

Soybean Products Gaining Popularity in Marketplace

Soy proteins have come of age in the United States — so much so, in fact, that given certain assumptions they could replace as many as 8 per cent of the animals we'd otherwise need to meet our red meat needs by 1980.

However, the USDA's Agriculture Statistical Reporting Service says that even with such replacement, we'll still have to have about 10 per cent more red meat than at present to supply our 1980 requirements.

Soybean proteins are penetrating the meat market in two ways

—As analogs which resemble specific meats in color, taste, and texture; and

—As substitutes for meat in processed items (patties, chili, casserole-type dishes, et cetera).

Analogues are already on the market in a number of forms, including bacon-like bits and slices, ham, beef, seafoods, and chicken. However, with the exception of the bacon, most analogues have had only limited distribution and can claim but a miniscule share of the red meat market. Their share is expected to remain relatively small even by 1980.

It's the meat-type extenders that have the greatest growth potential this decade. Researchers in the Economic Research Service figure that by 1980 these products could, under certain conditions, displace 10 to 20 per cent of the meat in meat-type food preparations in both the institutional as well as the retail food market.

A look at costs tell why.

Soy flour and grits are the simplest forms of soy proteins currently being made. Their crude protein content ranges from 40 to 55 per cent and the price per pound of net utilizable proteins runs from 5½ to 11½ cents.

Soy concentrates, made by further processing the meal, are 60 to 70 per cent crude protein. Their prices are a bit higher than the grits and flour because of the extra processing and the lower yields of finished product. The

range is anywhere from 18 to 25 cents a pound.

Soy isolates (even more highly processed and containing 90 to 97 per cent crude protein) have prices in the 35-to-40-cent range while textured soy proteins that are extruded and spun to look like real meats cost upwards of 50 cents per pound of net utilizable protein.

Compare those soy protein costs with the ones for a few other foods and you'll easily see why institutional feeders such as schools and hospitals are using them more frequently.

Some examples: beef - \$3.26 per pound of net usable protein, chicken - \$2.47, fish - \$3.07, whey (dry) - \$0.84, milk - \$2.34, skim milk (dry) - \$0.79, eggs - \$2.09, dry beans - \$0.65, wheat - \$0.41, cottonseed flour - \$0.58, rice - \$1.71.

Add to these cost advantages the functional pluses of soy proteins—water and fat retention, improvement in keeping quality, and browning effects—and soy proteins appear to have a bright future.

Restaurants, too, may well step up their use of soy protein extenders if animal proteins continue to get more expensive.

Food served in restaurants is not subject to the same labeling and identification requirements as food sold directly to consumers—which means the away-from-home eating market is more susceptible to penetration by substitutes. And it's quite a market—worth \$35 billion in 1969 and growing rapidly.

If standards of identity and labeling are modified over time, soy extenders may also find their way into more products sold at retail—especially ground meat items like sausage, hamburger, luncheon meat, and hot dogs as well as certain types of frozen dinners and canned products.

The lower cost of vegetable proteins—added to consumer concern over the use of animal fats in the diet—has already

helped win consumers over to the concept of soy products much faster than food experts dreamed possible.

Soy analogs, of course, still face considerable resistance. While they're approaching the flavor and texture of the meats they imitate and are priced comparably with natural meat on a cooked basis, on an uncooked basis in the store they seem high-priced to consumers.

In addition, the high prestige of steaks, roasts, and other meat cuts makes it difficult for substitutes to gain acceptance.

Dome of the Rock
Jerusalem was one of Mahomet's favorite cities. Legend has it that the rock in the Dome of the Rock, a Moslem mosque in that city, bears the imprint of the rear hooves of Mahomet's white horse, which the Koran says he rode up into heaven.

About 9 cents of each dollar, or some \$8.6 billion out of the \$101.6 billion spent by food shoppers last year, is spent on packaging. In addition, between 3 and 9 cents goes for advertising costs, depending on the manufacturer, says the Chicago Daily News, April 15, 1972.

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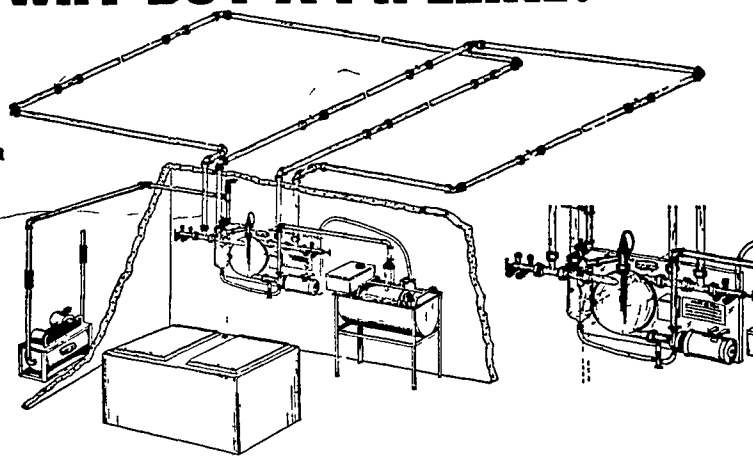
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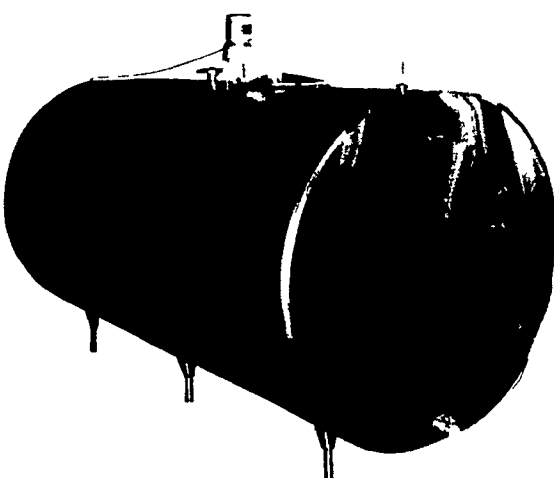
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