

What's Behind

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Unit pricing as the term indicates is the price per unit either per pound or ounce. While the total price tells the consumer just what he is paying for the lump sum, the unit price allows the consumer the opportunity to know just how much the item is costing per pound or ounce.

Unit pricing is often found on meat where both prices are indicated for clarity.

Until recently, open dating or the shelf life estimation was used only by the store clerks and the processing firm to insure freshness of the product. Most consumers saw a code of numbers but often did not realize the importance.

Following much consumer inquiries, the processing firms have now explained their open dating codes to the public. There are four main types of open dating with the most common being the "pull date". The date indicates the last day of retail sale of fresh food. The code is usually preceded by the words "sell by".

Still another open dating method is to print the expiration date which is usually clarified by the words "do not use after".

The packing date may or may not be used as a form of open dating on the product.

Food Safety

While food processors are under regulation to insure that consumers have the opportunity to purchase only good quality food, the consumer must also be wary of his own judgments.

Although damaged cans may be selling cheap in the store, a consumer should check carefully before purchasing damaged items. Under no circumstances should a shopper buy cans that are swollen or leaking as bacteria may very possibly have entered, contaminating the product.

Care should also be taken in preparing food, especially meats. Always wash your hands before handling meat and cook completely according to directions. Always thoroughly wash utensils and cutting boards that have been in contact with raw meat using a hot soapy solution.

If there is any reason to suspect that a food product is not fresh or is spoiled take special precautions. Do not taste the food but keep it, if possible, along with the container it was purchased in. Take it to the store manager or alert a local or state regulatory office.

Buying food may seem quite complicated today, but the better informed a consumer is the better his chance of purchasing the food that he really wants and needs. The next time you visit the grocery store, take a few minutes longer to check the labels for information making sure what you purchase is really what you want.

The information on the label has been placed here for our convenience, how you decide to use it is your consumer right.

(The information used in writing this article was obtained from the 1974 USDA Yearbook of Agriculture and several USDA pamphlets.)



Doctor in the Kitchen®

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

British Heart Disease Report

How to prevent heart disease? The search goes on. And medical committees regularly meet to evaluate research evidence.

Because diet, smoking, and high blood pressure are things that we can manipulate, these factors receive a great deal of attention. Experiments concerning their possible relationship to heart disease can be conducted and reported. And statistical evidence, though often questionable as to its reliability, can be gathered from various countries.

One of the most recent reports on diet and heart disease was published earlier this year by Great Britain's Department of Health and Social Security, the British equivalent, roughly, of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Here are highlights:

Panel Statement

An official British advisory panel unanimously agreed "that they cannot recommend an increase in the intake of polyunsaturated fatty acids in the diet as a measure intended to reduce the risk of the development of heart disease. In their opinion the available evidence that such a dietary alteration would reduce the risk in the United Kingdom at the present time is not convincing."

A majority of the panel did recommend that the amount

of fat in the United Kingdom diet should be reduced. But a minority of the panel could not agree to limiting "the consumption of fat by the population as a whole." This is in spite of the fact stated in the report that "the percentage of food energy derived from fat in the United Kingdom has risen and continues to rise, and about one half of the energy derived from fat is provided by saturated fatty acids."

Said the panel: The idea that a diet rich in fat makes heart disease more likely "is complicated by the fact that people who consume a high fat diet are often heavy cigarette smokers and tend to have a high sucrose (sugar) intake."

Speaking of the research in which polyunsaturated fats have been substituted for some saturated fats, and the results interpreted as evidence that such dietary adjustment may prevent heart disease, the panel said "in none of the trials was the evidence clear cut," and in one trial a rise in the incidence of gallstones was detected.

What It Means

This all squares with my personal convictions about diet and heart disease, at this point. A physician may wish to make dietary recommendations for specific patients he feels are at risk. But to recommend dietary changes for the general population, as the American Heart Association seems insistent upon doing, or implying, is just too much and very poor science. The United States' National Heart & Lung Institute apparently agrees. That's why the Institute is spending millions on a six-year trial to determine whether dietary changes can really help anybody. If they knew the answers, they wouldn't be spending our tax dollars to try and find out.

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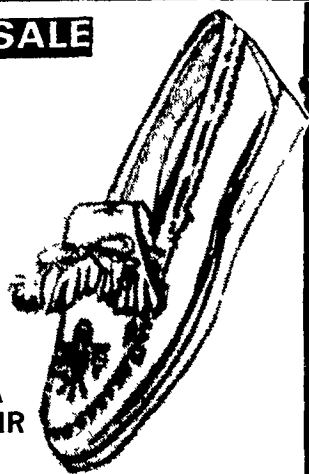
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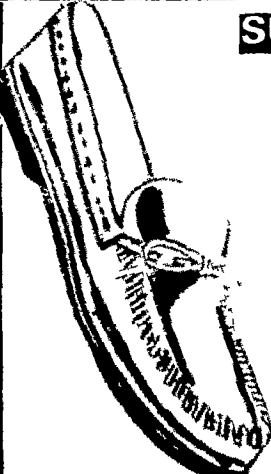


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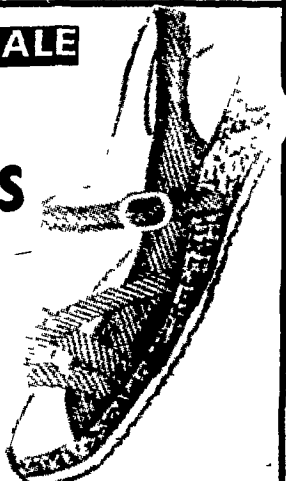


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