New products challenge consumers

TOWSON, Md. - New foods, new ways of eating and new cooking challenge American consumers. They find it more complicated to make sure that they are eating the foods they need each day.

In 1983, marketers introduced a record number of new products

(1,803) into food and drug stores, nearly 20 percent more than in 1982. Many of the new products offer simplified methods of preparation. Others are designed to fit new eating patterns such as one-person meals, brown bag luches and special diets. A third group of new products are fabrications designed to imitate and substitute for traditional products such as dairy foods, meat, eggs and fruit juices.

According to the Food and Drug Administration, a "substitute" food is one which looks like another food and is nutritionally equivalent, based on FDA standards. An "imitation" is, by definition, nutritionally inferior.

Because nutrition research continues to discover the importance of food components formerly unknown as well as the effect of various combinations of elements, the issue of nutritional equivalence is paramount. For instance, the laboratory scientist can bring together chemicals

which match the known vitamins, minerals, protein, color and taste of cheddar cheese, but the scientist cannot duplicate what is not yet known about cheddar cheese.

Recent studies have pointed to apparent anti-decay properties of cheddar and certain other cheeses and to a factor that enhances iron absorption. Only further biological testing can establish whether the real and the imitation cheeses are equal nutritionally.

An independent laboratory conducted a detailed nutrient analysis of an imitation lowfat dry milk and a traditional nonfat dry milk to see whether they were equally good for the body. The imitation lowfat dry milk was substantially lower in protein, calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, zinc, thiamin and niacin equivalents than the dairy product. Samples of the imitation product collected from ten different states varied in composition.

Consumers who want to know what they are buying have learned to read ingredient labels. They know that the first ingredient of a real cheese is milk or cheese, the first ingredient of a real juice is juice and the first ingredient in real processed meat is meat, not soybeans or textured vegetable protein.

A label which lists several types of fat as interchangeable indicates that the product will vary depending on price and availability of types of fat.

Many processors manufacturers of dairy products are placing a "REAL" Seal on the label. This seal, a stylized drop of milk enclosing the word, "REAL," assures consumers that the product conforms to federal and state standards of identity. Real dairy foods can be depended upon to provide essential nutrients on a consistent basis and to perform predictably in cooking and baking.

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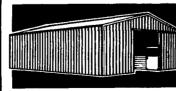
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Pet parrots

(Continued from Page B10)

pet-owners aren't prepared to deal with the macaw's constant bantel - in the form of loud screams that can rouse an owner from a deep sleep in the early hours of the day.

All in all, macaws would be better left in the tropics, according to the magazine. The birds would be happier - and so would their potential owners. Even Solomon, had he known better, might have chosen a dog or a cat instead of a macaw.



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