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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Tuesday, November 8, 1938

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS." Information from the Bureau of Animal Industry and the Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Now that fall butchering time has come around on many farms, the mailbag is full of questions about curing and smoking and canning pork.

And just by great good luck the new bulletin--or rather the revised pork bulletin is just off the press and ready to bring this information to listeners or anyone else who needs it.

So jot it down, listeners--jot down the name and number of this bulletin which is yours for the asking. If you do your own butchering and meat preserving, here's another reference for your farm library. The name of the bulletin? "Pork on the Farm, Killing, Curing and Canning." The number? Farmers' Bulletin 1186. How to get it? Send a card to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. Is it free? Yes, as long as the supply lasts.

Now to use this new bulletin for the answers to some of the week's questions--

First question: "How cold should pork be while it is curing in salt?"

Answer: "In packing houses well-chilled pork cuts are cured at a temperature between 36 and 38 degrees Fahrenheit. This appears to be the safest range of temperatures to use. At the same time much meat is cured on the farm at temperatures above 40 degrees, and even up to 50 degrees, although much meat may be lost at these higher levels. The 36 to 38 degree level throughout the curing period is the safest rather than the only one that can be used. This fact should be understood when ice-chilled curing boxes averaging 42 to 48 degrees temperature are used. Temperature levels are believed to influence flavor as well as soundness. Uniform temperatures normally result in a uniform saltiness and flavor development."

Second question: "Is pork better cured by the so-called sugar cure or by the plain salt cure? And what about the brine method versus the dry method?"

Answer--again from the bulletin: "Sugar in the curing mixture cuts down the harshness of the plain salt cure and improves not only flavor but texture of the meat. So most people prefer the sugar cure to the plain salt cure. You can apply it either by the dry or brine method. The dry method is faster, so is used almost exclusively in the South for hams and shoulders. Both methods are used for all cuts in colder climates. The brine method produces a milder bacon than the ordinary dry cure."

Another listener asks about the use of pepper in curing pork. The bulletin says: "Pepper is sometimes dusted on the cured meat to add flavor."

Here's a question from a listener who says she has never understood just what a Smithfield-style ham is. According to the bulletin: "A special type of cured ham is prepared in the South Atlantic States, oftentimes from hogs that have been partly fattened on peanuts. These hams, often known as Smithfield-style hams, are cured in a dry mixture for from 5 to 7 days, depending on their weight. They are then overhauled, resalted, and held in cure from 25 to 30 days. After the salt cure is completed, they are washed in warm water, dried, sprinkled with pepper, and cold-smoked for from 10 to 15 days, after which they are aged and mellowed by hanging in a dry room for a period as long as a year."

Now here's a letter from a listener who wants complete, detailed directions for making headcheese. The answer to that is: See page 32 of the bulletin. Another listener wants a recipe for smoked sausage. Answer: See page 30 of the new bulletin. Still another wants a recipe for scrapple. That recipe is on page 33.

Fresh sausage, smoked sausage, bologna-style sausage, liver sausage, headcheese, scrapple, panhas, pickled pigs' feet--you'll find all these recipes in the bulletin. So once again, let me repeat that the name of the bulletin is "Pork on the Farm"; the number is 1186; and you get your copy by writing to the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D. C.

Last question: "Please tell me whether it is possible to make a good job of tanning hides at home."

To answer this, I'm going to quote another bulletin, another free bulletin, which is also yours for the asking. This is the bulletin called "Home Tanning," No. 1334. And on the first page you will read this statement: "Ordinarily hides and skins should be tanned only by experienced tanners. But sometimes the spread between the receipts for hides and the cost of leather warrants the farmer in tanning for himself. The inexperienced cannot hope to make leather equal in appearance, or possibly in quality, to that obtainable on the market, but farmers and ranchmen should be able to make serviceable leather for most farm purposes by carefully following the directions in this bulletin."

So if you want to tan small fur skins or skins of low market value, for home or country use, here's the bulletin to give you the information-- "Home Tanning," No. 1334.

That completes our schedule of questions for today.
