Date Labeling Food Reduces Complaints

WASHINGTON, Jan. 17 - Stores which date label food may have fewer consumer complaints about freshness, as well as improved stock rotation practices, according to a report issued today by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

A study prepared jointly by the USDA's Economic Research Service and the Consumer Research Institute found either pack dates (when the item was packed or processed) or pull dates(the last day on which is should be sold) reduced by about 50 percent the incidence of shopper complaints about food freshness. Open dating also helped retailers decrease product losses by improving handling practices.

Eighteen percent of shoppers contacted in a national telephone survey complained about food going stale sooner than expected. To find out if open dates could affect shoppers' satisfaction with foods, pull or pack dates were initiated on about 600 perishable and semi-perishable items in selected Ohio food chain stores. Items selected for open dates were those that respondents in the telephone survey had mentioned as not satisfactory. Shoppers were interviewed in the test stores before and after open dates were introduced. After eight weeks of open dating, fewer complaints were reported - even on some items which were not date labeled. Apparently psychological factors such as a favorable change in the consumer's attitude toward store management were at least as important as any major improvement in food freshness in cutting the number of complaints.

A copy of "Food Dating: Shoppers' Reactions and the Impact on Retail Foodstores," MRR 984, is available free on postcard (please include zipcode) or telephone (447-7255) request from the Office of Information, U S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C 20250.

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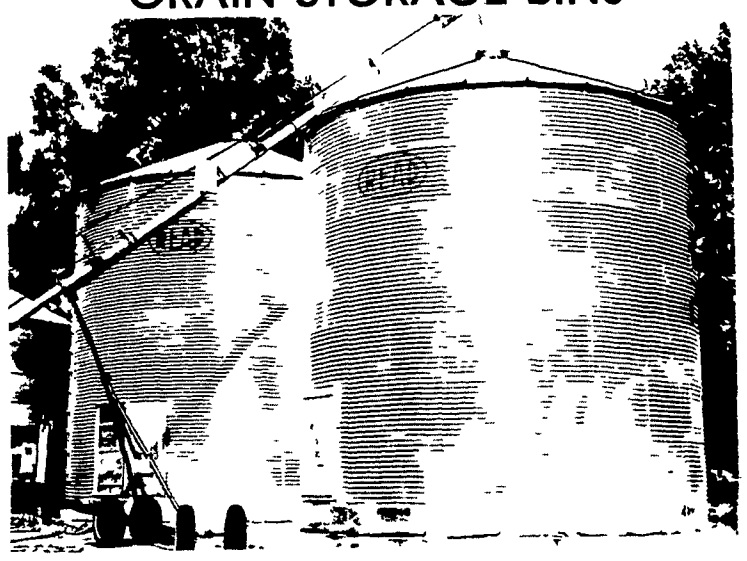

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In the Kitchen

STRAWBERRY SOUR CREAM PIE

4 eggs
1 cup sugar
1 cup sour cream
1 pint fresh strawberries or 20-oz. pkg. frozen
9-inch unbaked ginger snap crumb pie shell

Beat together eggs and sugar; blend in sour cream. Halve enough strawberries to measure 2 cups. Arrange strawberry halves in pie crust. Pour sour cream mixture over berries. Bake in 325-degree oven 1 hour or until custard is set. Serve warm or cold.

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Ladies, Have You Heard?

By Doris Thomas, Extension Home Economist

Doris Thomas

Liquid Sunshine Mellows Wintry Days

Cold winds, drizzly skies—what you need is some golden liquid sunshine, a brimming pitcherful of orange juice to dispense at mealtime and snacktime. Easy does it, too, with those handy cans of orange juice and frozen orange juice concentrate that are now in plentiful supply at reasonable prices

You couldn't find a better time to use them Have you tried your hand recently at home baking? Once you've experienced it, you'll never forget the heavenly aroma of home-baked bread, rolls, and cakes, especially when oranges or orange juice are listed among the ingredients.

Use orange juice in cooking, too, for a gourmet touch For an omelet to remember, use orange juice as the liquid, and top with grated orange rind, a sprinkling of chopped walnuts, and a dash of confectioner's sugar An orange sauce is just the thing for roast duckling, an orange glaze for roast ham, an orange gravy for Hawaiian-style chicken, and orange juice for the liquid for a meat loaf

Don't waste any part of those delicious navel oranges Use the peel for candied or honeyed orange peel, a delectable dish to eat as is or to include in a fruit cake or an orange bread.

Try this recipe for ORANGE HONEY BREAD A real treat bound to bring requests for repeats

Orange Honey Bread
(5 x 9 inch loaf)

2 tablespoons shortening
1 cup honey
1 egg, well-beaten
2½ cups sifted all-purpose flour
2½ teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon soda
½ teaspoon salt
¾ cup orange juice
¾ cup chopped honeyed orange peel or chopped nuts

TO PREPARE Cream fat and honey Add eggs Sift dry ingredients Add alternately with orange juice to creamed mixture. Add peel or nuts Bake in greased pan in moderate oven, 325 degrees for 70 minutes

Honeyed Orange Peel Remove peel from 3 naval oranges Cover this peel with water Add ½ teaspoon salt Boil ½ hour Drain Cover again with water Boil until tender Drain Cut peel in strips Bring ½ cup sugar, ½ cup honey and ¼ cup water to boil Cook peel in this gently until clear Cool in syrup several hours Reheat Drain Spread out to dry Roll in granulated sugar, if desired In addition, to use as a confection, this peel may be used to flavor and decorate cakes, puddings, breads, etc

Prevent Home Fires

Home fires caused 6,600 deaths last year And careless use of smoking materials was a major cause of home fires One way to keep these home fires from happening at your house is to keep matches and cigarette lighters where children can't get at them

Another common source of fire is falling asleep in a chair or bed while smoking Before retiring for the night, carefully check all furniture, chairs and sofas for smoldering cigarettes or hot ashes which could develop into a serious fire during the night

Be careful in disposing of the contents of ashtrays, too Make sure all the cigarette stubs and ashes are thoroughly out and are cold Dampen them before putting them into a waste basket A better way is to flush them in the bathroom if your sewer system will be able to decompose them Or empty all ashes and stubs into a metal container with a tight-fitting metal lid Never dump hot ashes into a wastebasket

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