

Food dollar includes 23 cents for processing and packaging

NEWARK, Del. — For every dollar we spend on food, about 23 cents goes for processing and packaging. In fact sometimes the package costs more than the food inside, points out home economist Sue Matusiak of the University of Delaware Cooperative Extension Service.

We can blame it on our high standard of living, she says. Processing and packaging require labor, and our money pays for this labor. As wages rise, so do processing and packaging costs, as well as food prices.

Another important factor is competition. Every brand vies for more shelf space, using expensive advertising, fancy packaging, coupons, bonuses, and other promotional gimmicks. In addition, the trend is toward more highly processed convenience foods. These all lead to higher food prices, says Ms Matusiak.

The third problem is waste. Some wrapped foods are placed in containers, which are then put into cardboard boxes, and finally into plastic bags. Packaging of this kind is unnecessary, wasteful and expensive. It ups your food bill and costs

4-H winners chosen

DILLSBURG - Roxanne and Robert Gabel were two of the five Perry County 4-H'ers to receive top honors at Capitol Regional 4-H Day held July 6 at Northern High in Dillsburg, Pa. Due to Roxanne's performance, she will be participating in State 4-H Achievement Days in August. Other demonstrators to receive top honors were Elaine Hamilton, Stace Smith and Delene Lantz.

Also participating in Regional Day were Nancy Stephens, Citizenship Short-course delegate; Chrystal Prosser, Public Speaker and a Clothing and Textile Judging Team that included Julie Barkely, Trudy Barkley and Jill Hetrick.

you additional money when the sanitation department must dispose of this waste.

In contrast, the Europeans frequently use plain wrapping paper and their own permanent shopping bags. This practice could save the U.S. tons of paper and millions of consumer dollars.

There are ways to avoid some of these packaging and processing costs, points out the extension home economist.

Don't buy highly processed foods, except those that cannot be conveniently made at home, such as cottage cheese or frozen orange juice. For example, if you buy frozen spaghetti dinner on an aluminum tray with pre-packaged, pre-frozen Italian bread and grated cheese, you're paying a lot more for the processing than for the food.

Avoid fancy packages or containers inside containers.

When excessive packaging is used as a means of selling a product, you wind up paying for this advertising.

Plan your meals around fruits and vegetables in season. Because of minimum processing and packaging costs, the fresh produce will likely be your best buy.

Consider planting a vegetable garden. The walk from your garden to your kitchen cuts out transporters, wholesalers,

retailers, processors, and packagers.

Food bills can be trimmed if you plan menus to take advantage of in-season items, and avoid highly processed convenience foods as well as over-packaged items.

Before putting an item in your shopping cart, Ms. Matusiak suggests, think about where your money will be going. Paying for unnecessary services lowers the value of your food dollar.

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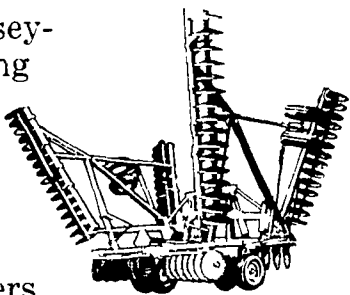
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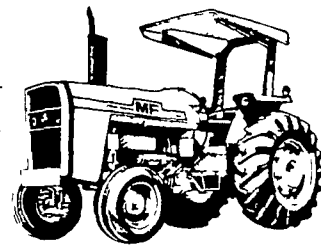
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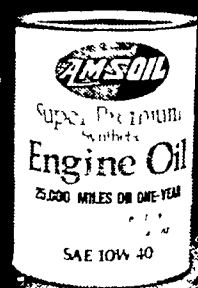
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