

New Holland artist designs poultry - egg coloring book

by Sally Bair
Feature Writer

When Kenneth Kuipers suggested to his wife Dona that she design a coloring book about eggs, she took up the challenge and just three weeks ago had the thrill of seeing her first coloring book come off the press.

The book, entitled "The Chicken and the Incredible Edible Egg" is educational fare for youngsters and their mothers alike, containing a wealth of information about the egg.

Dona Kuipers, New Holland, said the project got started when her husband "made the statement 'you ought to do a coloring book.'" She said, "Our minds clicked and the project got started.

"It was just an idea, but the more involved we got the more enthused we both got. The more we got to thinking, the more we realized that it really was possible."

One of the reasons they became inspired to immortalize the egg in art form is that Kuipers, a Michigan native, has long been associated with the poultry industry. For 19 years he was a salesman for poultry equipment and for the past seven years he has been selling the plastic cartons in which eggs are packed.

Through their work with the industry, Dona said, they picked up much "beautiful literature about eggs," but nothing aimed at educating children about the benefits of eggs.

One of her purposes, she says, is to get across "the way I feel about eggs. They are a good natural food. I want to give the true facts - that eggs are high in protein. Eggs are a better food than most people give them credit for."

So an educational format was chosen - as well as a fun one. Dona decided to do poems to tell the kids the story and have a factual story to tell the mother about the nutrition. In for forward, it states: "While the illustrations and poems in this book are created for children, the facts of the egg processing are truly represented."

Dona adds, "It is something we feel the housewife is getting her money's worth, and it is fun for the kids."

The finished product is an 11 x 16 inch book, with 48 pages. But that was not what she thought it would be originally. At first Dona prepared art for a much larger coloring book. But it was soon discovered that such a large book would be unwieldy and "the supermarkets wouldn't

want to bother with it and the housewife wouldn't pay the price of a really large coloring book."

So they scaled down the book until it "handled easier. It is big enough to be eye-catching, and it can be sold at a reasonable price." The suggested retail price is \$1.49.

From the professional appearance of the coloring book, one could never guess that Dona has had no formal experience or education in art. She said, "I had no training, but I always loved to draw. As the mother of three children," she said, "I loved kid's books, and over the years I have bought millions of coloring books! I just stumbled through the book on my own."

After the decision was made to tackle the job, Dona made many discoveries. "Just to make the book about the egg would have been dull." So she decided to add the chicken to her story. That too, presented a problem, according to Dona, because in the end, "You couldn't put her in the stew!;

Dona first wrote the poems, then worked with her husband on the narrative for accuracy. "Doing the poems," Dona said, "is the really fun part. You must use simple words." Another discovery she made was that there are very few words which rhyme with egg.

Doing the sketches "isn't a problem," she said, despite her lack of formal training. "I worked eight or ten or twelve hours a day for three weeks. And sometimes I would have to do five or six sketches to get just the expression I wanted."

The illustrations for coloring are simple and amusing - sure to please the young ones for whom it is intended. And the poems and narrative tell the story simply and directly. A sample follows:

Homestead Notes

"The egg now must be 'candled'.
That means going over a special light
To see if it is clean and fresh
and the quality is just right."

"Only trained personnel handle the candling of the egg. As the egg passes slowly over a special light, the candler can pick out any eggs with defects such as bad shells, eggs that are not 'egg shaped,' cracked shells, along with any other defects."

"Scramble, fry or poach them
Morning, noon or night.
No matter when you eat them
They are sure to be just right."

"Eggs truly are becoming more and more the 'main dish' for many meals. The egg is one of our most complete foods, and remember, it is a completely natural food."

Producing the coloring book was no easy matter. Although the poems came easily and the sketches were done without a great deal of agony, those were really just the first steps. The Kuipers formed "Know About Publications, Inc." to produce the book, and then worked on copyrighting the logo, "Did You Know About Book?" There was also the matter of contacting printers and working with them through all stages of production.

When asked if there were any interesting problems they ran into in producing the book, Dona said with a laugh, "Every time we turned around there was another one." My husband ran them all down."



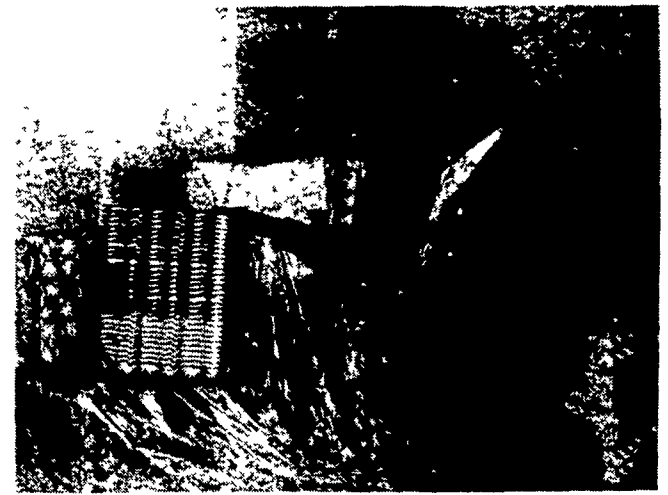
Here's the cover of Dona Kuipers' new coloring book - "The Incredible Edible Egg."

Her first reaction to seeking the printed publication was, "I was worried. I looked at this and looked at that and was very concerned about mistakes. For instance, I wish I had taken more time on the cover." There were some minor mistakes in the first printing which will be corrected on subsequent runs.

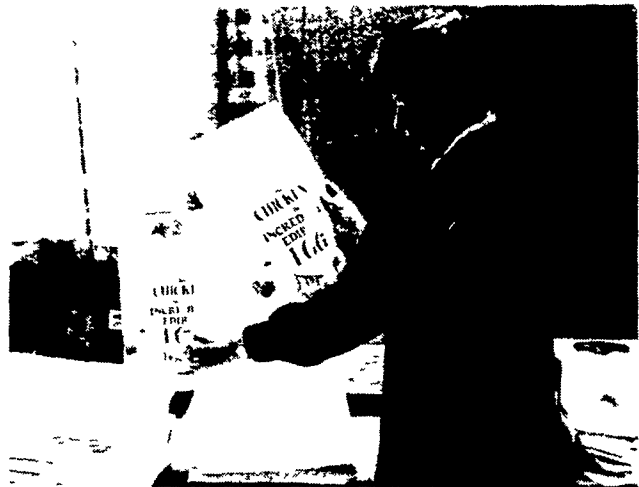
Now Dona is in the very time consuming task of mailing out samples of the publication in an effort to begin distribution. Initial distribution will be through packers, who hopefully will see that the book find their way to supermarkets and schools. Dona was on the program at the Northeast Poultry Producers Council convention in Hershey this week talking about the book and ways of distributing it.

Dona said, "The response has been real good so far." And of course, she says she will be proud "if people like it."

(Continued on Page 44)



For three years Dona has been running a mail order distribution of egg carton craft booklets. She also has had requests for unprinted egg cartons which she shows here in abundance.



Distributing the coloring books is the next step for Dona Kuipers, who has been mailing the books far and wide to interested organizations.

Country Corner

That chicken just 'ain't' what it used to be . . .

By Melissa Piper

While attending the NEPPCO (poultry producers) convention on Wednesday of this past week, I couldn't help overhearing a woman telling her friends about the great new taste and quality of chicken these days

The woman, who had traveled from New York, told her friends how hard it had been a few years ago to cook those "dumb birds" "Now," she explained, "they're so tender and cook up so well you have to rearrange all your cooking times"

Not only was the woman appreciative of the better quality but also the relatively inexpensive price of the meat

While a convention meeting is hardly the place to cross sample the consumer's attitudes toward agricultural products, the conversations did relate the fact that people are beginning to notice that here in the United States, the food is improving and at a relatively low cost (despite consumer beliefs)

It is a well known fact that in the United States we have a great variety of food from which to choose and in almost every conceivable form - from

frozen meats to canned vegetables and boxed goods. Our supermarkets must truly seem like a fantastic dream to a foreign visitor who is used to seeing just a few products in a market without the shining grocery carts, fancy displays and "early bird specials."

Continuing research has given us a variety of fruits, beverages and also the "tender chicken" but such goes unnoticed by many of the consumers who feel food is too highly priced. Before reflecting on the principals which helped to create the food consumers toss in their basket, the only reaction which seems to cross their minds is the price.

Little do they know that the percentage of their earnings which goes for food is very small compared to many countries of the world.

Agricultural forecasters have recently announced that the price of food will probably be about 9 percent above that of last year. But before you gasp - why not realize that in the two previous years the increase was 14 percent While it can be noted that the total personal consumption expenditures rose in the second quarter of this year most of the gain was caused by people eating out at

restaurants. Expenditures for food at home rose only fractionally! Just how many consumers realize that fact?

While farmers realize many of these ideas and understand the circumstances, many consumers especially in the urban areas fail to really comprehend the importance of the food prices and quality.

But the consumers cannot be fully blamed, for many times they just don't know about the research and effort which goes into making a good wholesome product They expect the best and feel hurt when something seems wrong.

We as farmers and agribusiness personnel must help consumers understand that food just doesn't spring from the shelves and freezers of the supermarket, but takes time and development with a spattering of good weather and luck.

Thank goodness that "stewing chicken" has improved in quality, for it shows that farmers, producers and agribusiness isn't halted at a standstill. Now let's get that fact to the consumer and we might not have to suffer through all those boycotts and complaints!