

Synthetic Foods Are Here To Stay

Synthetic foods are here to stay, and consumers will have additional choices to make when shopping at the grocery store, a food technologist at The Penn-

sylvania State University declared this week in Hershey.

Julius F. Bauermann, associate professor of food technology Extension, speaking at a statewide

Meat Packers and Processors Seminar March 11, said weather and its effect on natural food supplies and consumer acceptance are two of the things that

determine how fast new synthetics will be developed

"Some synthetic meat products have been on the market for 20 years or more and some other products, such as artificial

blueberries, have been used only about 18 months," the Penn State specialist pointed out

Pricewise he said, synthetic foods vary in comparison with their natural counterparts. In the long run, many synthetics appear to have the potential to be more economically priced than corresponding natural foods

"Producers of natural foods are always against the synthetic because of the fact that imitations may do them out of business," Bauermann emphasized. "Their reactions may be indirect, as demonstrated when some dairy interests managed to persuade legislators to prohibit the sale of margarine or that it be labeled as a butter substitute," he said

Consumers, generally, have shown a hesitancy to try an imitation item when they know it as a synthetic, the Penn State professor stated. However, when people are in a "what you don't know won't hurt you" frame of mind, they readily try synthetic foods

One of the important breakthroughs for synthetic foods has been their role in improving nutritional levels of people in underdeveloped countries. Currently, two soybean-protein-fortified soft drinks are being marketed, one in Brazil and the other in Hong Kong. Both were cited as ways to increase protein intake in a more palatable way, Bauermann stated.

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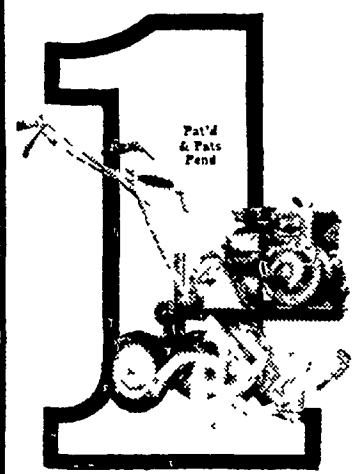
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