

Old Wives' Tales Hurt Dairy Product Sales

Old wives—and young ones, too—subscribe to a number of fanciful tales regarding dairy products. Perhaps the biggest misconception involves dairy foods' fat content—with many homemakers believing them to be far more "fatty" than they truly are.

In a recent coast-to-coast survey conducted by USDA's Statistical Reporting Service Special Surveys Branch, more

than 2,200 homemakers were queried on their attitudes towards dairy products and nondairy competitors—especially in relation to health and diet.

Homemakers were asked to give an estimate of the fat content of five important dairy items: regular whole and low-fat fluid milk, American and cottage cheese, and ice cream. There were 13 fat categories for respondents to pick from—ranging from "none" to "100 percent fat."

Few and far between were the homemakers who could correctly match the food with the fat.

A cast in point: Only one in 10 of the homemakers correctly rated whole milk's fat content in the "up to 5 percent" category on the SRS questionnaire. All the rest guessed too high—with three in 10 even thinking milk contained 50 percent or more fat.

The homemakers were equally wide of the mark in judging the

fattiness of ice cream and American cheese.

Fewer than a tenth of the respondents correctly picked the "between 10 and 19 percent fat" category for ice cream. One in 10 scored the fat content too low but almost 60 percent of the homemakers believed ice cream to be more than half fat.

The fat content of American cheese, which fell into the category "between 30 and 39 percent fat" was also correctly stated by only one in 10 people. The others were split almost equally between those who underestimated and those who overestimated.

For cottage cheese, two in 10 homemakers pegged its fat content correctly as "up to 5 percent". Most of the others overestimated, three in 10 by a sizable amount.

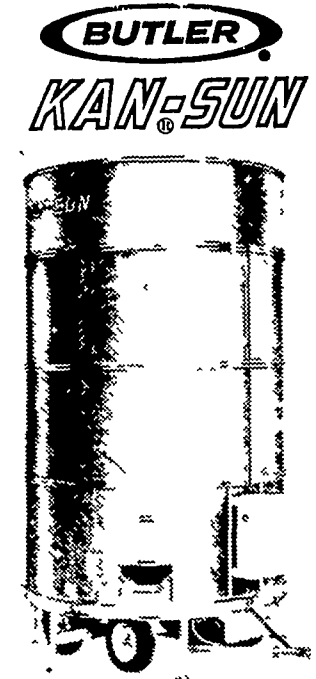
The respondents did best of all when it came to gaging the fat content of low fat milk—perhaps because this item's fat content is often displayed prominently on the label.

About half those interviewed correctly placed low fat milk in the "up to 5 percent fat" category. A tenth of the

homemakers thought it contained no fat at all. Only two in 10 believed it to contain 10 percent or more fat.

Another old wives' tale believed about dairy products came to light when homemakers tended to score butter higher in calories and fat than its big nondairy competitor, margarine. At the same time, they gave butter better scores than

margarine on the basis of calcium, protein and vitamin content. The truth of the matter, according to nutritionists in USDA, is that like quantities of butter and margarine contain the same amount of fat, calories, calcium, proteins and vitamins. The two foods are nutritional equals, but apparently homemakers don't view them that way.



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Farm Calendar

(Continued From Page 1)

vo-ag room, Penn Manor High School.

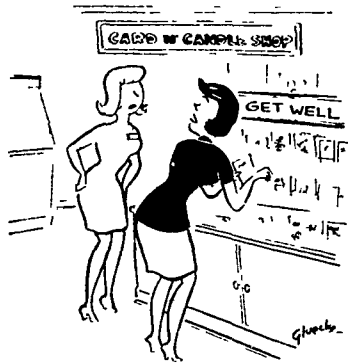
Lancaster County Farmers Association board meeting, Farm and Home Center
Wednesday, September 6

7 30 p.m. — Lancaster County Soil and Water Conservation District meeting, Farm and Home Center.

Thursday, September 7
8 p.m. — Ephrata Young Farmers officers and committee meeting, vo-ag room, Ephrata High School.

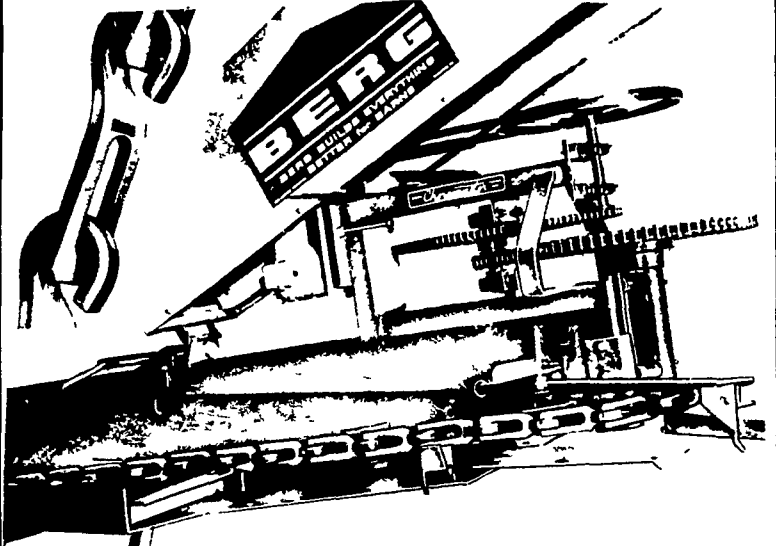
Friday, September 8
7 p.m. — Pennsylvania Egg Marketing Association meeting, Holiday Inn, Denver

My Neighbors



"Do you have anything for a nickel?—He's just got the sniffles."

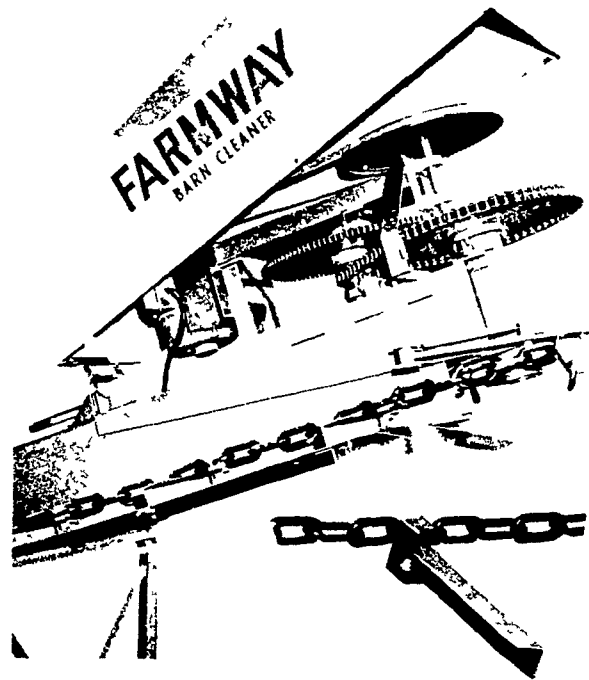
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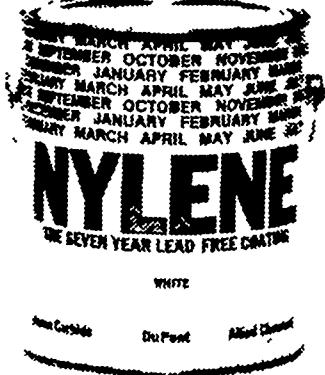
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