

# Consuming Thoughts

by  
**Fay Strickler**

*Penn State Extension Home Economist For Berks Co.*



If power fails during a winter storm or if someone accidentally unplugs the freezer or leaves the freezer door ajar you may find yourself with hundreds of dollars worth of food that has thawed.

How can you minimize your loss should this disaster strike? You may not be able to use these tips now, but keep them on hand just in case:

• *If you know that the power has just been erupted, avoid that first impulse to open the freezer door.*

When you let warm room air into your freezer you're cutting the time the remaining food will stay cold. The time to open the door to check food quality is when the freezer is back in operation and you expect that the power is on to stay.

• *Try to estimate the length of time your freezer will be off.*

When the freezer stops running, the power supply may be off or the freezer itself may be out of order. If the power is off, try to find out from the electric utility that serves you how long it will be off. If power is expected to be out for more than eight hours, you may need to take steps to keep your food from spoiling.

With the freezer closed, food in a fully-loaded cabinet usually stays frozen for two days; in a cabinet with less than half a load, it may not stay frozen for more than a day. Bear in mind, also, that a freezer full of meat or frozen liquids won't warm up as fast as a freezer full of bread and bakery items.

• *Keep freezer contents as cold as possible and get dry ice if you can.*

If the power fails to return within a day or two, use dry ice to keep

the temperature below freezing and to prevent deterioration or spoilage of frozen food. If you obtain dry ice soon after the power has been interrupted, 25 pounds in an almost full 10-cubic foot cabinet should hold the temperature below freezing for three to four days; less than half a load should keep for two to three days.

If you experience frequent, long-lasting power failures in your area, you might consider buying a standby generator. Other possibilities: you may want to rent freezer space from a commercial locker or use a portion of a friend's or relative's freezer space.

• *Assess the damage to the food.*

Occasionally, frozen foods will thaw partially or completely before you discover the freezer isn't working. The important considerations in refreezing foods are the temperature at which foods thawed and how long they were held after thawing.

You can safely refreeze frozen foods that have thawed if they still contain ice crystals. If foods have been held at less than 35-40° F, no longer than one or two days after thawing, they are fit to use immediately. Foods warmed to 40° F or higher for over two hours should be thrown out—except for hard cheeses, fruits or fruit juices, baked goods, flour and nuts. Check these foods carefully, how-

ever, for any signs of spoilage.

Even partial thawing and refreezing reduces the quality of most foods. Foods frozen and thawed require the same care as foods that have never been frozen. Do use thawed foods as quickly as possible.

You can safely refreeze meat, poultry and seafood if these items still contain ice crystals and feel as cold as they would be under refrigeration. Be sure to examine each package carefully, and, remember, when in doubt throw it out.

• *Refreeze "safe" food quickly.*

The faster refreezing occurs, the safer the product and the better the quality. If there is any question about the integrity of the wrap, rewrap.

Thawing and refreezing will diminish the eating quality of most food. Freezer burn becomes

more likely when food has thawed and is subsequently refrozen; "burned" portions should be cut away before further preparation takes place. To compensate for quality deterioration in safety refrozen foods (quality changes may include both mushiness and hot food toughness), use moist heat cooking methods like stewing or braising, or incorporate these items into soups or casseroles.

To refreeze food at home, turn the adjustable temperature control to its coldest position. When the current comes on again, the freezer will run continuously and food will freeze more quickly. Pile the food so air can circulate around the packages.

It's safest to put no more unfrozen food in the home freezer than will freeze within 24 hours. Overloading slows down the rate of freezing, and foods that freeze too slowly may lose quality.

**ROPE IN SOME EXTRA CASH!**

Advertise With A Lancaster Farming CLASSIFIED AD...

Phone: 717-394-3047 or 717-626-1164

# Keep them simple, we did.

## Belarus

Sensible  
Down-To-Earth  
Tractors



If you're looking for a small tractor that gets you through tough spots, you'll like the new 4-wheel drive Belarus 310.

It's a simple, economical 36-hp tractor with the 4-wheel advantage that gives you extra traction on rough, wet ground. You'll like the fuel efficiency and low maintenance of the 310. And its low price is another real advantage. Stop in and see us for all your farm equipment needs and take a look at the Belarus 310.

### PENNSYLVANIA

**ROVENDALE AG & BARN EQUIPMENT**  
RD 2, Box 210  
Watertown, PA

**ANDERSON TRACTOR SALES**  
1415 Main St.  
Jacobus, PA 17407  
1-800-457-5705

**LUBINECKI WELDING & EQUIPMENT**  
RD 2, Box 160  
Meadville, PA

**MARSHALL MACHINERY, INC.**  
Route 652, RR 4  
Honesdale, PA

### MARYLAND

**SCHROCK FARM EQUIPMENT**  
Route 1, Box 2568  
Oakland, MD  
301-334-9060

**ANDERSON TRACTOR SALES**  
4600 BredlenBaugh Lane  
(Off 12200 Manor Rd.)  
Glenarm, Md.  
410-592-7422

**STARKEY FARM CO.**  
Rt. 213, PO Box 250  
Galena, Md.

### NEW YORK

**BROWN'S TRACTOR & EQUIPMENT SERVICE, INC.**  
RR 2, Box 11B,  
Jackson Hill Rd.  
Bonville, NY

### VIRGINIA

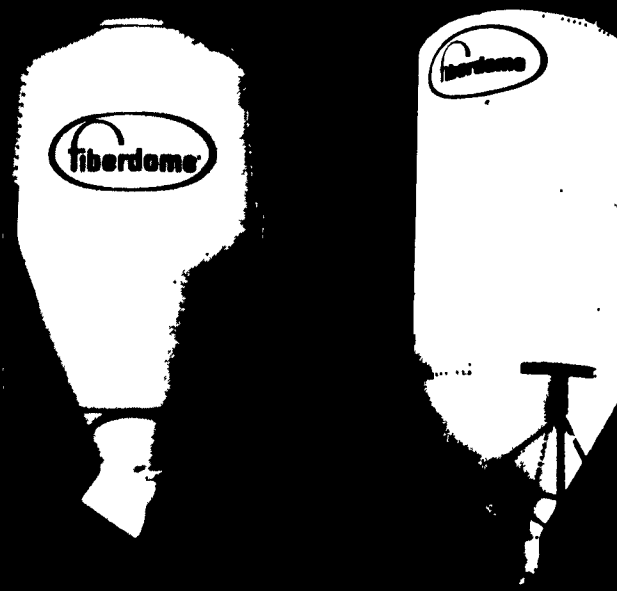
**BEVERAGE TRACTOR**  
Rt. 340 South  
Stuarts Draft, VA  
800-296-3325



Why settle for 2nd best - when Fiberdome now manufactures the most advanced fiberglass bulk bin available!

- Eliminates bridging, won't rust or corrode
- Cuts heat buildup and condensation
- Feed stays fresh in any weather

- Precision engineered for long, long life
- Unique 5-year warranty
- Adaptable to any auger or feeding system



Write for a full color brochure and a free sample of fiberglass. The modern material used for high performing bins.

*...made to last*

Contact your nearest dealer.



P.O. Box 11 • Lake Mills, WI 53551  
(414) 648-8376

**SOLLENBERGER SILO**  
Chamberburg, PA  
717-264-9588

**SOMERSET BARN EQUIPMENT**  
Somerset, PA  
814-445-5555

**BRENNER DAIRY EQUIPMENT**  
Spartanburg, PA  
814-654-7309

**NISLEY FEEDING EQUIPMENT**  
Willow St., PA  
717-786-7654

**HOOVER EQUIPMENT**  
Tyron, PA  
814-684-1777

**GNEGY SURGE SERVICE**  
Washington, PA  
412-222-0444

**DETWILER SILO**  
Newville, PA  
717-776-6321

**LANCASTER SILO**  
Lancaster, PA  
717-299-3721

**BADGER SALES & SERVICE**  
Spring Mills, PA  
814-422-8279

**FICKES SILO CO.**  
Newville, PA  
717-776-3129

**McMILLEN BROTHERS**  
Loyville, PA  
717-789-3961

**CEDAR CREST EQUIP.**  
Lanbanon, PA  
717-270-6600



**Belarus** Sensible, Down-To-Earth Tractors