

Dads As Influential As Moms In Kids' Food Choices

CREAMERY (Montgomery Co.) — Most of us know that the bedrock of sound nutrition is eating a variety of foods, yet encouraging our children to develop eclectic taste is no simple matter. Because women have traditionally chosen and prepared the family meals, we tend to think that mothers exert the strongest influence over their children's food preferences. Not so, according to Annette Goodling from Penn State Cooperative Extension.

In a study of 500 elementary school children and their parents, fathers are at least as important as mothers as role models in determining the foods children will try and perhaps come to like. There is as much similarity between the

food preferences of fathers and their children as there is between mothers and their children. Likewise, a father's knowledge of nutrition is as much a determinant of how much children know about nutrition as is their mother's.

And, contrary to popular belief, when parents were given a brief nutrition knowledge test, fathers have just about as much knowledge on the subject as mothers.

Other studies from the same research group have found that even though both parents were equally informed about good nutrition, mothers — who still do most of the cooking — expressed concern about the nutritional value of the foods their children eat. Working mothers said they felt guilty that they weren't making the kinds of meals they grew up with. Yet there is no evidence that their childhood meals were more nutritious than the ones they're serving their families today. Interestingly, mothers and fathers alike

reported that they "felt better" when they "ate better." They attributed this to both physiological and psychological reasons. One of the psychological reasons was that they felt they were doing better by their kids. Perhaps it's time to give dads credit for the powerful role they have in influencing their children's eating habits. Whether a father will eat or not eat certain foods, the comments he makes about them, his non-verbal reaction, and his general attitude toward trying new foods make their mark at the dinner table. One strategy to consider is for parents to form an alliance to encourage adventurous eating. "Remember," says Goodling, "it's not only a matter of serving a variety of foods but also of setting a good example by eating a broad range of foods and showing an interest in trying new ones."

There's also truth in the adage that enjoying specific foods is an

"acquired taste." Research studies suggest that children need to try a new food as many as 10 times before they learn to like it. In spite of the hectic pace most families maintain, 95 percent of the mothers and 82 percent of the fathers surveyed always or almost

always ate dinner with their children. Using the evening meal as an opportunity to make a variety of new foods available in an atmosphere that encourages everyone to try them will do much to broaden children's food preferences.

Allied Milk Producers

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President Rose's remarks at the dinner dealt mostly with the controversial BST issue. He told the dairy farmers in attendance, "If you're gonna' use BST, you better promote with greater effort your product." He said there's a cautious feeling about BST in the Allied Cooperative.

Comprising Allied's board of directors, besides Rose in Indiana Co. are Fred Shankle, Bedford Co. vice-president; Lowell Friedline, Somerset Co. secretary; Janice Lidwell, Cambria Co. treasurer;

Robert Beatty, Indiana Co.; Dave W. Myers, Cambria Co.; and Marvin Thomas, Somerset Co.

Complimenting the filled pork chop dinner served by the Good Cheer Club, were dairy appetizers made by Naugle. They were slices from "Cheesie Roll", and index cards with the recipe were free for the taking at each table.

Kathy Hostetler, Cambria County extension agent served as mistress of ceremonies during the evening.

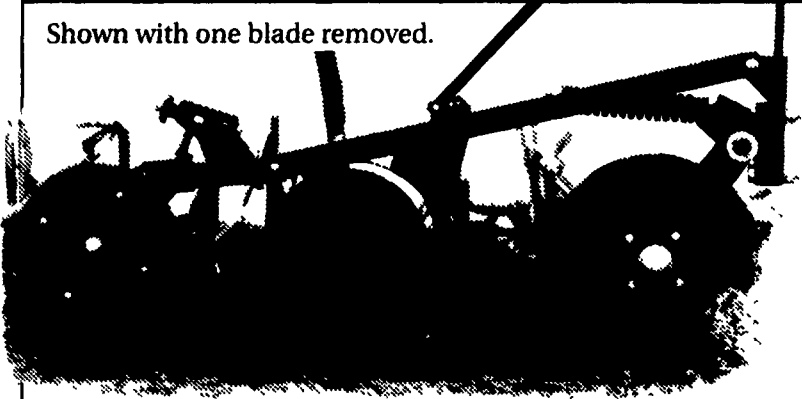
Approximately 250 persons were in attendance.



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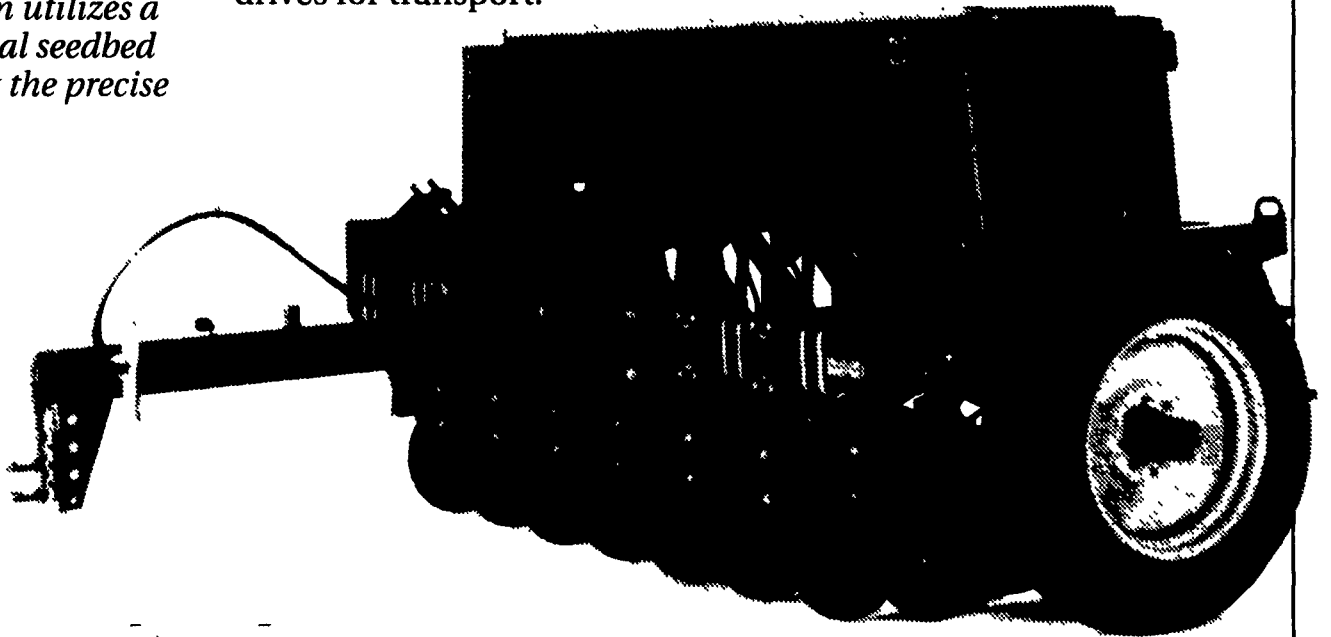
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