

National Survey Reports U. S. Dietary Food Levels

Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman announced this week the release of a preliminary USDA report, "Dietary Levels of Households in the United States," and disclosed that "on the basis of the study findings, I am directing an expanded nutrition education program by the Department."

The nutrition program was being expanded, the Secretary said, because the preliminary report, of a nationwide sample of 7,500 households made in the spring of 1965 showed:

(1) Only half of the households had diets that were good in all nutrients measured, compared with 60 pct. a decade earlier.

(2) That 21 pct of all households had poor diets, compared with 15 pct. in a similar survey conducted in 1955.

(3) That 36 pct of the households with incomes under \$3,000 had poor diets — yet low income households had greater returns in calories and nutrients per food dollar, on the average, than households with higher incomes.

(4) That at each successively higher level of income a greater percentage of households had good diets — but high income alone was no assurance of good diets. Thirty-seven pct. of the households with incomes of \$10,000 and over had diets that were below the allowances for one or more nutrients.

The report indicates that despite higher income, and the fact that Americans may choose from among the greatest abundance and variety of wholesome nutritious food at the lowest real cost of anytime in our history, there has resulted a somewhat adverse shift in food habits and some change in national dietary levels.

Although amounts of food used in U S households were sufficient, on the average, to provide diets meeting the Recommended Dietary Allowances set by the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council, the real issue was in the great variation of food use from household to household.

By all indications, emphasis on nutrition education has not kept pace with the increased need for nutrition programs resulting from population growth, changes in food technology, and the encouraged use of specific food products through promotional activities.

The report also shows: (1) Ninety percent or more of the household diets supplied the

recommended allowances for protein, iron, thiamine, and riboflavin.

(2) The nutrients most often in short supply were calcium, vitamin A and ascorbic acid. Seventy percent of the diets supplied the allowance for calcium, and about 75 percent for vitamin A and ascorbic acid. Nutrient shortages were associated with use of less-than-recommended amounts of milk and milk products and vegetables and fruit.

(3) Half of the households had diets that were good in all the nutrients measured, but this is down from 60 percent a decade ago. Some 21 percent of all households had poor diets, up from 15 percent in 1955.

(4) In households with incomes under \$3,000, over one-third, 36 percent, had poor diets. Yet, low income households had greater returns in calories and nutrients per food dollar, on the average, than households with higher incomes.

(5) At each successively higher level of income a greater percentage of households had good diets but high income alone was no assurance of good diets.

"From this," the report stated, "we must conclude that many Americans are making a poor choice — nutritionally — of our food abundance, and that to a large extent income does not determine good nutrition. There are many influences and much competition for the food dollar, and the dollars spent may not relate to good nutritional value. There is need for better nutrition information to help guide people in decision making."

● Have You Heard (Continued from Page 15)

Banana is partially ripe. You'll be able to cook, broil, or fry bananas of this color.

If the skin is all yellow, the banana is firm enough to cook or eat raw.

Bananas that are yellow, but flecked with brown, are fully ripe and good for topping on cereals, and in fruit cups, salads, and desserts.

For Better Coffee
Remove bag or basket from urn or coffeemaker as soon as coffee is ready for serving. Seepage from grounds gives coffee a harsh, bitter taste.

Replace cover and serve immediately.

For making coffee in quantity for large groups — plan to make fresh supply about every hour.

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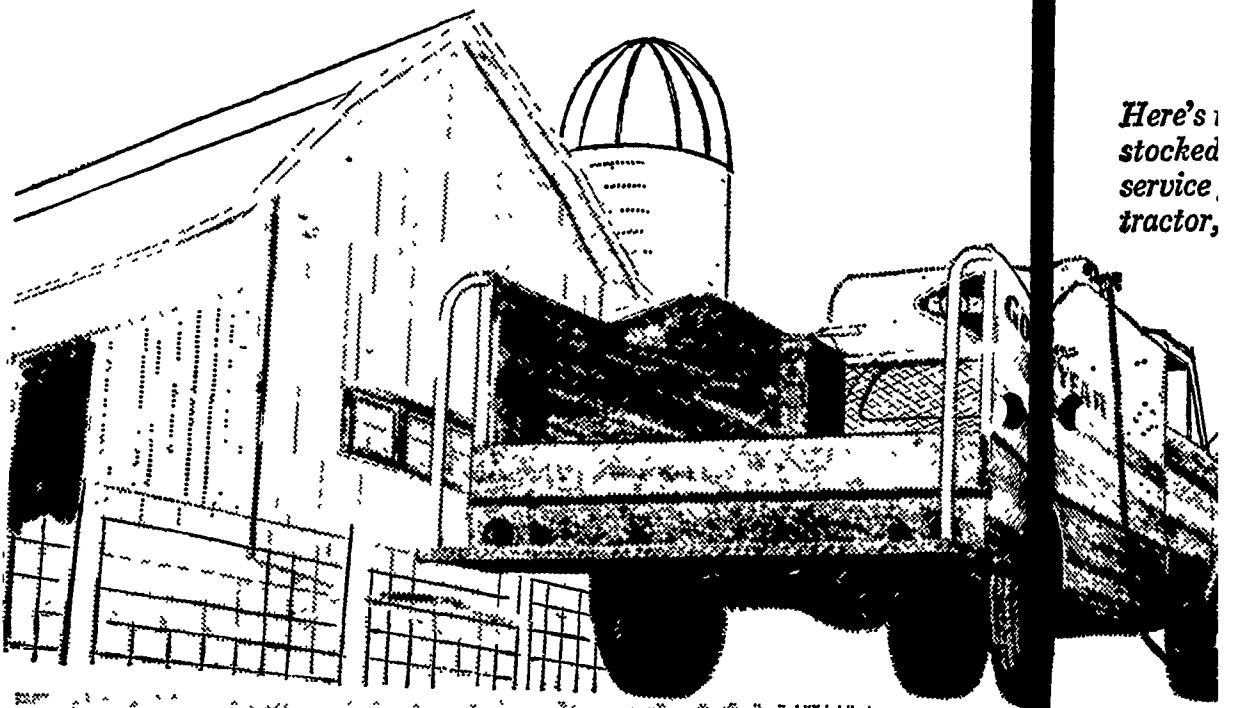
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