



Doctor in the Kitchen®

by Laurence M. Hursh, M.D.
Consultant, National Dairy Council

NUTRITIONAL NONSENSE

A "perfect environment for nonsense" is provided in America by the communications media, says Dr. Philip L. White, Secretary of the American Medical Association's Council on Foods and Nutrition. Dr. White is, of course, talking about nutritional nonsense. And he emphasizes that radio and television, especially, are constantly promoting the views of food faddists without regard to whether their information has a basis in scientific fact or not.

Said Dr. White in an article in the October issue of Nutrition News, a four times-a-year bulletin for nutrition educators published by National Dairy Council:

Why So Lucrative?

"Why is nutrition nonsense so lucrative a non-profession? Why are we faced with one bad diet book after another? How can fallacious authors rise to national prominence as on fatty clouds almost over night? Why? Because the media of mass communications ignore peer review and provide tailor-made megaphones for any thing sensational.

"The media, especially radio and television, are so hungry for controversial or 'different' viewpoints (to stimulate audience interest) they seem to seek out those who march to a different drum. The enormous number of talk shows create a talent demand that exceeds the supply.

"Why do the media permit Hollywood personalities to spread their foolish notions about health foods? Perhaps it's because after their umpteenth time around the talk show circuit, nutrition nonsense is all they have to talk about. They are invited back because somebody must fill the chairs on stage. The mass media does provide the perfect environment for nonsense."

In his article, one of Dr. White's main points is that science benefits from peer review — the process by which a scientist's report is reviewed by other scientists to see if his research has been valid and his conclusions or hypothesis reasonable. As Dr. White suggests, no such review is involved when the food faddist presents his ideas to the public, nor do most newspapers or other media require it.

Room For Encouragement

One has to be encouraged, though, by the great increase in the number of newspaper and magazine science writers who do know science and do not relay nonsense to the public. One problem, of course, is the question, "is information news?" It is news that sells newspapers, and sensationalism and controversy build ratings for radio and television. And Americans have always had some interest in the medicine show, in the showman-quack.

So I predict food faddism and nutritional misinformation will

be around for awhile. But people should guard against swallowing nonsense and rely instead on sources of factual information rather than opinion or notions. It is, after all, our own health we want to protect.

(NOTE: Last week's column, "Cholesterol Content of Food", incorrectly stated "a 3½-ounce serving of lobster will give you 200 mg of cholesterol . . ." The table in the column correctly listed 3½ ounces of lobster as containing 85 mg of cholesterol.—L.M.H.)

CHEESE HISTORY

The history of cheese goes back a long time. Legend has it that cheese actually was "discovered" several thousand years before Christ by an Arabian traveler who placed milk in a pouch made from a sheep's stomach. During his journey that day the combined action of the sun's heat and enzymes in the lining of the stomach changed the milk into curds of cheese and the thin liquid now called whey.

"Since that legendary discovery," says a National Dairy Council publication, "Newer Knowledge of Cheese," "countless experiments have produced varieties of cheese that range in texture from soft to hard and in flavor from mild to pungent and sharp. Yet

the initial, basic process remains the same.

"Over the many centuries during which cheese has been made, it has played a distinctive role in the economy of peoples and of nations. It was vital to the early nomadic tribes and became one of the prized mediums of exchange because it provided milk in a solid and less perishable form."

Brought To Europe

Cheesemaking began in Europe when the Crusaders brought back the secrets of the art. After the fall of the Roman Empire and during the Dark Ages, Trappist Monks in the monasteries kept the secrets alive and developed many varieties of cheese that still are made today.

Localities contributed, too, to varieties of cheese. Techniques employed varied geographically and the milk available in one place and the techniques used produced cheeses of certain characteristics not obtained elsewhere. These differences resulted in the many varieties of cheese that are obtainable today.

Cheesemaking remained a farm or home operation until the middle of the nineteenth century. Cheesemaking as a great industry in the United States began with the first small cheese factory in Rome, N.Y., in 1851.

All Kinds Available

Through controlled, scientific methods American cheesemakers have successfully manufactured virtually all the foreign cheeses such as Swiss, Camembert, Limburger, Blue and Parmesan. And Americans have originated such varieties as Brick, Colby, Monterey or Jack cheese and others.

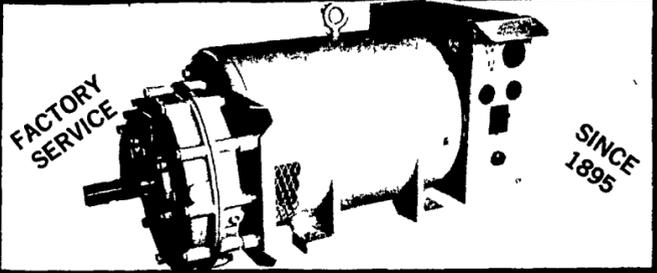
The beauty of cheese is that it converts milk to a concentrated form of nourishment suitable for immediate use or storage for future use. And cheese is not only nutritious.



The ancient Romans began the custom of hanging flags of victorious battles in their temples. This practice continued in Christian churches down to modern times.

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