

THE FOOD STAMP ISSUE

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other welfare programs. But for each dollar's worth of food stamps they received, they spent as much as 50 cents on food. The liberalized

program, says the ERS study, has resulted in an even higher ratio.

Two cents to the dollar Looking at nationwide food expenditures, about 2 cents

of ever dollar are generated by the food stamp program. Cost to taxpayers comes to somewhat over \$3 billion a year for the more than 13 million people enrolled.

Stamps for meat
It was estimated that roughly 15 cents of each dollar's worth of bonus food stamps resulted in added spending for red meats.

Compared with total U.S. spending on red meats, bonus food stamps came in for \$301 million in 1972 against \$35 billion for the Nation as a whole, or less than 1 percent of the total market. However, red meat bought with bonus food stamps was responsible for a larger share of the year-to-year expansion in demand for red meat in 1971-72. Bonus stamps may have accounted for over 5 percent of the total expansion in red meat spending.

In general, food stamps can't claim credit for a significant portion of the rise in total consumer expenditures for meat since 1969, the ERS report says. On the other hand, the expanded issuance of food stamps has enabled low-income families to afford meat they could not buy before.

Marketing costs continue to take the biggest bite from our food dollar. Of the \$132.2 billion Americas shelled out for farm foods last year, almost two-thirds went to pay the marketing bill.

The bill for marketing farm foods tallied \$82.3 billion in 1973. This was 5 percent more than in the previous year but was about the same as the average annual increase for the past 11 years.

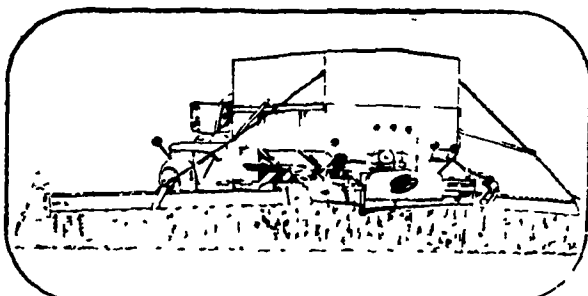
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What do they buy with food stamps? According to the ERS study, food stamp recipients use a large portion of their expanded buying power to buy more red meats, particularly ground beef and lower cost beef cuts. Other big items are bakery products and fruits and vegetables. The share of each food dollar breaks down like so among the major food groups:

- Meat group (includes eggs, dry beans and peas, nuts, and meat mixtures) \$0.38
- Milk group (includes milk, cream, cheese, frozen desserts) .13
- Vegetable and fruit group .20
- Bread-cereal group .12
- Other food (fats, oils, sweets, etc.) .17

With red meats comprising such a high proportion of food stamp dollars, ERS researchers did some further analysis.

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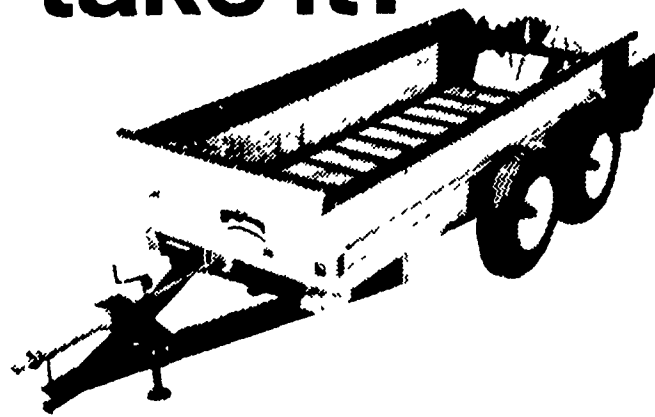


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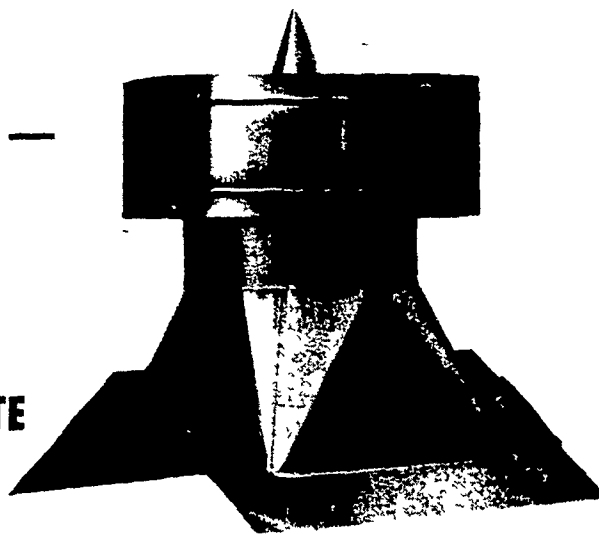
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