

Ignorance & Misinformation Are Causes Of Malnutrition In U.S.

"More Americans are malnourished because of ignorance and misinformation than because of poverty," believes Dr. George V. Mann, nutritionist from Vanderbilt University.

Dr. Mann stated in an article in the November issue of *Food and Nutrition News*: "If poverty were the cause of malnutrition we would have a ready solution in this affluent society — money . . . Education is not so easily accomplished."

Dr. Mann, who has conducted

field studies on diet and health in Alaska, Guatemala, Nigeria, Congo and Tanzania, as well as in the U.S., cites de-emphasis of homemaking, growth of a generation of convenience food "self-feeders," and the influence of advertising — especially television commercials — as reasons for the nutritional inadequacy of diets of many Americans. He also said emphatically that physicians are inadequately trained in nutrition science.

"Nutrition education has been traditionally conducted in the home through the mother-daughter transfer of food choices and cooking skills . . . and the family meal transmitted customs of food selection and meal pattern," Dr. Mann explained.

But in the last 25 years, he points out, the development of prepared and convenience foods has made home preparation of food either unnecessary or rudimentary. A child who can drop a coin in a slot, or open a cupboard door can feed himself, even small children have become self-feeders. Lacking direction, they make bad choices.

What influences the children in their selection? Television advertising, for one thing. The difficulty is that advertising is sales-oriented, not health-oriented, he said.

Adults are influenced along with their children. For example: "Fear and repugnance for obesity are used as devices in advertising to promote so-called low calorie foods. These have had a remarkable increase in use."

Written before, but published at the same time as the government clamp-down on use of cyclamates, Dr. Mann's article stated that the argument that body weight and shape can be controlled by low calorie foods should be recognized by consumers as "the promotional scheme for the highly profitable substitution of cyclamate for sugar."

Diets proposed to restrict certain foods, such as reducing intake of animal fat diet as suggested by the American Heart Association, elicited some stern words from Dr. Mann, who is a Career Investigator of the Na-

tional Heart Institute in the Nutrition Division at Vanderbilt.

"The diets proposed by the Heart Association are too unpalatable to be acceptable and they are so artificial no human group has ever been found which eats them naturally," he said. "The promoters chose to ignore large populations who eat more animal fat than we do, and yet are untroubled by coronary heart disease. Furthermore, the unsaturated fat diets advocated have not been effective in promoting health when tested in at least four major experimental trials."

What is the solution to good nutritional education of the American people? Dr. Mann lists three: introduce and enlarge nutrition science in the elementary and secondary school curricula; enforce regulatory control of food advertising claims, including those for vitamins, to conform with scientific fact; and enlarge nutrition education among doctors, nurses, dietitians and teachers to make them competent educators in this area of health promotion.

Food and Nutrition News is published by the Nutrition Research Department of the National Live Stock and Meat Board and has a readership of 40,000 physicians, nutritionists, educators and food scientists.

New Diseases

Livestock producers are always faced with the problem of new diseases being brought to their farm or barn. This is a very difficult situation to correct when the farms are so close together and so much traffic between farms and barns. However, all owners should be extremely careful when going to a public sale, auction, or stock yards and then coming back to his own barn and herd. It is best to wear different shoes or boots to these other places. Many diseases are introduced by the owner himself, if he does not practice good sanitation. Also, stray dogs, cats, and birds could be the carrier of infectious diseases from farm to farm. Clean premises and strict sanitation practices are very important and go with good herd or flock management.

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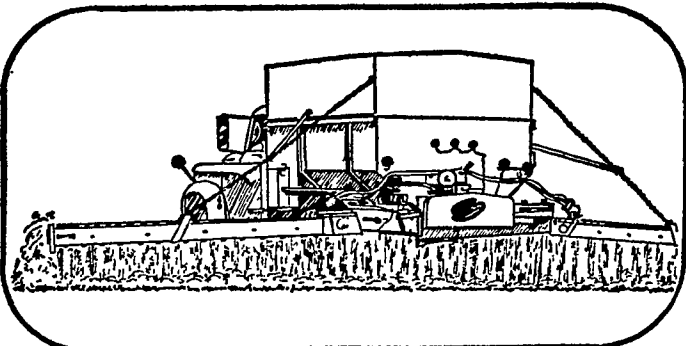
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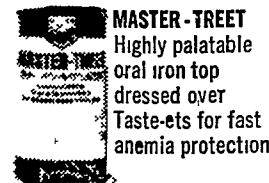
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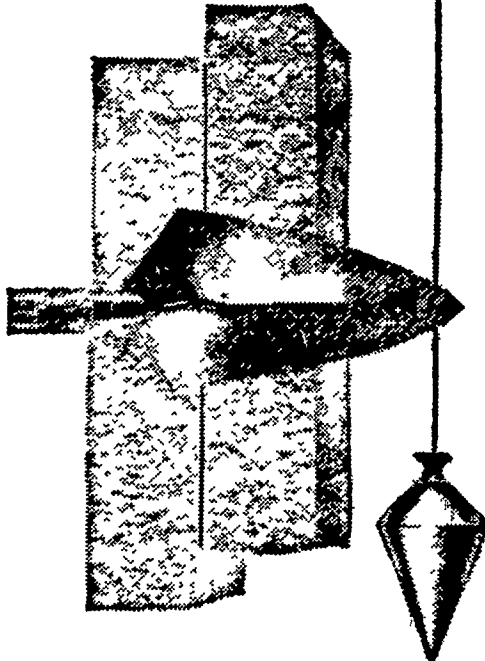
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