

Plan Meals From All Five Food Groups

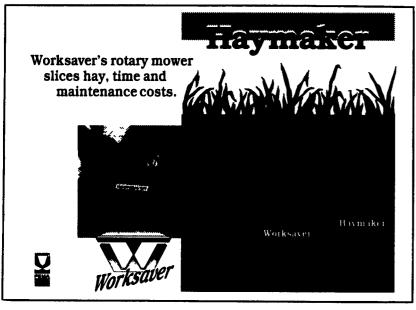
Although most Americans are eating more grain-based foods, fruits and vegetables than ever, a recent national Gallup poll shows that they are still not getting enough for optimum health.

Last year the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) introduced the Food Guide Pyramid to encourage Americans to replace unhealthy high-fat foods with nutritionally balanced meals rich in fiber and complex carbohydrates. The Pyramid replaces the USDA's threedecades old "Basic Four" guidelines with five food groups: Breads, cereals, rice and pasta,

vegetables fruit milk, yogurt and cheese poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs and nuts. No one food group is more important than another, all are needed for a healthy diet. The Food Guide Pyramid suggests including at least six daily servings of bread and grain foods in your diet, three of vegetables and two of fr. it. Two to three servings each from dairy foods and meat or protein foods also should be included in everyone's diet. Fats, oils and sugars should be used sparingly.

Because breads, cereal, rice and pasta are at the base of the Food Guide Pyramid, grain foods should make up the largest portion of everyone's diet. Only five percent of those surveyed said they eat the recommended 6-11 daily servings of grain foods. The median respondent averaged just three servings.

Misunderstandings about serving sizes could be one reason more



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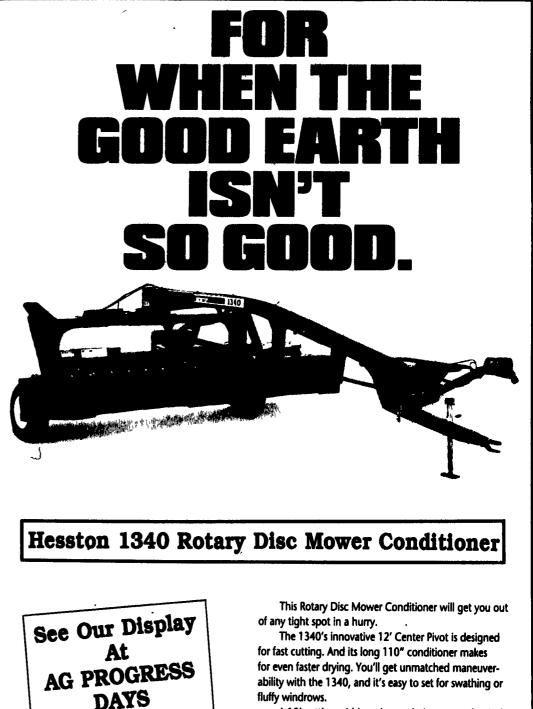
Americans are hesitant about increasing their bread and grain consumption. But serving sizes are modest, so the recommended guidelines are easy to meet. For example, a slice of bread or onehalf cup of cooked cereal, rice or pasta is one serving. One ounce of ready-to-eat cereal is a serving. A bun, bagel or English muffin counts as two.

Another reason for people not increasing their grain foods consumption is misinformation. Fifty percent of survey respondents incorrectly think bread is fattening. Bread is not fattening. It is what we put on bread that increases the calories and grams of fat.

Increasing bread and grain consumption can actually reduce overall fat percentage by replacing high-fat, high-calorie foods. Grain foods also help satisfy hunger, which reduces the temptation to overeat.

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