail issuance. A common one was voiced by USDA's Vernon Morgan, who said that "there are going to be some areas where mailing stamps is just not possible because of previous experience with thefts of welfare checks or food stamps." An Illinois representative pointed out that her State mails food stamps in every area except Chicago, where officials are afraid of a high loss rate through mail theft. Delegates from the District of Columbia felt the same way. A Tennessee representative said that the State had successfully mailed stamps in the urban area of Memphis by staggering the mailings and avoiding too much publicity. But many wondered whether West Virginia's loss rate would remain low if the State had more urban areas.

Other misgivings centered on financing the system. A District of Columbia delegate said that his department, lacking West Virginia's equipment, would have to pay someone else to do the mailing. Many had qualms about the cost of the data processing system. Donald Roberts, head of West Virginia's food stamp program, admitted that the costs were considerable, but said that the system pays for itself. ☆

Post Offices Sell Food Stamps

"LET'S DO IT."

With those words from Western Regional Postmaster General Fred Huleen last fall, the United States Postal Service was launched into the business of issuing food stamps. On October 12, 33 post offices in the Seattle area began selling this "other kind of stamp" to participants in the Department of Agriculture's Food Stamp Program.

It was to have been a 6 months' pilot project. But the service proved so popular and convenient for food stamp users and so advantageous for Federal, State and local governments that it mushroomed quickly throughout the State of Washington. By April 1972, Washington had 124 post office food stamp outlets, California 37, and Idaho two.

Fresno County, California, began post office sales at 36 locations April 1. A few days later, Food and Nutrition Service Fresno officer-in-charge Howard Bradshaw made a personal



check of food stamp customers' reactions to the new service. He talked informally with food stamp purchasers at a Fresno city post office. "I think the post office is very receptive to food stamp customers," one man told Bradshaw as he finished his purchase. Along with courteous treatment, food stamp buyers liked the speed with which postal clerks handled the transactions. "I'm really happy with their efficiency," a customer informed Bradshaw, and another added it took her only 2 minutes to buy her stamps.

By April, the Postal Service was in at least discussion stage with State or county welfare agencies for additional locations in the four States which already have post office outlets, and in Alaska and Utah.

The interest that spurred this rapid growth developed from contacts with State welfare agencies by the Postal Service's western regional office and the Food and Nutrition

The Postal Service is establishing the concept of "all services at all windows." Food stamp and postage stamp customers share the same line (right). A clerk (below) readies the postage stamps and food coupons.



Service regional office. The response has kept Tom Hart of the Postal Service's regional retail division on an almost continuous circuit of exploratory meetings with State and county welfare officials.

Hart explains, "We offer a supplemental service in the community interest. We're not interested in competing with established food stamp outlets such as banks, and particularly anti-poverty or community organizations. But where there's a need for more outlets, we think we can help."

A State or county that is interested in post office issuance can let the Postal Service know through the local postmaster or district office. The western regional office is then informed, and Tom Hart is off to Honolulu, Anchorage, Los Angeles, or Fresno to explain what the Postal Service can do.

If, as is happening as a result of many of these meetings, agreement

and a contract between the Postal Service and the welfare agency are concluded, postal officials are frank to admit there are benefits to post offices no less than to food stamp program participants.

Henry Riecks, western regional director of the Postal Service's retail division, says, "Post offices are busiest in the early morning and late afternoon. So we can pattern our food stamp sales hours to the banks and other outlets and increase our clerks' utility and capability. We can already meet USDA's security requirements in most offices and the procedures are relatively easy to set up."

The Postal Service is establishing the concept of "all services at all windows." There are no separate lines for food stamp customers, unless it's more convenient and faster for them. Postmasters in some offices have set up express-type lines—a single line with each person going to the next available window in turn.

All food stamp sales outlets charge the State or county welfare agency a fee for transactions. "Our price is arrived at in terms of direct expense to the Postal Service," says Hart. In California, as determined by the Regional Postmaster General, this ranges between 80 and 85 cents per transaction.

"Remember, the Postal Service is now an independent Government agency," he explains. "But we certainly don't look at food stamp sales in terms of the money they will make for us. It's a community service."

The Postal Service is aggressively looking for community services to perform. In addition to selling food stamps, they now sell license plates for the State of Alaska, and are looking into many other possibilities—having postmasters serve as notaries public, handling voter registration, taking passport applications, even providing facsimile transmission service.

According to Regional Postmaster General Huleen, "Our policy is essentially to provide service to public agencies where we can do it and receive direct costs. We don't intend to go into competition with private business."

The Postal Service has its eye on July 4, 1976—not only as the 200th anniversary of American independence, but as a sort of Postal Service Independence Day. That, according to Riecks, is the date by which the Postal Service hopes to be self-sufficient—to be paying its own way. Increased utilization of post office facilities and people during slack parts of the day is the key. By 1976, a lot of food stamp program participants will have helped the Postal Service reach its goal. Thousands in the far west already have. The 33 post offices in Seattle alone are handling about 6,000 food stamp transactions a month.

As for community needs, Henry Riecks says, "We're proud of the way the western postal region has responded to the needs of communities as they are today, not 20 years ago. Once the Regional Postmaster General gave the go-ahead, we were in the food stamp business in a matter of a few weeks." ☆

Reaching levels 20 to 30 feet high, flood waters uprooted homes, cars, and other belongings and deposited them along the banks of the creek. National guardsmen (right) clean up the wreckage from a house that was sliced in half as it was washed onto a railroad trestle.



Meals prepared with USDA-donated foods were provided to flood victims at three local schools. At the Man High School cafeteria (below right), they are served breakfast. Man High School was also used for the emergency issuance of free food stamps. A young woman (below left) signs for her stamps in the school library.



feeding programs aid flood victims

By Werner C. Hietsch

IT WAS SHORTLY after 8 o'clock Saturday morning, February 26, after 3 days of heavy rain that the huge coal-slag dam at the head of Buffalo Creek Hollow in Logan County, West Virginia, burst its seams. About 17.5 million gallons of water plunged into

the 17-mile valley, leaving more than 100 people dead, injuring 1,100, demolishing 756 homes and 186 trailers, and damaging another 610 homes in its wake.

Within just a few hours various disaster relief organizations sprung into action.

This included the Food and Nutrition Service, whose Frank deMartino was on the scene that Saturday afternoon making arrangements to have federally donated foods shipped to disaster feeding sites from the commodity warehouse in nearby Logan.

DeMartino, a resident of Williamson, W. Va., was unable to get home Friday night because floods caused by the rains had made many roads impassable. He heard of the disaster on the radio in his Charleston, W. Va., motel room 90 miles away.

On his way to the Buffalo Creek area, he listened to more news reports telling of the devastation that took place in the narrow valley in which 16 mining towns are nestled.

A murky wall of water, about 20 to 30 feet high, raged through these communities carrying with it numerous homes, trailers and cars, and depositing them against washed-out bridges and along the banks of the muddy creek. Four of the towns nearest the dam, Latrobe, Lorado, Lunda and Robinette, were completely swept away by the deluge.

Once the water receded, a thick black covering of silt and slime lined the entire valley floor. The black high water mark was clearly evident on the homes that were not uprooted.

Red Cross and Salvation Army disaster teams quickly set up rescue headquarters in the small town of Man, situated at the junction of Buffalo Creek and the Guyandot River.

Over the weekend foodstuffs poured into the disaster area from local merchants and the flood victims' more fortunate neighbors. Fourteen USDA-donated foods were available almost immediately. These included boned chicken, frozen pork, processed cheese, apple sauce, butter, flour, dried milk, shortening, beans, salad oil, peanut butter, and fresh pears, apples and peaches.

The foods, transported in National Guard, Red Cross, and Salvation

Army vehicles, went to three schools as well as seven mobile canteens.

During the emergency an average of 2,000 flood victims were served three meals a day prepared with USDA foods in the cafeterias at Man High School, South Man Grade School and Amherstdale Grade School. Approximately 10,415 pounds of donated foods were provided from the Logan warehouse during the first 2 weeks following the disaster.

In addition, eight cases of sweet-potatoes, seven cases of tomato paste, and five cases of pineapples, which USDA had provided to the Man High School and South Man Grade School for use in their National School Lunch Programs, were also utilized.

Because the Amherstdale School was without power for several days after the flood, it was impossible to serve hot meals there. As a result, the boned chicken, served cold, was extremely welcomed.

Since West Virginia participates exclusively in the food stamp program, flood victims made use of USDA commodities by eating the prepared meals served at the emergency feeding sites.

USDA authorized the emergency issuance of free food stamps for those who were able to prepare their own food at home but lacked the money to buy it. The Department could do this under the authority of the Disaster Relief Act of 1970.

Arrangements for the speedy issuance of coupons was made by Ray Artz, the USDA Food Stamp Program District Manager for western Pennsylvania and West Virginia. On Monday morning he made sure that enough stores authorized by USDA to accept food stamps were stocked with ample food supplies to serve customers.

USDA's official announcement authorizing the emergency issuance could then follow.

The certification and issuance was handled by the West Virginia Department of Welfare at the Man High School library as well as at their Logan office. The Red Cross also accepted applications at the latter location.

In order to expedite the process, flood victims used a simplified appli-



cation form, which affirmed that they suffered a significant economic loss as a result of the flood, and that they had cooking facilities with which they could prepare meals.

Under normal circumstances food stamp participants are required to purchase their coupons for a sum of money much less than the actual face value of the coupons, the purchase price being determined by national eligibility standards. Due to the emergency, however, these coupons were provided by USDA free of charge. The monthly allotment of coupons was the same as that given to all food stamp participants.

Altogether, approximately 1,600 households consisting of 6,500 persons received coupons valued at \$165,000.

Although the emergency issuance was in effect for only one month, persons suffering prolonged hardship could still benefit from food stamps through the regular certification process.

The success of the emergency relief operations is due to the cooperative efforts of numerous private organizations, the Federal Government, West Virginia agencies, especially its Department of Welfare, and the hundreds of local residents who volunteered their services. ☆

FOOD FACTS CA

Making tacos (right) is a part of the food education program at a Westminster, Colo., elementary school. Students plan a nutritious meal (below) by placing cut-out photographs they have selected on a paper plate. On the cover Westminster first graders make potato soup and learn how it contributes to daily dietary needs.



FOOD HAS BEEN GIVEN a new place of importance in the curriculum at the Metz Elementary School in Westminster, Colorado. Art classes use foods in their projects. Math classes figure food costs. Science classes study vitamins and food preservation and run tests to determine the sugar, starch, fat and protein content of various foods. And first graders whip up potato soup while discussing the "basic four" food groups.

The idea originated last summer when the school's food service director, Margaret Cunningham, attended a school lunch workshop at Kansas State University, which was sponsored by KSU and the Food and Nutrition Service. Each of the workshop participants went home with the assignment to develop a nutrition education project.

Mrs. Cunningham began by contacting Mary Lou Zarlengo, who had just been appointed principal of Metz Elementary. "Mary Lou has always had an interest in nutrition," said the food service director, "and I knew she would be ideal to give this education idea a try."

Peggy McReynolds, school lunch consultant with the Colorado Department of Education, agreed to serve as a resource person. She spent several hours with the faculty and lunchroom personnel developing ideas on how to include food information in the curriculum.

Teachers responded enthusiastically and by the time the school had Open



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House in mid-November, results of the "food learning" project were evident everywhere. Posters and projects pertaining to food filled most of the classrooms. Even the library had place settings at a dining table where books relating to food were displayed.

A third grade math class developed a country store atmosphere with empty cans of vegetables and milk cartons brought from home, and students used play money to buy basic foods needed for a well-balanced meal.

One mother who missed the Open House approached Miss Zarlengo at a Parent-Teacher Association meeting the following month with, "Just what are you doing in school? My child has been telling me the wildest things about food."

Her son had soundly defended his after-school snack of a peanut butter and jelly sandwich by describing all its nutritional benefits.

The school has utilized this technique to encourage children to accept foods that are not familiar to them. For instance, dumplings, which were new to almost all of the children, were the featured discussion in class the day before chicken with dumplings was scheduled to be served in the cafeteria. The children learned how dumplings were made and their different uses—with chicken as a main course, for example, or with apples as a dessert. Then they watched the cafeteria staff prepare the dumplings. After the meal the cafeteria manager reported good acceptance of the new food.

Recognizing that examples are important teaching tools, one of the teachers arranged to have fashion models speak to the students about how important a good diet is to them. One class even asked a local health food store to supply a speaker.

Several of the classes have had tasting parties to sample new foods, such as pomegranates and beets.

Mrs. Cunningham has explained to the local PTA that the program can be a definite aid to teachers and food service personnel as well as to chil-

dren. "It helps answer the question of why we have to serve certain foods the children generally don't like." To introduce the idea to school lunch managers of other Westminster schools, workshops have been held on a volunteer basis.

The highlight of the project has been meals prepared by the children and served to their parents. First and second graders made breakfast, third and fourth graders undertook lunch, and the fifth and sixth grade classes prepared dinner.

Miss Zarlengo credits her food service personnel with a big share of the success of the program. "They even let the children help them prepare the food," she pointed out.

Many parents have taken an interest in the project and have been invited to attend the workshop sessions. As one mother, who has been an active participant said, "Many children will never be taught about nutrition unless it is taught in school. All you need to do is observe the shopping in the supermarkets to realize how very little many people know or think about their daily diet."

Another mother said, "I think the program is terrific. My child is eating breakfast for the first time in his life."

The effect of the nutrition project shows up in the increased number of children eating lunch at school. From 35 to 50 more students at Metz Elementary are eating the "Type A" lunch each day. ☆

WHEN ROBERT CARRIER introduces his fourth and fifth graders to nutrition, he first asks the youngsters what they had for breakfast that morning.

Some enthusiastically reply, "Eggs, juice, toast and milk."

Others answer, "A bowl of cereal with milk."

Another group shyly says, "Nothing."

The last response is one of the prime reasons why Carrier presents a nutrition unit to his students in the Taylor, Michigan, school district. Like

many teachers, he knows that children need a good breakfast to start the day right.

At the beginning of the unit, his students list just what they had for breakfast that day. He relates the various breakfasts to the basic four food groups which include milk and dairy products; meat, poultry, fish, and eggs; fruits and vegetables; and bread and cereals. After pointing these out, he stresses the fact that everyone needs foods from each group to get a balanced diet every day.

Investigative reports are then assigned on such topics as vitamins, minerals, digestion, food in space, and dental health. Students research their topics and gather information from sources such as encyclopedias, magazines, and educational publications from various food trade associations.

As panels of youngsters present their reports orally, Carrier ties in re-

lated films and guest speakers such as a local dentist, doctor, and the school dietitian.

The school dietitian reinforces the importance of a balanced diet. She explains menus she plans for lunches served at the school under the National School Lunch Program.

As the nutrition unit progresses, Carrier introduces a number of activities which he created to stress the value of good nutrition. One of these is a card game called "Bottle, Bottle, Who's Got the Bottle." Played similarly to Old Maid, the game tells the story of milk from its very beginning through its delivery to the store or home.

"Milk Run" is another Carrier creation. It is a game which presents the following concepts: the origin of milk, how it gets to you, the various milk products, people involved in the processing of milk products, plus several safety principles.

A third activity is a song with words

and music by Carrier. It is entitled, "What Do All Mothers Give?" The answer is milk.

"Children learn by doing," he explains. "It is evident that activities requiring student involvement generate the most interest, excitement and motivation. This confirms our class motto: 'I hear, I forget; I see, I remember; I do, I understand.'"

To reinforce this motto, the students plan, prepare, and serve a breakfast in the classroom.

The initial step is for the students to agree upon a breakfast menu based on the basic four food groups. A recent one consisted of orange juice, scrambled eggs, sausage, and muffins with butter and milk. The class is then divided into four sections each assigned to provide food from one food group. Other responsibilities such as room decorators, appliance contributors, cook's helpers, waiters and "cleaner-uppers" are also decided upon at this time.

"When breakfast day arrives, everything is well organized to 'plug-in' for action," Carrier explains. "If someone forgets something, the school lunch cooks help out.

"Sometimes it gets to be quite a circus, but it really is worth the effort. For some children, eating a complete, adequate breakfast is a new venture. In addition, the class is actually doing what it previously had studied and discussed."

Carrier's nutrition unit does not end as soon as the breakfast dishes are done. He follows up with an evaluation in which each student compares his breakfast habits at the beginning of the unit with those learned and performed throughout the unit. Themes are assigned on the basis of individual experiences. Students also draw pictures of what they have learned. This approach helps review nutrition concepts and allows the instructor to determine what has been "digested."

Carrier believes that if nutrition concepts were learned by students, and their behavior was changed, it is unlikely that any single learning experience was responsible. Rather, it is a culmination of a variety of learning experiences that require student involvement. ☆



This child is looking at a filmstrip on food and nutrition. She takes notes on it in preparation for a report to the class.

Advisory Council Reports on Child Nutrition Programs

ON MARCH 7, 1972, IN the Oval Room of the White House, the National Advisory Council on Child Nutrition presented its first annual report to the President, recommending more emphasis on nutrition education and the expansion of the child nutrition programs to schools now without any food service.

The National Advisory Council on Child Nutrition was authorized by Public Law 91-248 "to make a continuing study of the operation of programs carried out under the National School Lunch Act, the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, and any related Act under which meals are provided for children, with a view to determining how such programs may be improved."

Appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture in February 1971 and chaired by Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Richard Lyng, the 13-member Council includes nine members from various fields of experience related to child nutrition and three representatives from the Department of Agriculture.

Following a year's review of the Food and Nutrition Service's child nutrition programs, the Council made five major recommendations:

1. Nutrition Education

Greater emphasis should be given to nutrition education through the child nutrition programs, through classroom instruction, and through innovative means outside the classroom to help close the gap in public knowledge about nutrition.

Although the role of the National School Lunch Program as a laboratory for nutrition education has long been recognized, nutrition education has not had the continued attention or funding needed to make it available on a continuing basis to all schoolchildren. It has become a forgotten part of the curriculum in many schools, with teachers reluctant to in-

clude it in their teaching plans, often because of their own lack of training in nutrition and the demands of other subjects. In addition, the funding and emphasis given to other subjects has not been provided for nutrition education.

The changes in American food practices also point up the need for nutrition education. People must learn about the nutritional content of the increasing number of manufactured foods and synthetic nutrients that are on the market. The problem of inadequate knowledge is shown in the Preliminary Report on the Ten-State Nutrition Survey in the United States, dated April 1971, which points out that many Americans are suffering from nutritional deficiencies. As a result of these factors, the Council recommends that:

- Nutrition education should receive greater priority both at the elementary and secondary education levels and should be included as a curriculum component at all grade levels.

- Means should be explored to bring nutrition education to adults and very young children through television, children's books, adult education, and other means.

- USDA should work more closely with the Office of Education to encourage nutrition education in both the classroom and the lunchroom.

- At the State level the State Departments of Education should provide nutrition education specialists to coordinate food service programs and educational programs, and they should show in their State Plans of Child Nutrition Operations specifically how this coordination will be accomplished.

- Nutrition education should be a requirement for certification of all teachers and should be made available as inservice training to teachers. Federal funding, in the form of grants to colleges and institutions and

scholarships for teachers and would-be teachers, should be made available to assist in providing such training.

- USDA should develop the new nutrition center at the National Agricultural Library with a view toward making the center a usable and effective resource for practical nutrition education and for the development of instructional materials.

- The food industry should foster nutrition education through advertising, promotional materials and labeling practices which supplement educational programs and define the nutritional content of the foods provided under existing regulations of local, State and Federal Governments.

2. Reaching Schools Without Programs

USDA and the State Departments of Education should continue to concentrate on extending child nutrition programs to schools so that within 3 years all schools needing a school lunch or breakfast program will be participating and all schoolchildren from low-income families will have access to free and reduced-price meals.

Despite the commendable expansion of the National School Lunch Program during the 25 years of its existence—the percentage of schools participating has increased from 24 percent to 68 percent of the total schools in the United States, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa, and 82 percent of the total number of children enrolled in schools currently attend schools offering the program—many children do not have access to any food service at school. Results of an October 1971 survey show that approximately 18,000 schools with an enrollment of over 5.5 million children are in this category. The tragedy is that a substantial number of needy children, perhaps over a million, cannot ob-



The Advisory Council submitted its first annual report to President Nixon March 7. Shown here at the White House are, left to right: Edward J. Hekman, FNS Administrator; Dr. John F. Murphy, President, Swift Food Service Co., La Grange, Illinois; Mrs. Roger Whitcomb, School Board Member, Wichita, Kansas; Miss Josephine Martin, Georgia State School Lunch Director (partly hidden); Miss Jacqueline Johnson, Administrator, Program Resources and Medical Service, Odyssey House, New York City; Assistant Secretary Lyng; President Nixon; Dr. Ruth Huenemann, Professor of Public Health Nutrition, University of California; Secretary of Agriculture Earl L. Butz, Edward Schwartzkopf, School Administrator, Lincoln, Nebraska; Cola D. Watson, Director, Vocation-Technical Education, Vermont Department of Education; Russell H. James, FNS Southeast Regional Administrator; Dr. Dale Parnell, Superintendent of Public Instruction in Oregon; Herbert D. Rorex, Child Nutrition Division Director (Msgr. Bennett Applegate of Columbus, Ohio, was not present.)

tain free and reduced-price meals because they attend these schools.

The Council feels that although Public Law 91-248, enacted in May 1970, recognized this problem and provided specific means to resolve it, improvements are needed. Specifically, not enough Nonfood Assistance funds are being used to reach needy schools currently without food service; the State Plans of Child Nutrition Operations show insufficient resolve to reach nonparticipating schools; and the advance funding provisions have not yet been implemented.

In view of these facts, the National Advisory Council recommends that:

- In line with the new regulations issued by USDA in November 1971 on Nonfood Assistance funds, the Department of Agriculture and the State Departments of Education should concentrate the use of these funds in schools which currently offer no food service and give priority to those which have the most needy students.

- The States should set more realistic expansion targets in their State plans and concentrate on reaching the neediest schools first, so that within 3 years, all schools needing a

school lunch or school breakfast program will be participating.

- In connection with the two recommendations above, more accurate data should be developed on the number of needy children and their location in terms of the schools they attend and whether or not these schools offer food service.

- The Department of Agriculture and State and local officials should continue to explore how new foods and approaches can assist in reaching nonparticipating schools, including those where constructing kitchen facilities is not a viable alternative.

- USDA and State and local officials should further emphasize the need for schools receiving Federal assistance for their food service programs to reach all attending eligible children with free and reduced-price meals.

- The provisions of Public Law 91-248 authorizing advance funding should be implemented.

3. Upgrading School Food Service Personnel

USDA should provide leadership and coordination with State Departments of Education and professional groups to upgrade school food serv-

ice personnel by developing suitable staffing patterns and qualifications and by further encouraging training institutions to provide suitable school food service training.

It has been obvious for some time that food service supervisors and workers in the Child Nutrition Programs are underpaid, undertrained, and especially in the case of supervisors, understaffed. The following facts, as reported in the recently released School Food Service and Nutrition Education volume of the National Educational Finance Project, illustrate this situation:

- A 1968-69 Bureau of Labor Statistics survey showed the following average hourly earnings for certain categories of school employees: School food service, \$1.68; custodial, \$2.28; office, \$2.37; skilled maintenance, \$3.44; bus drivers, \$2.62; and all employees \$2.24.

- The October 1969 NEA Research Bulletin contains a comparison of salaries paid to professional employees which shows that persons involved in food service administration received the lowest pay of all school administrators and second lowest increase in salary over a 6-year period.

- A survey conducted by the Joint

Committee of USDA and Land Grant Colleges on Education for Government Service showed that in the ten States surveyed, 40 percent of the 56,366 persons involved in school food service work did not have a high school diploma and only 2 percent had college degrees.

- The School Food Service and Nutrition Education section concludes that there is a supervisory personnel gap at the State and system levels for school food service of at least well over 5,000 positions between the actual number of trained supervisors now available and the number needed.

The situation is slowly changing for the better. Food service workers are now covered by Federal minimum wage laws; colleges and vocational education institutions are showing more interest in food service training; and money is now available and being used under Public Law 91-248 for "nutritional training and education for workers, cooperators and participants" in the Child Nutrition Programs. However, the rate of change is not fast enough, especially since well-trained, adequately paid and motivated workers must be available if the Child Nutrition Programs are to increase their current relatively low rate of student participation.

Well-trained workers are needed not only to improve the quality of school meals but also to operate lunch programs efficiently. Achieving these goals leads in turn to increased student participation.

The Council therefore recommends that USDA provide the necessary leadership and that the following specific actions be carried out in cooperation with professional organizations and interested Federal and State agencies:

- The competencies required for food service work should be determined.

- Standards and qualifications for personnel involved in food service work should be established.

- Curricula for both pre-service and inservice training of school food service personnel should be developed.

- Funds that can be used for training school food service personnel

should be identified and used, with particular attention to State and Federal funds available for vocational education and manpower training.

- Community colleges, universities, and other training institutions should be further encouraged to provide suitable training for school food service personnel.

- Manuals on school food service operations should be available in all programs.

4. Revising Nutritional Standards for Child Nutrition Programs

The Council endorses USDA's pilot program on providing alternative nutritional standards for the Child Nutrition Programs based on nutrient values.

As a prerequisite for participation in the Child Nutrition Programs, schools and service institutions must agree to serve meals which meet certain nutritional standards as set forth by the Department of Agriculture. The Type A pattern, the best-known standard for the National School Lunch Program, was basically set up to enable all food service personnel, regardless of their training or lack of it, to easily understand the Federal requirements.

The pattern also reflects the fact that, until recently, most schools and service institutions prepared most components of meals themselves and primarily by using non-processed foods. This situation is changing in two ways. First, the gradual upgrading in the training and qualifications of food service personnel has resulted in workers with a more sophisticated understanding of nutrition and foods. Secondly, technological advances are resulting in schools and service institutions using more convenience foods and "new" food products which provide nutrients at lower costs than traditional sources, e.g., textured vegetable protein products.

As a result of these new developments, the Department is engaged in a pilot study to provide alternative meal standards, based primarily on the nutrient values of food. The National Advisory Council endorses this action. The Council takes this position in the belief that a nutrient approach will be more flexible and

adaptable to regional, ethnic, and age preferences, that it will more readily permit the use of new and experimental foods.

Lastly, the Council recommends that in revising the nutritional standards, USDA should reconsider permitting the use of lowfat milk on a student choice basis, particularly among weight-conscious teenagers.

5. Implementing Advance Funding Authority

The advance funding authority contained in Public Law 91-248 should be implemented so that USDA's Child Nutrition Programs appropriations requests can be submitted to Congress one year in advance of the year in which the funds will be available. The Council believes advance funding is needed to provide the State and local officials with a firmer base for long-range planning and expansion efforts.

Because of the tight money situation affecting most State and local Governments, funding problems are given higher priority than planning. The Council also urges the Administration to announce changes in the rules and regulations regarding the use of such funds well in advance of the school year to permit orderly reaction and adjustment to the changes.

Activities of the Council

The Council held three meetings during the year in Washington, D.C., and conducted on-site reviews of school lunch and summer feeding program operations. Members gave detailed consideration to program operations leading to the recommendations which USDA is acting upon concerning such things as the development of a uniform school food service accounting manual and a comprehensive survey of the number of schools without food service.

The Council reviewed proposed amendments to the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program regulations. Representatives of the Council also participated in meetings of Federal, State and local child nutrition officials on State Plans of Child Nutrition Operations and summer operations under the Special Food Service Program for Children. ☆



Meals on Wheels: not just TEA & sympathy

By June R. Wyman

ONE IN EVERY TEN Americans is elderly. That means 20 million people, many of whom are not eating well. At worst, they may have serious nutritional deficiencies.

For some, the answer is low-cost central feeding facilities specifically for the aged. But when the elderly can't get to the feeding center, the meals must go to them. That's what "meals on wheels" is all about.

"Meals on wheels" is the common name for any program which delivers prepared meals to the elderly or in-

capacitated. Programs vary from sophisticated catered operations with paid workers to rudimentary programs with volunteer drivers and cooks working in church basements; most are nonprofit and low-cost. All serve a vital need, one that grows more pressing every year as our rapidly increasing older population faces rising costs for nursing homes and home care.

Congress recognized that need when it recently mandated a national elderly feeding program. And it real-

ized the problem in last year's food stamp reforms, which specified that food stamps may now be used by the elderly for meals that are delivered by groups authorized by the Food and Nutrition Service to accept food stamps.

The amendment was welcomed both by meals on wheels organizations and by the elderly themselves. For many of the elderly, it could mean the difference between salami sandwiches and balanced hot meals. For example, a West Virginia area welfare administrator said that many older people in his district had withdrawn from the food stamp program because they could not use stamps to purchase delivered meals. And even before the regulations implementing the amendment were finalized, FNS field offices began receiving inquiries from local meal delivery services asking when they could apply for authorization.

One reason for this eagerness may be that more than the food needs of the aging is involved. The Lutheran Society of Western Pennsylvania, which operates several programs, explains:

"The physical response is dramatic as people receive regular, carefully balanced meals; but the emotional response is even more dramatic as lonely people realize that others do care for them. In many cases, the daily visit from the meals on wheels volunteer is the only contact these people have with the world outside their rooms."

Even when the aid is not so dramatic, it goes beyond improved nutrition. Volunteers at the Trinity Lutheran Church in Wheeling, W. Va., help out with seemingly small things which become vastly important to a shut-in, such as reading letters and threading needles.

Perhaps most significantly, meals on wheels often means being able to continue to live independently in one's own home.

Trinity Lutheran Church was one of the first two meals on wheels programs in the Nation to accept food stamps. Serving Ohio County, the program is an affiliate of the Lutheran Service Society of Western Pennsylvania. The church started deliveries

in November 1971 and began accepting food stamps in January 1972. With the number growing every day, the program now serves 48 people between the ages of 60 and 88. Deliveries are made once a day each weekday, providing each person with one cold meal and one hot meal, which arrives heated. On weekends the elderly must fend for themselves.

The charge for the service is \$7.50 a week. Recipients who are getting food stamps or cannot afford the full price pay \$6.50. The church provides free meals to recipients who are unable to pay anything. Trinity Lutheran depends solely on donations from churches; they do not use USDA-donated foods because the closest warehouse is too far away.

Each recipient must be certified by the welfare department to receive meals on wheels. Food stamp recipients must be certified separately for their stamps. Most are allotted about \$30 a month in stamps; \$26 of this goes for their delivered meals, which leaves \$4 for weekends. Food stamps may be used for either delivered meals or groceries.

Trinity's staff includes a full-time cook—the only paid employee—and 50 volunteers, who are certified by the health department to handle food. The volunteers work at various times during the week. Some of them are retired persons, who seem to find that working with the church "helps to fill a void in their lives," said the program chairman, Flora Bell. Others are mothers, who frequently take their children along, since the elderly seem to enjoy them. Sometimes they bring special treats which they have made at home, like pumpkin pie. Extra assistance comes from local college students, who help out during vacations.

Everything is done the same day: cooking, heating, and delivery. Diets are altered for diabetics, those on low-salt plans, and others with special nutritional needs. For example, recipients who can't tolerate fish get other protein foods, and those with stomach ulcers who can't eat roughage, get softer foods. De-caffeinated coffee is served to everyone.

Usually two volunteers use their own cars on each of four routes.

While they are in the recipients' homes, they are restricted in what they are allowed to do. For instance, they may look up phone numbers and write them. They may open containers, but they may not clean, touch the food, or give advice. They may not sit down because, it is felt, it might be difficult for them to leave.

According to Dale Mann, who is the group's vice chairman and director of referral services, the caseload is heaviest during the winter. A State employee trained to work with the elderly, he takes recommendations from social service agencies (doctors, hospitals, welfare agencies, church charities), refers them to Trinity, and processes applications.

Some of those involved in the Trinity program feel that their area is one of the easier ones to serve. As Mrs. Beth Ann Gast said, "It's easier to do this in a small community because word spreads faster; it starts to build up by word of mouth." And Mrs. Joan Green thought that "the hardest route to drive is the city . . . yet that is where the most desperate need is."

Dr. Louise B. Gerrard, Executive Director of the West Virginia Commission on Aging, points out that meals on wheels is still generally limited to metropolitan areas. "In general," she says, "it's still a neighbor feeding a neighbor."

Dr. Gerrard says that she has herself walked through isolated rural hollows such as the site of the recent flood disaster at Buffalo Creek, W. Va., where she found some people living on roads passable only part of the year and 2 hours away from the nearest hospital. Their children had moved away; "that's the pattern around here," she says. She met fiercely proud mountaineers so feeble from malnutrition they could hardly function; yet they'd rather die than ask for help. One woman said: "On my little bit of money, I buy what I know will fill me first. Then if I have any money left, I buy what I know I ought to eat."

Dr. Gerrard and others who spend their days dealing with the elderly's overwhelming problems realize that delivering meals is only the beginning, but the need for this program has been clearly established. ☆

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