

Winter 1980 United States Department of Agriculture
Science and Education Administration

extension review

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FOOD & NUTRITION

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Nutrition and Your Health

Dietary Guidelines for Americans

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Eat a Variety of Foods page 4

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Maintain Ideal Weight page 7

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Avoid Too Much Fat, Saturated Fat, and Cholesterol page 11

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If You Drink Alcohol, Do So in Moderation page 19

U.S. Department of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare

What should you eat to stay healthy?

This seemingly simple question eludes a simple answer.

To clear up some of the confusion about nutrition, diet and health, scientists from USDA and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) have joined forces to provide some advice on improving eating habits to maintain good health.

Secretary Bob Bergland and Surgeon General Julius B. Richmond of the U.S. Public Health Service announced a set of seven dietary guidelines in February.

"People constantly ask me," Secretary Bergland said, "Is eating this or that bad for me? Will I be healthier if I eat more of something or less of something else?" Americans are clearly interested in good nutrition and concerned about how what they eat will affect their health. For a long time, we had nothing but conflicting statements from a variety of sources. Now the scientists of USDA and HEW are making recommendations based on an emerging consensus within the scientific community."

"We're not telling people that there is one ideal diet or a nutritional insurance policy that will keep them healthy," Bergland said. "These are general recommendations and within them individuals can make their own choices from a variety of foods."

Pointing to changes in nutrition policy, D. Mark Hegsted, administrator of the SEA Human Nutrition Center, noted that "for decades our nutrition message has been 'eat more' — more foods to provide protein, vitamins, and minerals in order to prevent deficiency diseases. Today we recognize that we need to shift our concern to include not just the quantity of foods eaten but also the relationship between those foods and health. The message of the guidelines is 'be moderate' rather than 'eat more.'

"Americans are confronted today with an expanding food supply which offers many opportunities for over-consumption and even more opportunities for food selections which may make negative contributions to health.

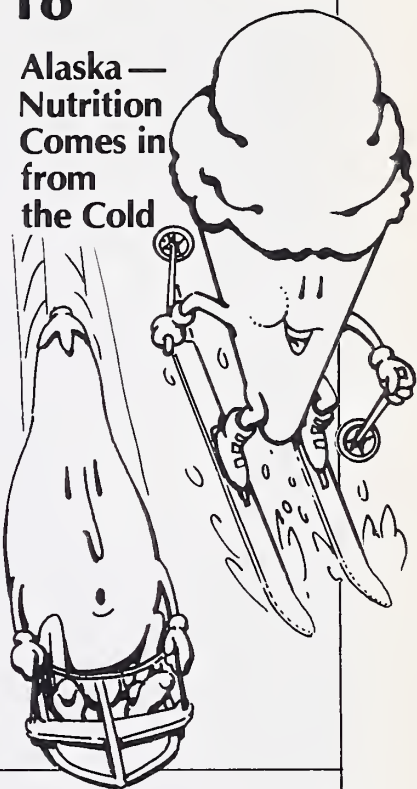

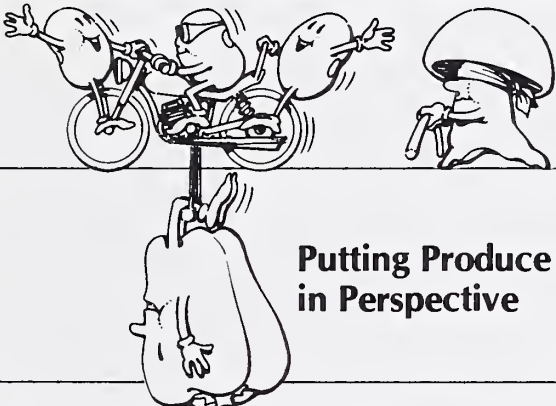
"We recognize that more research is needed to further elucidate the finer details of the relationship of diet to chronic disease onset and prognosis. We recognize that we may need to change our advice to the public as our knowledge grows. But we feel strongly that, in the interim, the public has a right to some simple, understandable guidance about what to eat. We feel that the dietary guidelines provide that guidance."

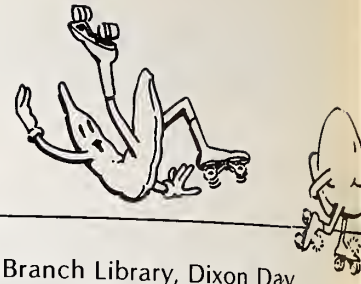
The Human Nutrition Center will be producing other guidance materials such as menus and recipe suggestions and new food guides to help people translate the dietary guidelines into practice.

Copies of the guidelines have been distributed to state Cooperative Extension nutrition specialists. Extension county offices may request additional copies on publications shipping order form SEA-91. Public inquiries for the publication may be directed to the Office of Governmental and Public Affairs, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

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<p>extension review</p> <p>Vol. 51, No. 1 Winter 1980</p> <p>Bob Bergland Secretary of Agriculture</p> <p>Anson R. Bertrand Director of Science and Education</p> <p>Mary Nell Greenwood Acting Administrator, Extension</p>		<p>The <i>Extension Review</i>, quarterly publication of the Science and Education Administration, is for Extension educators in county, state and USDA agencies. The Secretary of Agriculture has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of the public business required by law of the Department. Use of funds for printing this periodical has been approved by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget through September 30, 1980. The Review is issued free by law to workers engaged in Extension activities. Others may obtain copies from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, at \$2.25 per copy or by subscription at \$8.25 a year, domestic, and \$9.35 foreign. Send manuscript inquiries to: The Editor, SEA Information Staff, Room 3137-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250, Telephone: (202) 447-6133.</p> <p>Reference to commercial products and services is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the Department of Agriculture is implied. The Science and Education Administration of the U.S. Department of Agriculture offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, sex, or national origin, and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.</p> <p>Editor: Patricia Loudon Assistant Editor: Michael A. Meliker</p>	



Extension Profile: The "Whirlwind" World of Wirth

Betty Fleming
SEA-Extension Information Officer
Washington, D.C.

Consider this challenge. You're an Extension home economist in Philadelphia attempting to reach a significant number of the 1.8 million population with a food and nutrition consumer education program. What methods do you use?

Jackie Wirth has this job and, the best description for her particular approach is "whirlwind!"

Approach

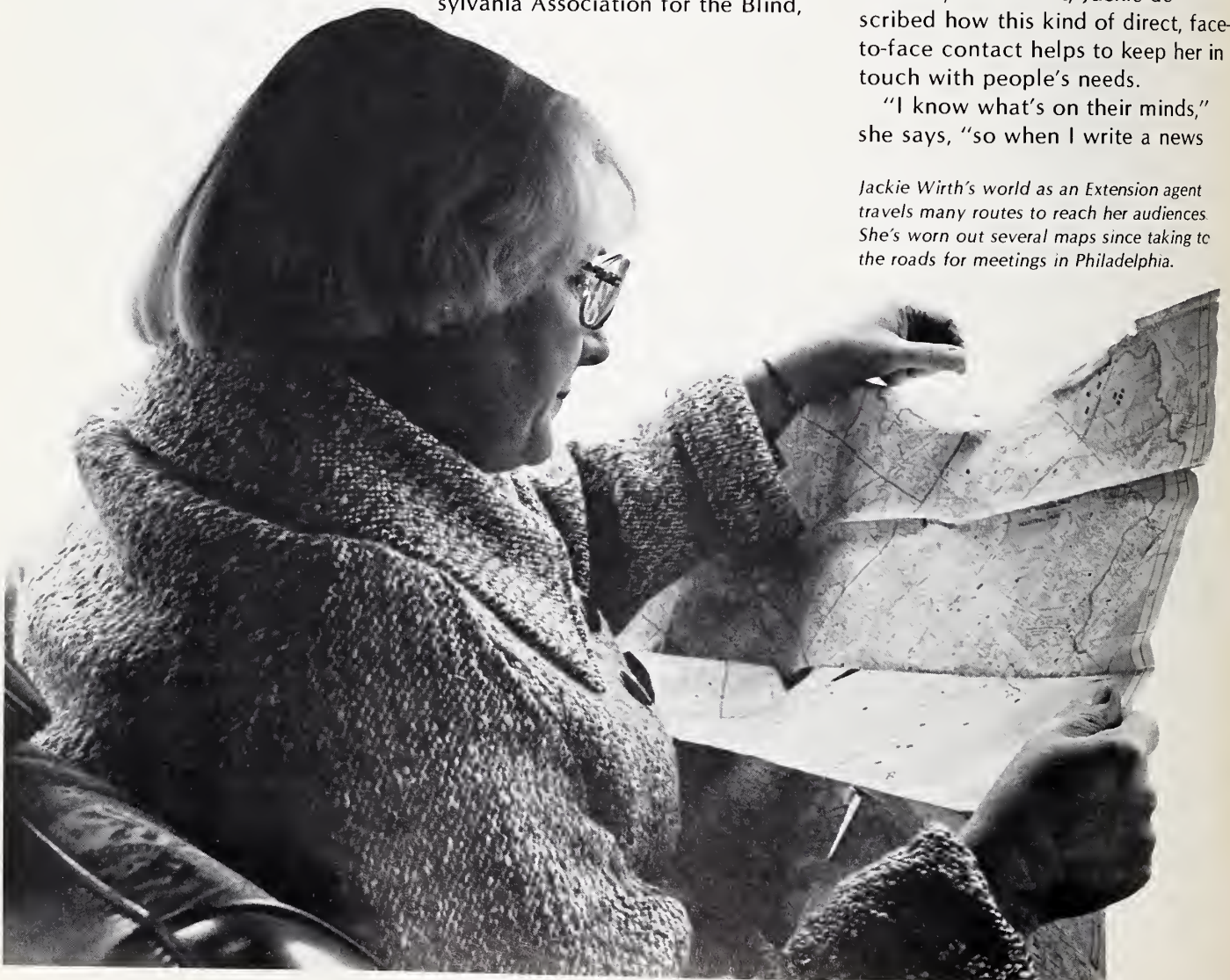
During a week period, Jackie scheduled meetings with the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind,

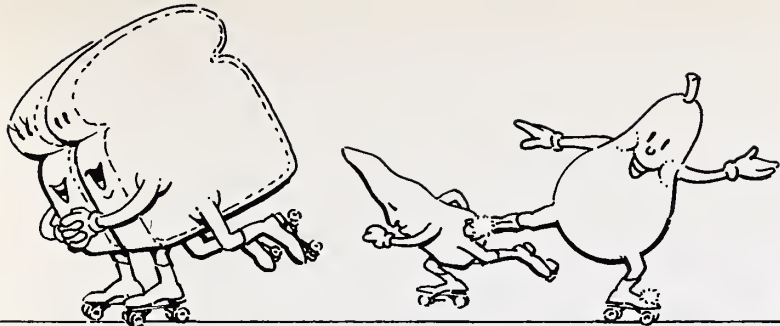
Wyoming Branch Library, Dixon Day Care Center parents, International Ladies Garment Workers Union retirees, Calvary Church 50+ Club, Fox Chase Branch Library, Paschall Day Care Center parents, Kensington Nursery parents and a Wellesley College alumnae group. Total attendance at all these meetings—more than 300.

One meeting was scheduled on a holiday; another on a Saturday. Sometimes, there were three meetings in one day. During a pit stop at a nearby restaurant, Jackie described how this kind of direct, face-to-face contact helps to keep her in touch with people's needs.

"I know what's on their minds," she says, "so when I write a news

Jackie Wirth's world as an Extension agent travels many routes to reach her audiences. She's worn out several maps since taking to the roads for meetings in Philadelphia.





release or do a radio or TV show, I can be on target."

For ample feedback, she encourages audiences to participate, air views, ask questions. Her meetings can definitely be described as lively!

Jackie's focus is mass media. Money management and food and nutrition are her top priority consumer subjects at this time. With nearly 20 years of Extension experience (including 3 years in Pennsylvania), Jackie has developed her own mass media philosophy. "I don't aggressively promote myself or Extension, or regularly call the media with ideas," she says. "That's not my style. I do send two news releases to 40 papers and radio-TV people every Friday. I keep in touch that way and those releases are a gentle, soft-sell reminder that I'm here, that I have good information, and that I'm a resource.

"The media call me, and I respond as quickly as I can. If I can't help, I refer them to someone else. I like them to call, rather than have me be out there trying to peddle something."

Newspapers

Bulletin newspaper food editor Sarah Casey says that's what she likes about the news releases Jackie writes. "They're not selling anything. Most of our stuff comes from self-interest groups pushing a product," says Sarah. Telephone calls, mostly food and nutrition questions, drive a busy food editor up the wall. Sarah is happy to refer callers to Jackie for more information.

Jackie averages one to two arti-

The mailbag overflows for Extension secretary Beverly Harrell when Jackie offers a publication on radio, TV, and in local newspapers.



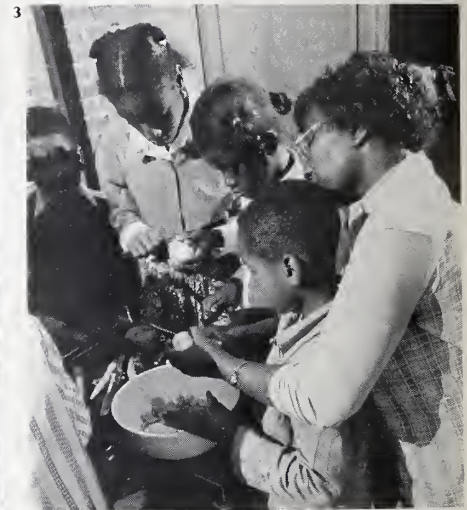
cles (usually with credit) per month in the *Bulletin* (circulation: 536,300). She may also have six to eight stories per year in another daily, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (circulation: 847,500). Reader response to these stories is often overwhelming. A recent canning publication offer in these two daily papers plus the *Philadelphia Daily News* and weeklies brought close to 600 requests.

Radio-TV

On the TV side, Jackie annually averages 15-20 9-minute TV shows for KYW-TV's daily "Farm, Home and Garden" series. Gary Geers, who's hosted this show for nearly 27 years, says that . . . "Jackie is one of the best home economists on the air. She comes prepared." Gary is currently working with more than 75 Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware Extension agents for his show.

"We don't repeat any topics," says Gary. "I look for a new slant, a fresh approach. Jackie knows what I want and watches the news to see what's current." The show has an estimated 250,000 viewers, 53 percent of the available viewing audience at that hour.

Jackie also regularly does radio call-in shows for Philadelphia's



1 Jackie and Frank Milani, Philadelphia Radio Information Center for the Blind program director, discuss plans for an upcoming show.

2 Jackie explains how smart shoppers can take advantage of coupon offers to save on food expenses.

3 Learning to make nutritious, economical beef stew is a tasty lesson for these EFNEP youngsters and their EFNEP aide, Alease Bey.

4 Philadelphia Bulletin food editor Sarah Casey, left, food news reporter Denice Kachin, center, and Jackie plan a feature on home canning.



Radio Information Center for the Blind (RICB). The program reaches about 3,000 subscribers through FM receivers tuned to receive a special signal carried by WUHY-FM (an educational station). Volunteers often read her releases on the air.

As a result of her visibility, Jackie gets calls to do evening news spots, telephone call-in shows, and cable TV shows. When radio-TV stations interview community leaders to develop their FCC ascertainment listing of community problems, they contact Jackie. "That's when I really know they know I'm here," says Jackie.

State backup for Jackie Wirth is good. She gets a useful state news packet every other week. People such as food and nutrition specialist Louise Hamilton, food scientist Jerry Kuhn, and food economist Harold Neigh are valuable resources to both Jackie and the Philadelphia print media.

Topics

What kinds of food and nutrition topics does Jackie focus on? The need for supplementary vitamins, feeding your preschooler, snacks, salt, sugar and additives are some of the current concerns she's recently



1 Workshop participants ask questions and pick up publications after a meeting.

2 Libby Goldstein, left, manager of the Philadelphia urban gardening program, and Jackie decide which jars of home preserved food take the prize.

3 What better way to study nutrition labeling than to pass out empty cereal cartons and study labels?

4 Jackie and Judy Olive, coordinator of Philadelphia's EFNEP, ponder a tough nutrition question.

tackled. "I try to address topics that should be done," she says, "not just the easy issues."

In addition to state backup resources, she depends on reputable print sources including basic nutrition textbooks for help. Jackie frequently takes reference books to meetings. "If someone asks me a specific question and I don't know the answer, I look it up for them right there if I can," says Jackie. "I'm not afraid to say I don't know and that I'll provide an answer later."

Problems

What kind of problems does an urban Extension home economist like Jackie Wirth face? Here are a few:

- An office mimeograph machine with "100,000 miles on it" is barely capable of producing the 26,000 copies of the five different newsletters Jackie puts out, in addition to other staff members' mailings.
- Franking newsletters costs money (8½ cents each for 3rd class bulk rate). Jackie is encouraging libraries and day care centers to pick them up in bulk quantities for distribution instead of using the mail.
- USDA publications are increasingly difficult and expensive to obtain in quantities needed for urban areas.
- State publications budgets are limited. There are few state fact sheets, so Jackie produces her own. She writes and publishes single-concept sheets on topics such as winter squash, snacks, asparagus, potatoes, pickles, and jelly.

- Some Extension administrators feel that talking to groups organized by other people leaves an Extension home economist without support groups of her own. From Jackie's point of view, this method allows her to concentrate on teaching, not promotion or recruitment. (Jackie makes no effort to take down names of people who attend these organizational meetings for followup effort. She does give each group an idea of what Extension has to offer.)

- Food and nutrition inservice training may be 1½ to 2 days a year (. . . "if we're lucky," says Jackie). Brief updating is also available at an annual conference. Jackie, a home economics generalist who's only had four introductory courses in F&N plus Extension inservice training says she could use more.

- Accountability with mass media is tough. Jackie is trying to keep the names and addresses of those who request publications as a result of radio, TV and newspaper work. She plans to follow up to see if they've used the information. Also, this clientele could be contacted for future meetings.

- Urban office phone lines are limited. With one *Philadelphia Inquirer* item, Jackie received 100 phone calls. She tries to discourage media from including the phone number in stories.

- Philadelphia city/county supplies low-rent office space, but that's all. This means that audiovisual materials, exhibits, demonstration and publication supplies are scarce. "We can borrow visual aids

from Penn State," says Jackie, "but they're 200 miles away and it takes 2 weeks via the mail to get anything."

Satisfactions

What are the satisfactions in an urban Extension job? Jackie says she gets her rewards when people say . . . "I didn't know where else to call." . . . "I knew you'd have the answer." . . . "Is Mrs. Wirth there? Oh, thank God!" (a canning problem) . . . "I'm glad to see something good is coming out of our tax money."

Other Programs

Philadelphia also receives Extension food and nutrition information from two other home economists—Judy Olive and Libby Goldstein.

Judy Olive coordinates the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in which paid nutrition aides teach low-income homemakers how to improve their families' diets. She works with a staff of 12 to reach over 400 families with food and nutrition information. Judy writes a regular "Menu of the Month" feature for the *Philadelphia Tribune* (a minority biweekly with 160,000 circulation).

An ADA registered dietitian as well as an Extension home economist, Judy is a valuable nearby





resource for Jackie Wirth's media programs. A F&N resource person for Pennsylvania's SE regional Extension staff, Judy also works with 50 or more organized groups such as the handicapped, training both staff and clients.

Libby Goldstein manages an Extension urban gardening program in which more than 8,000 city families learn to grow and preserve their own food. "Nutrition is a definite part of what we do," says Libby. Judy Olive trains six garden assistants in nutrition. Jackie Wirth teaches them food preservation. Libby also writes news releases, a regular weekly gardening column, and yearly garden guide supplements for the *Philadelphia Daily News* (circulation: 233,300), a "City Green" newsletter,

and radio-TV scripts. She operates a Hotline Garden Phone that handles an average of 2,500 calls per year.

Feedback

Are you an urban Extension home economist trying to extend food and nutrition information to residents in your city? What are the problems you face? What solutions have you tried? Jane Voichick, acting assistant deputy director of food and nutrition, SEA-Extension, would be happy to hear from you. A followup *Extension Review* article with your ideas and suggestions might be possible. Write to her at: Food and Nutrition, SEA-Extension, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 5404-S, Washington, D.C. 20250. □

KYW-TV host Gary Geers and Jackie rehearse a "Farm, Home and Garden" show on canning equipment.

Calories Decrease— Diets Improve

Stu Sutherland
SEA Information Specialist
Washington, D.C.

Americans are eating diets lower in calories but of a generally better nutritional quality than they were in 1965. And Americans are eating out more frequently.

A panel of nutrition experts from SEA's Human Nutrition Center presented these conclusions during the USDA 1980 Outlook Conference held last November.

The panel used data from the Nationwide Food Consumption Survey, begun in spring 1977 but not yet fully analyzed, and the 1965 Household Food Consumption Survey. They compared food expenditures, amounts of food consumed and nutrient content of diets of U.S. citizens over the 12-year span.

Frances J. Cronin, SEA home economist, summed up differences in amounts of food used by households as reflected by changes in energy (calories) and nutrient levels. She also explained how information was obtained from about 15,000 households in the 48 neighboring states for the 77-78 survey.

Information on household food use came from interviews with persons identified as being most responsible for food planning and preparation. Trained interviewers used an aided recall schedule to obtain the kind, form, quantity, and cost (if purchased) of each food and beverage eaten in the household during the 7 days prior to the interview.

Households were contacted at least 7 days before the interview and asked to keep informal notes to assist them in recalling the food eaten during the 7-day period. This procedure differed from that of previous surveys, when households were interviewed at the time of first contact.

Cronin also explained that she was reporting average quantities of food and nutrients from household

food supplies in terms of an "equivalent person." This equivalent person is equal to 21 meals eaten at home in a week (based on 3 meals a day), and is used in an attempt to adjust for meals eaten away from home by household members and for meals and snacks eaten in the home by guests and employees.

Survey Comparison

A comparison of the two surveys showed changes in our population's





age distribution during the last decade. Bureau of the Census statistics indicate a decline of about 6 percentage points in the percentage of the population (from 1965 to 1977) under 18 years. Those between 18 and 44 years increased over 4 points and those over 64 increased 1 point.

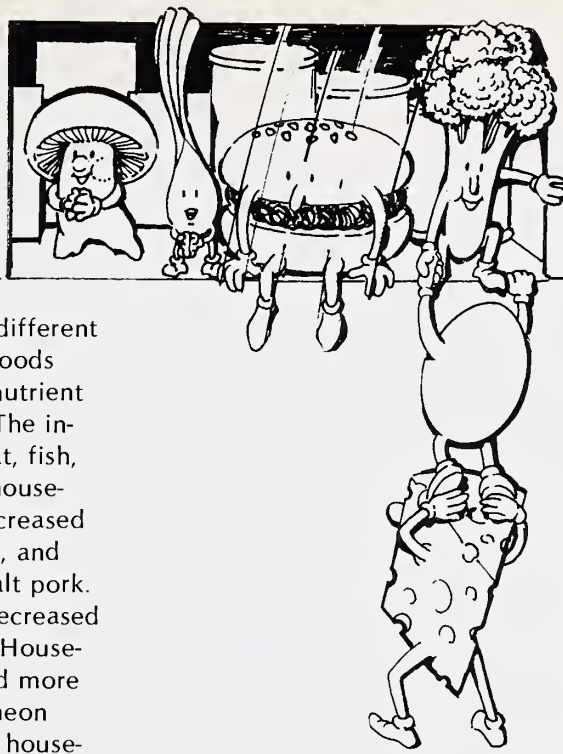
The number of households with one or two members increased, while the number of households with five or more members declined.

Cronin noted that further analysis will be necessary to assess the impact of these changes, and pointed out that data being presented are average values, which mask variations among the households.

She said there was a 10 percent decline in food energy, probably due to a decreased use (in 1977) of milk and dairy products, bread and cereals, fats and oils, and some sugar-based foods. However, there was not a decline in the levels of vitamins or iron, and only the level of calcium in food used decreased over the 12-year span. Cronin concluded that food had a higher nutrient density in 1977 than in 1965.







In general, households at different income levels in 1977 used foods which were more similar in nutrient content than those in 1965. The increased consumption of meat, fish, and poultry by low-income households (in 1977) reflects an increased use of all types of meat, fish, and poultry, except bacon and salt pork. The low-income group also decreased their use of eggs and beans. Households in this group consumed more pork, poultry, fish, and luncheon meat, and less beef than did households in most higher income groups.

Households in the lowest income group increased use of vegetables between 1965 and 1977 to a level similar to or higher than that used by other income groups.

Households in the lowest income group also increased their use of fruits from 1965 to 1977, with most of the increase in citrus fruit and juices.

Average nutrient levels for households in the lowest income group surveyed generally improved more than those at other income levels. Both the nutrient levels and amounts of food used, at the various income levels in 1977, were more uniform than in data from the 1965 survey.

Food Dollars

SEA home economist Mary Y. Hama compared the way food dollars were spent and summed up several trends and patterns.

Money spent on food away from home increased from 17 percent in 1965 to 24 percent in 1977. Hama said households with relatively high incomes, both in 1965 and 1977, used more of their money for food away from home than did low-income households. But, the average money value of food used at home per person was only 20 percent higher for the highest income group than for the lowest income group.

Some changes in food consumption patterns appear to have taken place during the 12-year period, Hama said. Households spent more of their food dollar in 1977 to buy meat, poultry and fish; fruit; soft drinks, punches and prepared desserts. Less was spent on eggs, dry legumes and nuts; fats and oils; and the sugar, syrup, jelly and candy food groups.

Hama also noted that average quantities of foods used per person has also changed since 1965. In addition to those food groups that changed in food dollar values, alcoholic beverages underwent a marked change in quantity consumed. This may reflect the greater use of beer and wine, for which a larger volume intake has been typical, and to people's increased candidness in revealing their alcoholic consumption, Hama concluded.

Nutritive Content

Home economist Eleanor M. Pao compared average nutritive content of diet changes and related them to the 1974 Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA).

Caloric intakes of all survey sex-age groups were lower in 1977 than in 1965—below the RDA by about 10 to 25 percent. The sharpest drop of all groups was infant intake of feed energy, protein, fat, and calcium. For most adult groups, calcium intakes were close to or above the 1965 levels.

Pao noted that mean weights of people in most groups in 1977 were similar to mean weights for 1965. Thus, she said, the drop in caloric intake does not appear to be associated with loss of weight. Perhaps a sedentary life style is more common in the 1970's than in the 1960's, Pao concluded.



The mean intake of protein for infants decreased from 39 grams in 1965 to about 25 grams in 1977. Pao said this sharp drop may reflect a change in composition of baby formulas from those made with evaporated cow's milk, as was common in the 1960's, to formulas developed to resemble human milk in the 1970's. Human milk has about one-third as much protein as cow's milk.

Infant iron intake in 1977 was more than twice that in 1965, but the average iron intake for 1- to 2-year-olds was much lower—about 45 percent below the 1974 RDA. Females aged 12 to 50 years had an average iron intake between 35 and 40 percent below the RDA, as was the case in 1965.

Diets of older men and women seem to have decreased least among the groups in energy, protein, and fat, Pao reported. Their average calcium, vitamin A and vitamin C intakes were higher. Pao noted that intakes of protein and fat declined for most sex-age groups in 1977.

Average nutrient intakes for protein, vitamin A, riboflavin, and vitamin C met the 1974 RDA for all sex-age groups in 1977. Vitamin C in diets increased considerably from 1965 to 1977.

Total Consumption

D. Mark Hegsted, administrator of the Human Nutrition Center, said total food consumption of Americans appears to be at a very low level. Yet, he commented, we are as big and fat as we ever were, so he feels obesity may be gaining on us as we become more sedentary in our lifestyles.

Commenting on the way food is being wasted, Hegsted said there appears to be great opportunities to conserve food in the same way there



are opportunities to conserve energy—explaining that the two are not unrelated.

He said the survey comparison is encouraging as it indicates that former differences (spread) are coming closer together between the various income levels in dollars spent for food and the kinds of food used. He felt lower income groups had been assisted by food programs between 1965 and 1977, so they now share more fully in the country's abundant food supply.

At the same time, Hegsted said, 3 percent of all households report they do not have enough food, and this rises to 9 percent in low-income groups. Much remains to be done, especially in a country that may waste nearly half of the total food available.

Though we complain about food costs and other faults of the food system, Hegsted said, food costs for most Americans are low compared to the rest of the world. He didn't think most U.S. citizens would willingly trade what our agricultural and food systems have achieved compared with that available in other parts of the world.

Given the fact that the 1977 survey data came from 15,000 house-

holds, and also includes data on 34,000 individuals who consumed nearly 20,000 different products, Hegsted concluded that to produce any kind of report is a formidable task. He also noted that statistical data can be exploited for a variety of purposes, both legitimate and not, and urged everyone to use the food consumption survey data honestly and constructively.

The most recent survey is the sixth done by USDA since 1936. The data was compiled and studied by SEA employees in the Consumer and Food Economics Institute of the Human Nutrition Center.

When completed, the survey will provide detailed information on food used by households, from which the nutritional quality of household food supplies can be estimated. It will also provide data on home production of food, household income, participation in food programs, education and employment of household heads, and other factors that might affect food consumption.

Dr. Frances Cronin, Dr. Eleanor M. Pao, and Mary Y. Hama are located in the Federal Building, Room 336, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD 20782.

Editor's Note: This article was compiled from four papers presented at the 1980 National Agricultural Outlook Conference. They are; "Nationwide Food Consumption Survey Implication" (Hegsted), "Nutrient Consumption Patterns of Individuals in 1977 and 1965" (Pao), "Changes in Household Food Consumption in the U.S., Spring 1977 and 1965" (Hama), and "Changes in Nutrient Levels and Food Used by Households in the U.S., Spring 1977 and 1965" (Cronin). Copies of these papers are available on request by writing to The Editor, *Extension Review*, Outlook Papers, Room 3137—South Building, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

Dial Direct — FNIC

Susan Schram
Extension Program Leader—Family Living
Michigan State University

Are you looking for just the right film on nutrition to show to young children?

Have you been asked to do a presentation on nutritious snacks for pre-school teachers?

Would you like to review some literature or films to help you become a better manager?

Are you looking for a reference on vegetarian cookery?

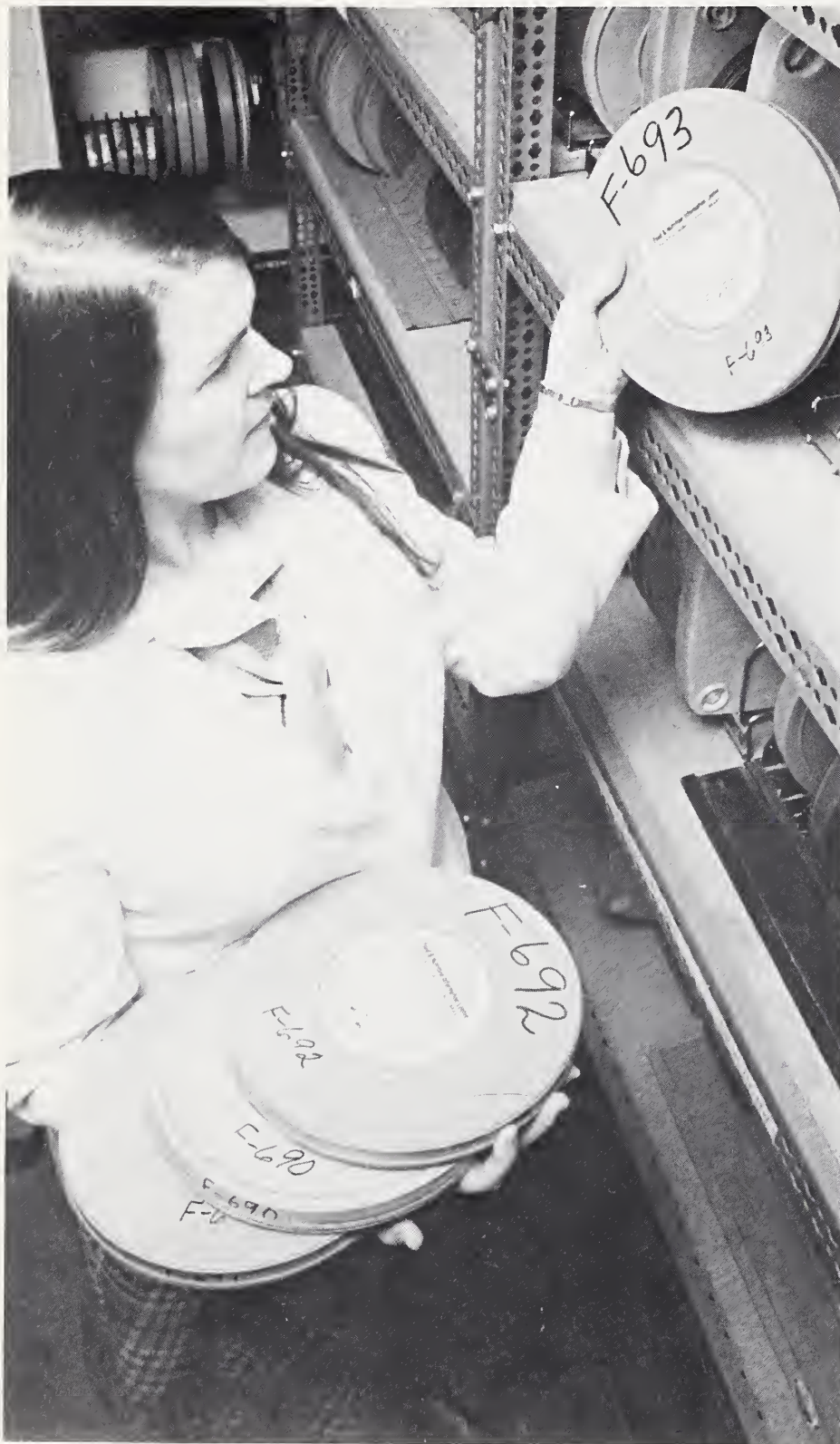
There is a new resource available through USDA that can help Extension agents and lay leaders with

these and other needs in the field of food and nutrition. It's the Food and Nutrition Information Center (FNIC), located at the National Agricultural Library in Beltsville, Md.

The Center was open previously only to those involved in child nutrition programs administered through the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNC). Recently, however, FNIC has expanded its collection of food

Slides on Extension topics from A to Z can be borrowed from FNIC. Robyn Frank, FNIC chief, helps Maryland Cooperative Extension Service's Dorothy Van Zandt select slides for an educational program.





and nutrition materials, making its resources available to Extension personnel.

If you need anything from a short, entertaining film on nutrition to references for an indepth paper on a current nutrition issue, the Food and Nutrition Information Center can help. Extension agents using it have reported FNIC's film collection to be particularly outstanding

Interested in contacting the Center? Its specific services now include:

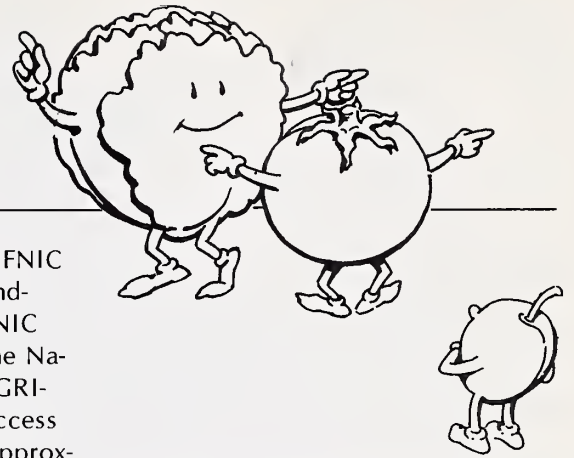
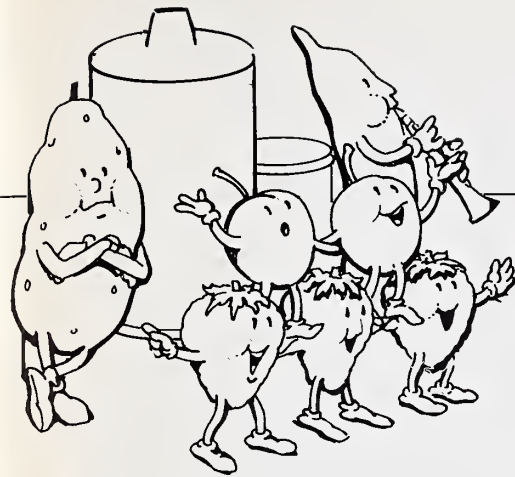
- Lending of books and audiovisuals—motion pictures, filmstrips, audiocassettes, videocassettes, film loops, posters, charts, games, and transparencies
- Providing photocopies of journal articles upon request (in accordance with copyright law, Title 17, U.S. Code)
- Providing comprehensive reference services, including referral services, and computer searches of major data bases

The Center's policy regarding the lending of materials is as follows:

- Books may be borrowed for a period of 1 month
- A maximum of six journal articles may be requested at a time, photocopies will be provided
- A maximum of three audiovisuals may be borrowed at a time for a period of 2 weeks (order not more than 1 month in advance)

All Center services are available free of charge. Extension agents and others may access FNIC's collection by reviewing the Center's catalogs, or through use of the computer.

Films may be borrowed from FNIC for a 2-week period.



Catalog

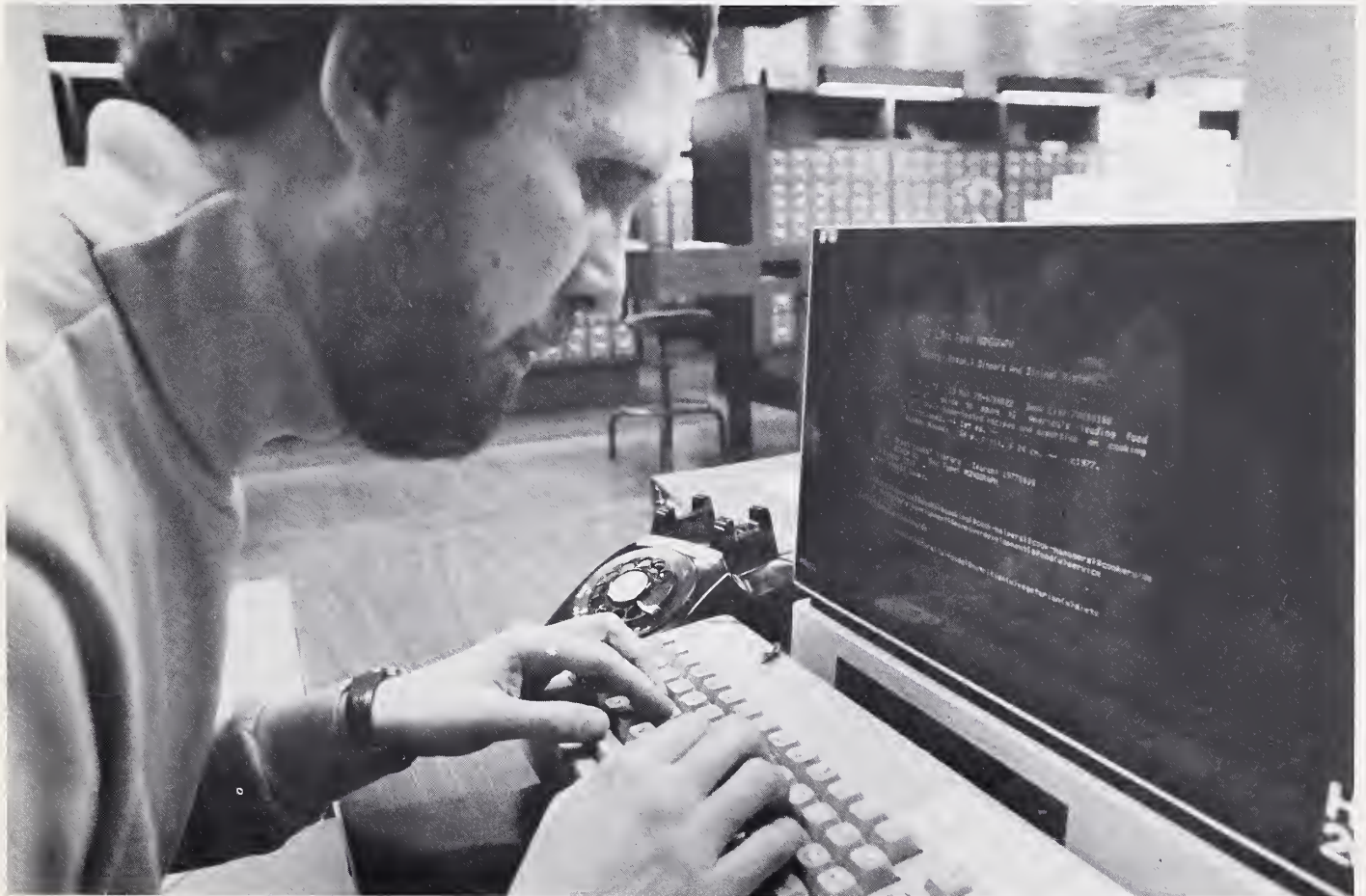
The FNIC catalog is currently being revised. A limited supply is currently available from the Center free of charge. In the near future, however, the complete retrospective catalog will be available from: Oryx Press, 3930 Camelback Road, Phoenix, AZ 85018, phone (602) 956-6233. Contact Oryx Press for price information.

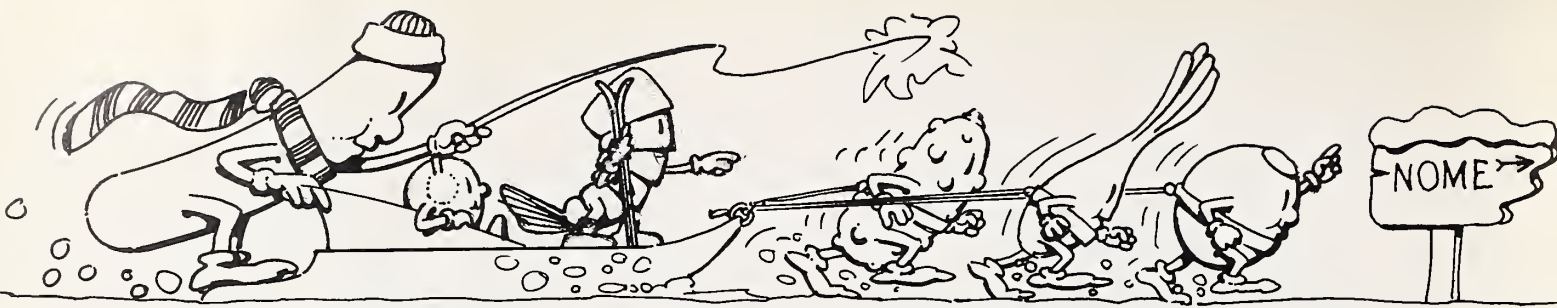
For computer access to the FNIC data base, check with your land-grant university library. The FNIC data base is integrated with the National Agricultural Library's AGRICOLA (Agricultural On-Line Access file). The data base contains approximately 16,000 citations. If your university library cannot assist you, FNIC technical information specialists are trained to search these data bases as well as MEDLINE, the National Library of Medicine's on-line data base. Allow a minimum of 2 weeks for response.

The Center is looking forward to hearing from you. Requests for Center services may be submitted by letter, telephone, or personal visit.

FNIC has a 24-hour monitor to record telephone requests outside business hours. Contact: Food and Nutrition Information Center, National Agricultural Library, Room 304, Beltsville, Maryland 20705. Telephone: (301) 344-3719 □

FNIC information specialist Bill Feidt has access to more than 100 bibliographic data bases to help Extension agents in their literature searches.





Alaska— Nutrition Comes in From the Cold

Ellen Ayotte
and
Marguerite Stetson
Nutrition Program Coordinator
University of Alaska

Impossible to spread the nutrition message over 586,000 square miles in Alaska?

To youth and adults? To isolated cities and villages? Not so, says the CES Nutrition Coordinator and the eight district Extension home economists.

In the past, diligent district agents used a potpourri of methods to provide nutrition education to isolated areas. Repeat performances, year after year, drained professional time. Gaps remained in villages that could be visited as well as audiences that could be reached.

Volunteers

Because youth in schools was the biggest audience gap, Ellen Ayotte, district home economist, organized

volunteers to teach single "mini" nutrition lessons in the classroom. That was 5 years ago. Ten to fifteen teachers asked for these lessons. By 1978, more than 120 teachers expected, and demanded, that the volunteers visit their classrooms. During this same year the volunteers reached over 3,000 youth . . . and their teachers.

Customized teaching lessons were worthwhile. Both students and teachers gained knowledge. At the same time the volunteers discovered textbooks fraught with misinformation, such as: "Balanced breakfasts prevent tuberculosis." It was time to work directly with teachers. Teachers needed knowledge for selecting appropriate textbooks. They needed skills for teaching the students.

How do you get teachers to participate in a nutrition workshop? What kinds of materials and methods do you use? These were some of the initial questions facing Nutrition Program Coordinator Marguerite Stetson. The Western Hemisphere Nutrition Congress opened the door for Stetson. Sharon Young of the California Dairy Council (CDC) reported on a new nutrition education system. It was tested in California with elementary children. "The results of our testing show that 80 percent of the students achieve mastery level of the material."

Multi-cultural Materials

As a nutrition educator, Stetson had found few methods that could guarantee results. Further checking with CDC proved that the material was equally successful with multi-cultural and multi-economic audiences. This was what Alaska needed.

Within weeks, Stetson was in California learning how to use the CDC

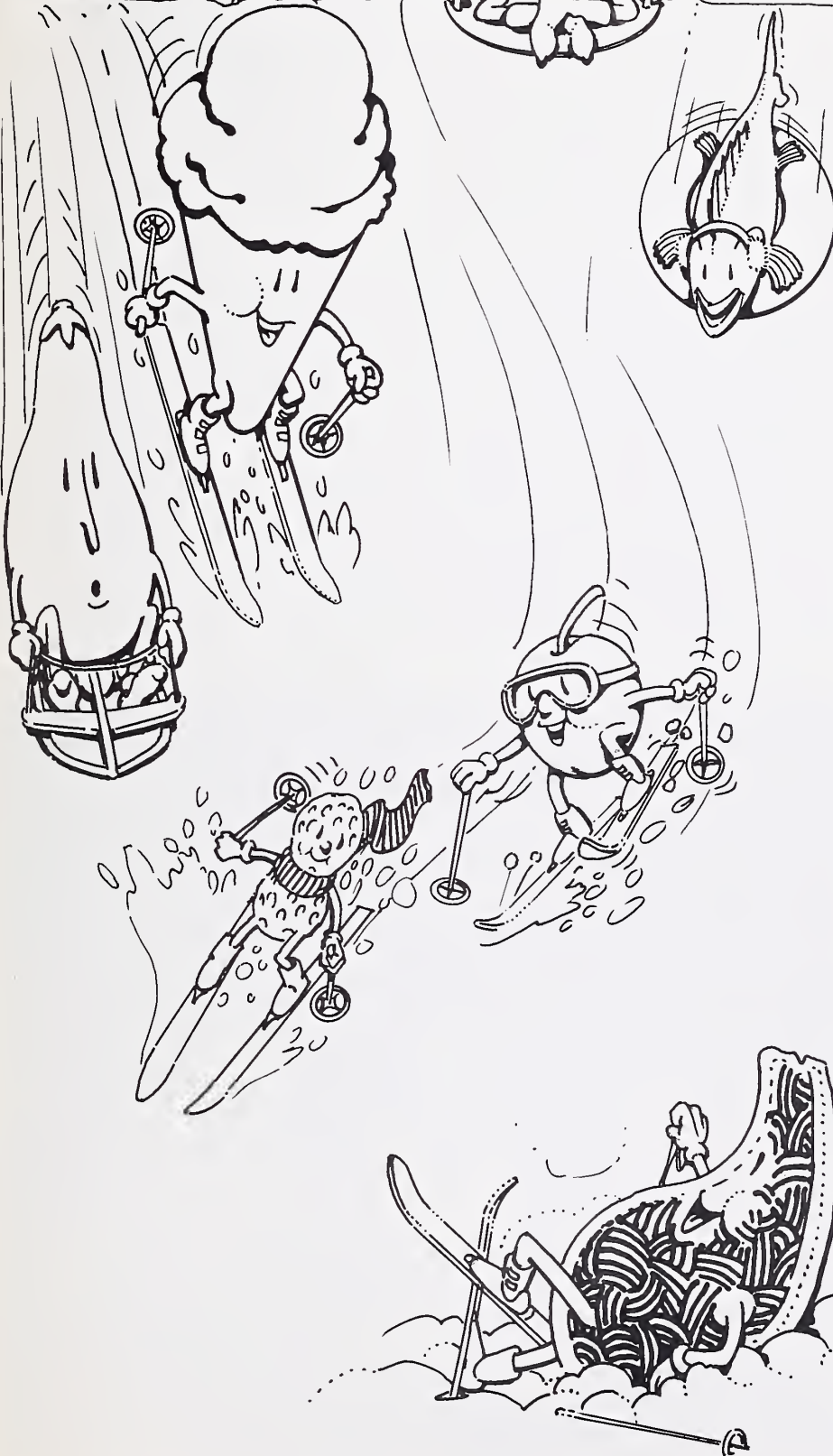
materials. She found not only elementary materials, but also systems designed for junior high and adults. Armed with permission to use the materials in Alaska, she tried the adult system in Barrow with Eskimo women involved in health education. The material worked in Alaska.

Back in Fairbanks, Stetson planned a course for teachers. At the same time, the Alaska CES editorial staff wrote articles for the media. Local and other Alaskan newspapers printed these articles about the success of the nutrition education project in Barrow.

Forty-five teachers enrolled in the first workshop. Within 3 months, over 100 Alaskan teachers were trained to use the materials and to teach others. Each workshop had the teachers involved with using the "consumer program" for adults. As teachers became involved in analyzing their own diets and foods offered for coffee breaks, they were quick to point out: "That donut is an 'Other'." "I better select milk for lunch, that's a group I have been missing." "Look here, I have the milk group, meat, fruits and vegetables and bread—a balanced meal."

These statements indicated that the awareness level of education was in the process. If they go on to make changes in their eating patterns, the "adoption" stage of behavior is reached.

Nutrition does not have to be dull. While using the materials in a classroom, the teachers commented: "Even my reluctant learners expressed interest in this project." From the students: "Can't we go a little further today?" "If we plan this meal for lunch, we will need the following food groups to balance the day." . . . From a nurse: "If nutrition had



been taught like this when I was in school, I would have enjoyed it."

Teacher Trainers

Every day new orders for materials come in from districts and individuals around the state. Some teachers call or drop a note saying: "I have trained the following people: . . ." Stetson and a secretary keep track of the orders and make certain that all who order have been trained to use the materials.

According to Stetson, the next 2 years will be devoted to training 2nd and 5th grade teachers around the state. If only Fairbanks and Anchorage 2nd and 5th grade teachers are trained, 8,000 students would learn more about nutrition.

Since trainers are located in Bethel, Nome, Juneau, and Kenai, with a little coaxing and support, an additional 2,000 students can be reached.

Homemaker Club members are being offered the chance to learn to teach the adult method. They can use this system in their communities. With this added layer of volunteers, more people can be reached with the nutrition education program.

If, as is hoped by Stetson and Ayotte, nutrition education becomes a part of the school curriculum throughout Alaska, the aides in the EFNEP project will have an easier time assisting low-income families.

The real benefits from this new program accrue to the thousands of students who will have the necessary skills to select food wisely.

The Alaska Cooperative Extension Service has found a way to reach across Alaska's vast expanse of land to a variety of audiences in isolated cities and villages with nutrition education. This method might work in your state, too. □



Countdown 4-4-3-2

Ronnie Malone
Extension Home Economics
Rutgers University, New Jersey

One summer, a Rutgers community assistant working in the Paterson, New Jersey EFNEP program posted a "Guide to Good Eating" poster on her apartment door. Soon a handful of Spanish-speaking youngsters from her church gathered to see what was happening.

Because her apartment is small, she used the hallway outside to show them one of the 4-H Mulligan Stew films, "Countdown 4-4-3-2." The Mulligan Stew boys and girls and their message turned them on.

"They really identified with the youngsters in the film," says Manuela Rodriguez, the nutrition aide. The neighborhood kids decided to be like them—a nutrition group.

Word of mouth soon increased their membership to 15 youngsters between the ages of 8 and 15. They scraped together enough money to buy one T-shirt. The shirt with its "4-4-3-2" and "NEP Kids" messages

advertised a cake sale on Main Street in Paterson. Motorists bought out their wares.

The 4-4-3-2 stands for the recommended daily servings from the basic four food groups. And the NEP stands for the Nutrition Education Program (as EFNEP is known in New Jersey), an outreach of the Cooperative Extension Service at Cook College on the New Brunswick campus of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.

One hot day later in August they held a lemonade sale. Customers asked, "What's the 4-4-3-2 on the shirt?" Because they used the special lessons and fun sheets during weekly meetings with Rodriguez, they were able to answer every question.

Eventually, they raised enough money to buy each member a T-shirt.

A story describing the group and its project was circulated to Passaic County newspapers. Soon the Paterson *Evening News* featured the NEP Kids with a story and photo of several youngsters wearing their T-shirts.

To make sure *El Diario-La Prensa*, the New York City-based Spanish daily newspaper, used the story, Rodriguez contacted a reporter there.

Jose Davila came to a meeting in her crowded apartment with his photographer. The subsequent story was practically a nutrition lesson in itself.

During the summer, the group planned and prepared picnics in nearby parks. Conversation always related to how picnic food should be chosen and why it requires special care.

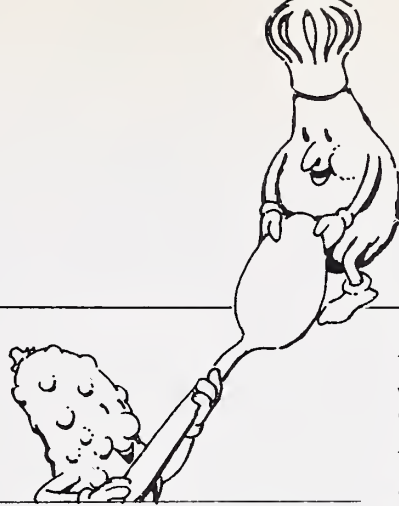
In the fall, the NEP Kids planned a Halloween party. Rodriguez sur-

prised ten of the group with certificates of merit. The five who did not receive them were disappointed. "Ah, but you missed some of the meetings, and you did not deserve it," she told them. However, the "graduates" then tutored the rest of the group and four new members as well. Beverly Bowman, Maritza Cortez, Unise Cortez, and Esteban Figueroa are volunteer leaders for the group now.

No junk food was allowed at this party. Instead, homemade fruit punch, pumpkin pie, and peanuts were served. Because they have learned their nutrition lessons well, the kids all understood why these foods formed a better party menu.

"Mrs. Rodriguez is very committed," says Patricia Brennan, Extension home economist in Passaic County who supervises the Nutrition Education Program there. "She really does an all-out job. In working with individual program homemakers, she knows that she can't teach anything but nutrition. So she does a fantastic job of referrals for non-nutritional problems."

And the NEP Kids have learned to share. After their fund-raising paid for the T-shirts and the Halloween Party, their treasury had \$5.75 left. Rodriguez told them of a destitute family she had visited. They had no food, food stamps had not begun, and emergency food from the church couldn't be available until Sunday. The NEP Kids gave their money to buy milk and bread that



Friday. Rodriguez since enrolled the family in the Nutrition Education Program, where they are making much progress, especially in food budgeting and use of food stamps.

Earlier this year the group proved that Easter baskets don't have to contain candy. They made construction paper baskets for some 25 children at a Paterson day care center. Each was filled with nuts and popcorn. And they put on a nutrition skit and danced to one of the Mulligan Stew songs for the youngsters.

In addition to reaching out to others, the NEP Kids have earned a place in the community. "Two store-owners donated to their project funds," says Brennan, "because they are involved in such worthwhile projects."

One day Rodriguez met a contact from *Aspira, Inc.*, a Puerto Rican educational agency. "How can you keep the group interested in such a boring subject as nutrition?" she was asked. "Because I plan activities and projects that relate to nutrition but are interesting and fun for the children, too," she replied.

Another plus in her success stems from a rap session following every lesson. All participate and all listen—and there is no judging or criticism. Sometimes youngsters tell

funny tales on themselves; one youngster visited Puerto Rico with his parents and didn't know a cow from a pig. But he was able to share and laugh about it with his friends.

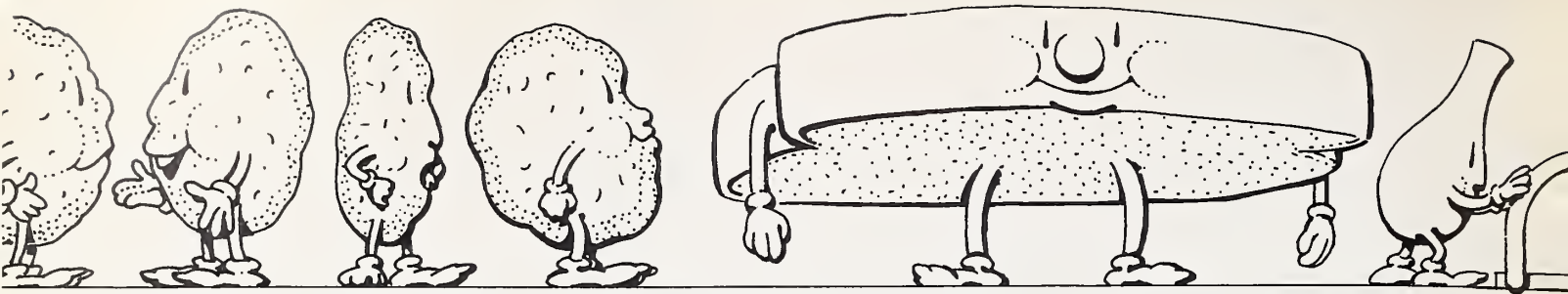
Now the group is working on breakfast lessons combining food preparation and good nutrition.

For warmer weather later this year, they plan a special project—a picnic trip to nearby Garrett Mountain.

You can figure that menu out for yourself—it'll be Mulligan Stew. □

The NEP kids squeeze nutrition facts from citrus fruits. Wearing their 4-4-3-2 T-shirts attire are, from left, Kimberly Bowman, Theresa Silva, Miguel Correa, and Jimmy Cortes. (Photo courtesy Paterson Evening News)





In 4-H—Food is More Than Fun

Is the true image of the average American teenager that of a junk food junkie—with sugar-laden soda pop and empty-calorie snacks the mainstay of their daily diet?

Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth programs for kids and volunteer leaders across the country are attempting to erase that negative image once and for all.

Kansas

In Kansas, 17-year-old Debbie Anderson, researched a project in her local community on "Nutrition and Cancer." After interviewing doctors, and studying cancer research papers and published material, Debbie compiled a 39-page report. She concluded that a well-balanced diet, with fewer snacks and greater amounts of fresh fruits and vegetables, not only make people healthier, but diminishes the chance of getting cancer.

Anderson also worked with room mothers at local schools to provide more nutritious snacks at school parties and taught food-nutrition to 14 mentally retarded adults 4 hours every Saturday at Johnson County Community College.

Her expertise in the food and nutrition program won her a \$1,000 scholarship from General Foods Corporation and a position with the International English Peace Corps in the United Kingdom through the American Field Service.

California

Another scholarship winner was Janet Henderson of Davis, California. Janet worked on a 4-H allergy project—planning the diet of a young girl allergic to many flours and sugars. "Just a few variations introduced into Amy's diet brightened her day and made eating more fun," the 4-H'er explained.

While working on the allergy project, Janet became fascinated with nutrition, and this influenced her career choice—pediatric nutrition specialist. She also assisted in forming a special food-nutrition club that doubled in size under her leadership. Earlier this year when Janet's physician prescribed Vitamin A for an eye problem, she began another project researching vitamins. Using information from the University of California Nutrition Center, she discovered additional sources of Vitamin A in foods she can eat.

Kentucky

In Kentucky, Laura Simms cooked dinners for 80 people at a nursing home for 2 months last summer. Besides learning about foods, she also learned to communicate better with the elderly. Laura presented many programs on nutrition to the home residents, and developed a program on good shopping habits for the Boyle County Senior Citizen Club.

Other Winners

Other General Foods scholarship

program winners included:

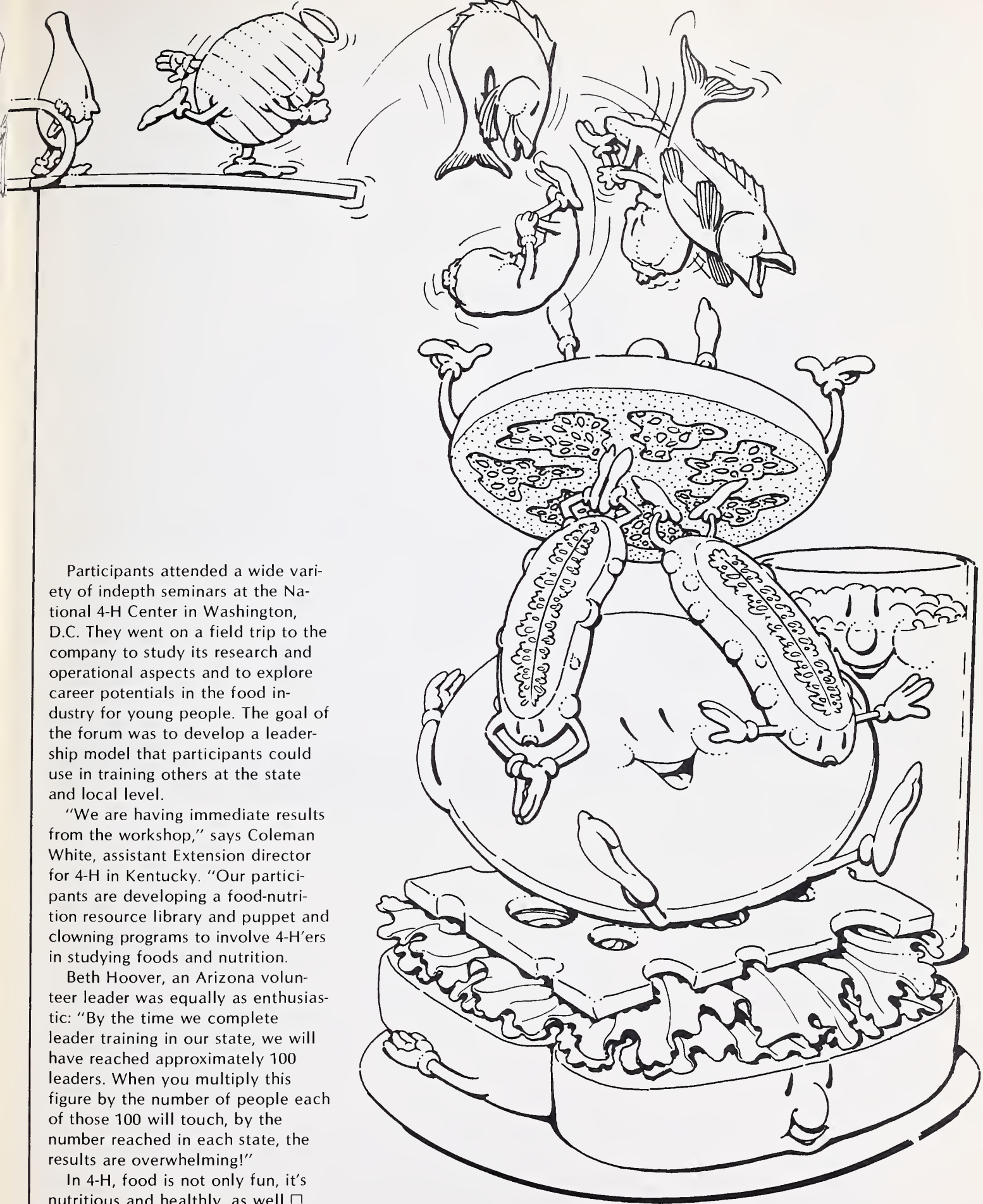
- Susan Deal, Minnesota, who taught school children that snacks don't have to be "junk food."
- Mary Detten, Oklahoma, who organized a puppet show to teach younger kids in 4-H the importance of good nutrition.
- Teresa Woodward, Tennessee, who helped low-income and handicapped adults plan well-balanced meals and shop for groceries based on cost and nutrition value.

Another award winner was Jill Nash of North Carolina. Jill made a television spot announcement used to alert the public to the danger zones in food temperatures. "If your food is from 40° to 100° it is in what is called the danger zone," she said. "We did a test showing that if the food is just under 42°, bacteria is growing." She also used a coloring book to teach food safety to mentally retarded children. Jill received a \$1,000 scholarship from the Reynolds Metals Company in the 4-H Food Conservation and Safety Program.

Volunteer Leaders

4-H'ers like Jill, Mary, and Teresa gain most of their knowledge about food and nutrition from volunteer leaders—the backbone of the 4-H/Youth program across the Nation.

Last fall, more than 150 volunteer 4-H leaders and Extension staff from 44 states and the District of Columbia attended a special leadership forum. The forum addressed two important needs in the 4-H program—strengthening skills of adult volunteer leaders and effective food and nutrition programming. The forum was made possible through a grant from the Campbell Soup Company.



Participants attended a wide variety of indepth seminars at the National 4-H Center in Washington, D.C. They went on a field trip to the company to study its research and operational aspects and to explore career potentials in the food industry for young people. The goal of the forum was to develop a leadership model that participants could use in training others at the state and local level.

"We are having immediate results from the workshop," says Coleman White, assistant Extension director for 4-H in Kentucky. "Our participants are developing a food-nutrition resource library and puppet and clowning programs to involve 4-H'ers in studying foods and nutrition.

Beth Hoover, an Arizona volunteer leader was equally as enthusiastic: "By the time we complete leader training in our state, we will have reached approximately 100 leaders. When you multiply this figure by the number of people each of those 100 will touch, by the number reached in each state, the results are overwhelming!"

In 4-H, food is not only fun, it's nutritious and healthy, as well. □

A Tomboy Joins the EFNEP Team

Rob Williams
Extension Editor
University of Georgia



"When I graduated high school, I wanted to teach children full time; all day, everyday. Being an EFNEP aide has given me the opportunity to do so."

Standing 5-foot-4, she was the smallest player on her high school basketball team. At 18, she is the youngest nutrition aide in Georgia.

Jackie Brown seems to enjoy doing things the hard way.

The second oldest of seven children, Jackie grew up—and still lives in a housing project in South

Augusta. Her father died several years ago; her mother a year ago.

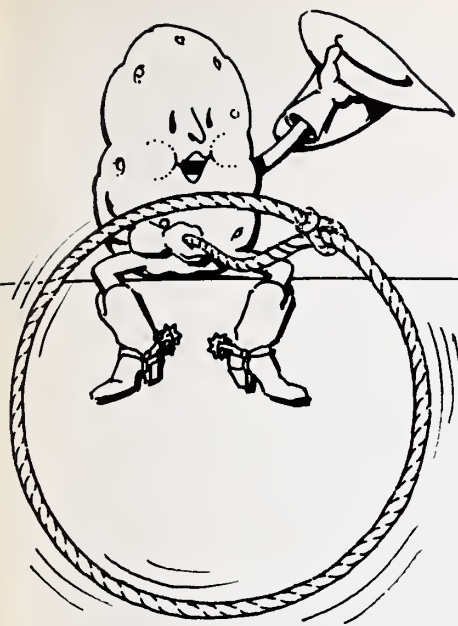
In 1970, Jackie was a scrappy tomboy shooting baskets and playing football with the other kids at the local community center. Like all kids her age, she liked to eat—anytime, anyplace.

EFNEP

Two women, Shirley Ball and Guy Ann Corn, would come to the community center one afternoon a week to teach the youngsters about food and nutrition. It was a new program

sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the University of Georgia, and the Richmond County Cooperative Extension Service. While it had a long official name—Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)—kids knew it meant something good to eat.

According to sources with EFNEP,



"Jackie has been very successful on the job," says Nancy Gary, her supervisor. "She brings a lot of strengths to her work: she's known in the community; because she was in the youth nutrition clubs, she sort of 'came up through the ranks;' and she works well with both children and adults."



Community Involvement

the program grew out of a 1965 national health survey which showed that there was a direct relationship between a family's income and the nutritional quality and adequacy of their diet. People were also not aware of their nutritional needs and how to satisfy them with their limited resources.

Georgia participated in a pilot study of new methods to teach nutrition to low-income families. The program has expanded to 40 Georgia counties and to other states.

Teaching

Jackie, who had cooked for her family on a regular basis since she was in the fourth grade, was soon teaching the younger children as a volunteer junior leader.

When Jackie graduated from high school, she still taught the nutrition classes at the community center.

"But I wanted to teach children full-time; all day, everyday," says Jackie. "I still do."

She worked as a substitute teacher the first year out of high school and continued to meet with the youth at the center to talk about nutrition or shoot baskets. Though not as scrappy as before, Jackie still jumps into most pickup games.

In March 1978, Jackie was hired as a nutrition aide for Richmond County EFNEP.

EFNEP aides work a lot like sales-people. They go door to door, peddling their product—education. But even though the education is free, doors are often closed on them.

"Most of the people know me, but I still try to tell them about my job and what I'm doing right at first," says Jackie. "If they don't want me, I don't force them."

Jackie's job is to teach families how to make the best use of their food resource, how to budget their food money, and the basics of good nutrition.

In the EFNEP office in the Ervin Towers building in Augusta, signs read:

- "Eat three balanced meals everyday."
- "The Basic Four: the meat group, the milk group, the bread and cereal group, and the fruit and vegetable group."

"Spinach gives you iron."
"But nutrition is not the hardest thing to teach people," says Jackie. "I guess the worst problems I find are that people don't know how to budget their money for food and they don't know which foods are best for their family."

"And if they fix the right foods, they fill up the kids' plates and just feed them too much," she says. "I guess most of the people I visit would be shamed to tell me if they didn't have enough food. I don't go

into their business. Sure a lot buy the wrong kinds of foods."

While Jackie has to go knocking on doors to find new families to join EFNEP—she has 45 families she visits on a regular basis—the kids come flocking to her. Whenever they see her car pull up to the same community center where she played a few years ago, the kids come running for the same reason Jackie first came running in 1970: to eat.

Food Models

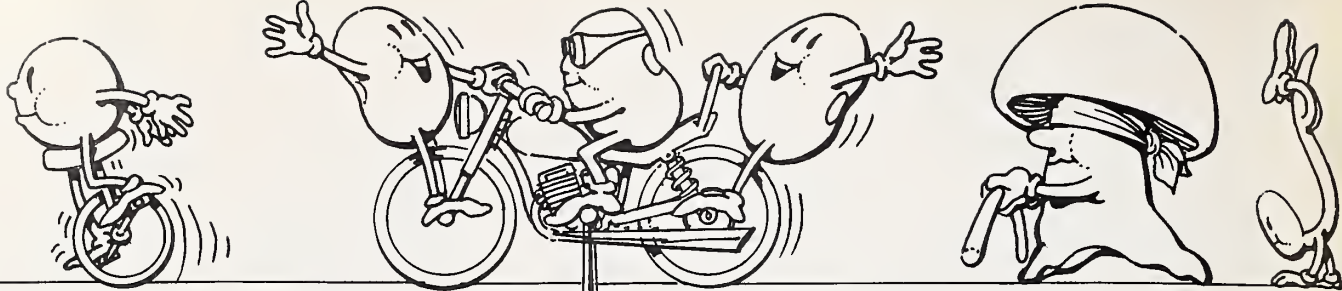
And they will eat anything that's not nailed down. Jackie uses very realistic plastic food models to teach meal preparation and food groups. To a casual observer it appears as if the models will disappear down gaping gullets before the real food arrives.

While a quick game of marbles on the floor or the "babble of tongues" disrupts the nutrition lesson, the youngsters seem to learn what foods fit into what groups and how to make nutritious snacks like "pat-a-pizza" or "corn doodle cookies."

Of course there is rapt attention at the end of class because that's when they get to eat the "lesson."

In addition to the 40 hours a week she works with the families in EFNEP, Jackie donates several hours a week to the Gwinnett Street Free Clinic.

"I just like helping people. One day I might need some help." □



Putting Produce in Perspective

Susan Reynolds
Home Economist
The Alabama Cooperative
Extension Service



Today's grocery shoppers are confronted with a wide array of fresh fruits and vegetables. Many are uncertain about wise produce selections. Which type winter squash to buy, or how to obtain the fresh coconut that their recipe requires presents them with problems.

Extension can provide the answers. But Extension agents or volunteers may not be readily available to answer questions and provide educational materials at the supermarket or "point-of-purchase". Extension in Alabama and Tennessee found a solution to this dilemma by providing training and materials for the attendants stationed in grocery store produce sections.

Dual State Effort

During 1979, the Kroger Company's Southland Division, based in Nashville, Tenn., requested a program for their produce attendants. Louise Baker conducted a training session in Nashville for more than 40 Kroger

produce attendants in her area. In Knoxville, Sue Cox conducted the session for 20 attendants. Pat Brogden conducted the session for 30 Chattanooga employees. Each of these women is an Extension food marketing agent in the area. I also conducted a training session, for 22 produce attendants in Alabama.

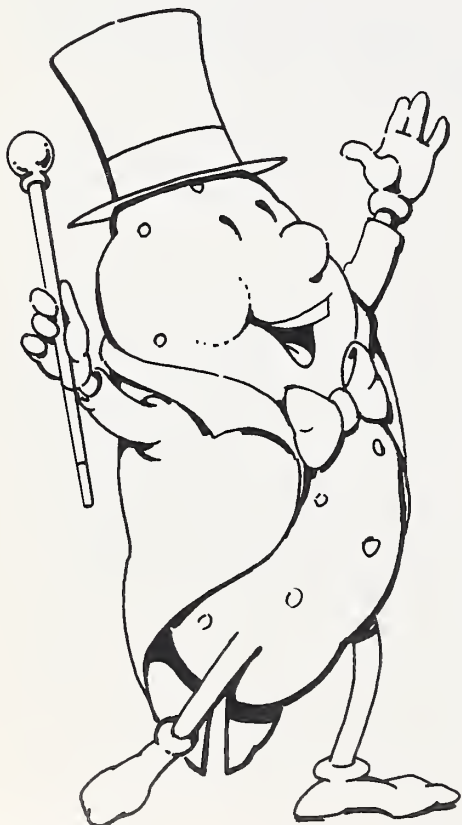
The produce attendants wanted information to give customers on selection, care, and use of various perishable produce items. Although, at each session, the more familiar fruits and vegetables were stressed, emphasis was also placed on exotic fruits and odd vegetables—namely anise, bok choy, sun chokes, kiwi, mangoes, bean and alfalfa sprouts, papayas, artichokes, pomegranates, and avocados. These vegetables are often as nutritious, useful, and economical as the familiar ones.

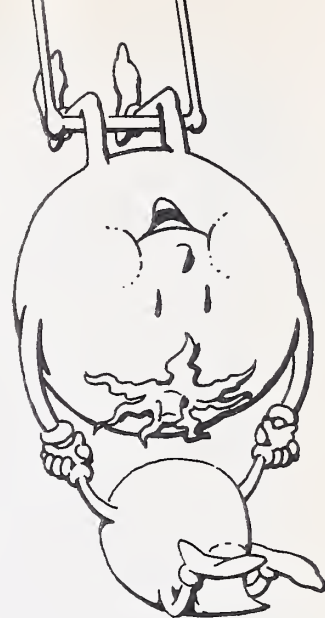
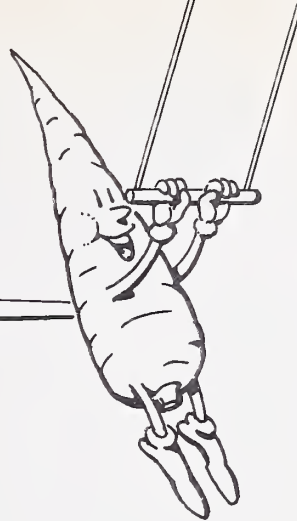
New products, especially ones that present a possible growth for the production and marketing industry were emphasized. Specialty items, fruit and vegetables with a specific ethnic demand were included. For example, certain local markets have a growing demand for oriental items resulting from new residents in the area.

Through present day marketing, produce items are appearing in local markets that are unfamiliar to a majority of customers. Therefore, the on-the-spot produce attendant can be the most important factor in determining if a customer will venture trying an unknown item or continue to pass it up.

Training Sessions

Each 3-hour session began with an informal, fun pretest. Slides of fresh produce were shown, and the grocery store provided fresh produce





for use both as visuals and in preparation and tasting. The agents prepared many fresh fruits and vegetables for tasting, including a variety of raw vegetables and exotic fruits. Demonstrations included: how to prepare and eat an artichoke; how to select and cut a fresh pineapple; and how to remove the outer bark from a coconut, break the shell, remove and prepare the meat.

The training focused on interchanging produce items in recipes. For example, if a consumer wanted yellow squash for a recipe, but it was not available due to weather, a strike, or the season, a produce worker needs to know what other type produce might be useful. The poor supply and high price of lemons is an example. Participants learned to emphasize the plentiful supply of limes, instead.

Consumer Questions

During the sessions, attendants received Extension publications and informational materials to keep at the fresh produce scales center for quick reference in answering consumer questions.

The produce attendants are interested in learning and receiving answers to their questions. Some had never tasted spaghetti squash, papaya, or raw mushrooms.

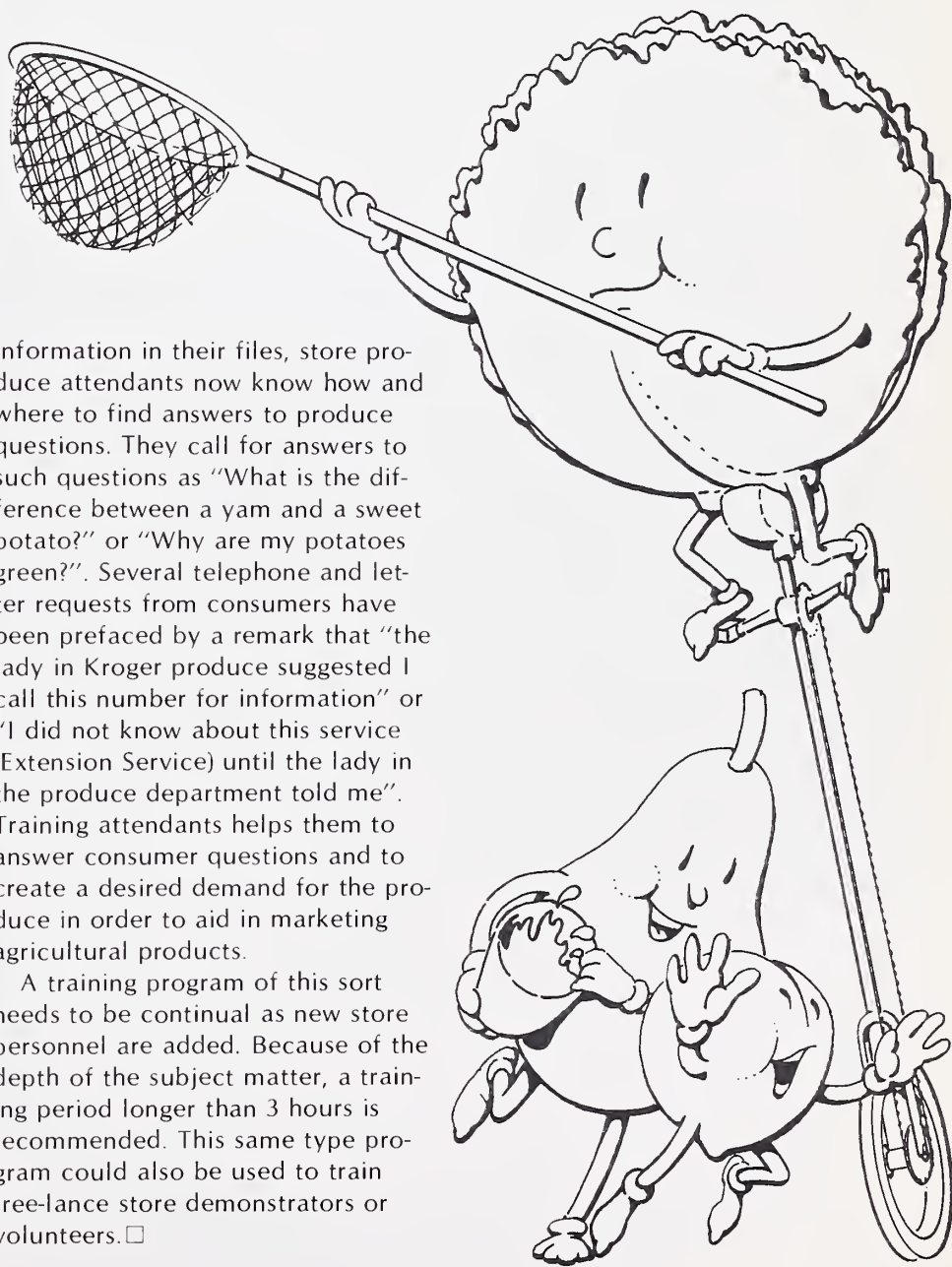
As a result of these Extension training sessions, the produce attendants are more confident in answering questions from consumers. They feel personal contact with the customers has been an asset in moving quality perishable produce.

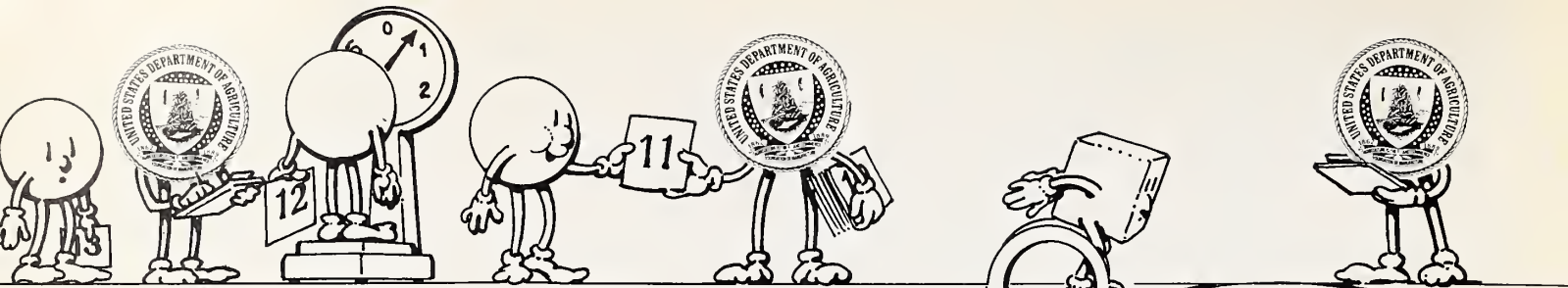
Additional Contacts

A greater awareness of Extension and what it has to offer resulted from the training. If they can't find

information in their files, store produce attendants now know how and where to find answers to produce questions. They call for answers to such questions as "What is the difference between a yam and a sweet potato?" or "Why are my potatoes green?". Several telephone and letter requests from consumers have been prefaced by a remark that "the lady in Kroger produce suggested I call this number for information" or "I did not know about this service (Extension Service) until the lady in the produce department told me". Training attendants helps them to answer consumer questions and to create a desired demand for the produce in order to aid in marketing agricultural products.

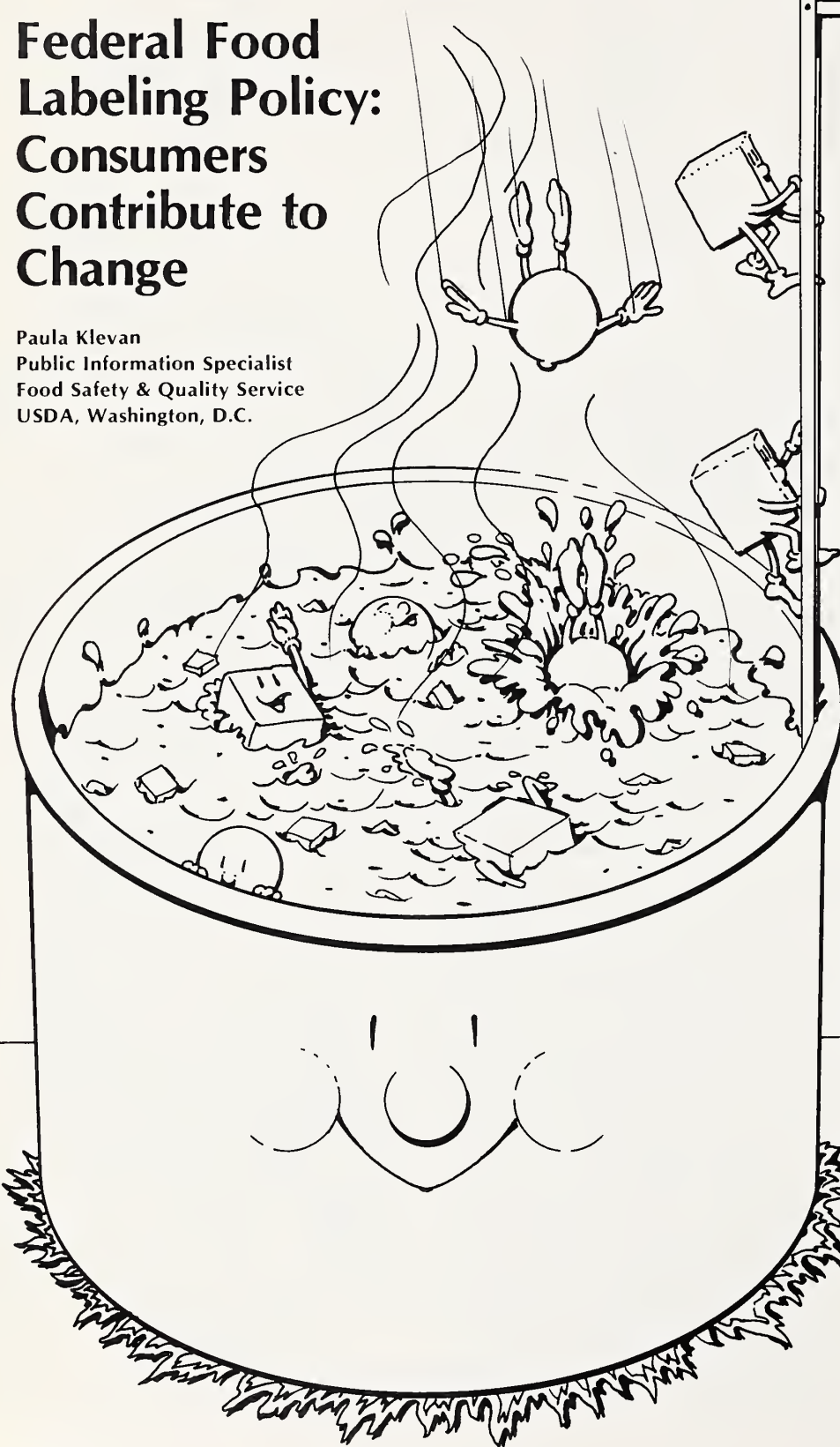
A training program of this sort needs to be continual as new store personnel are added. Because of the depth of the subject matter, a training period longer than 3 hours is recommended. This same type program could also be used to train free-lance store demonstrators or volunteers. □





Federal Food Labeling Policy: Consumers Contribute to Change

Paula Klevan
Public Information Specialist
Food Safety & Quality Service
USDA, Washington, D.C.

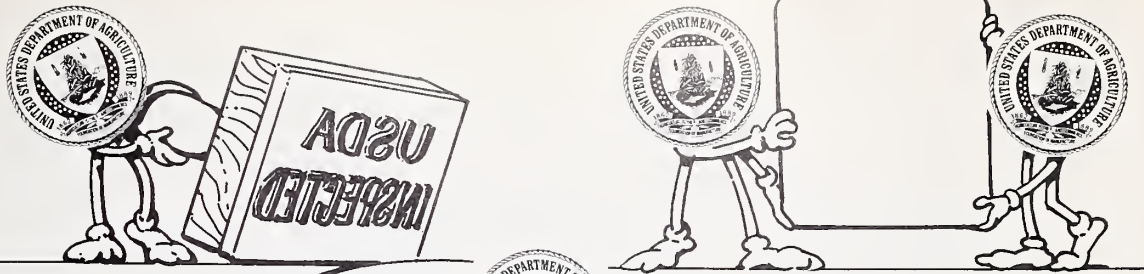


More than half of all the foods available in American supermarkets are processed in some manner. Where once a sniff, a squeeze, or even a glance told consumers all they needed to know about a food, today they need to carefully scrutinize product labels.

On December 19, 1979, Carol Tucker Foreman, assistant secretary of agriculture for food and consumer services, USDA, and officials of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), unveiled a major government-wide effort to improve food labeling.

"This is the most important action in this area in over 40 years," Foreman said.

For the first time, the three federal agencies responsible for food labeling worked together to update existing labeling laws and regula-



tions. And—for the first time, consumers had an opportunity to fully participate in this policy-making process.

“The American consumer knows more today about the effects of diet on health than most scientists knew only a few decades ago,” said Foreman. “This knowledge is essential because the foods we eat now are not the simple foods of yesteryear.”

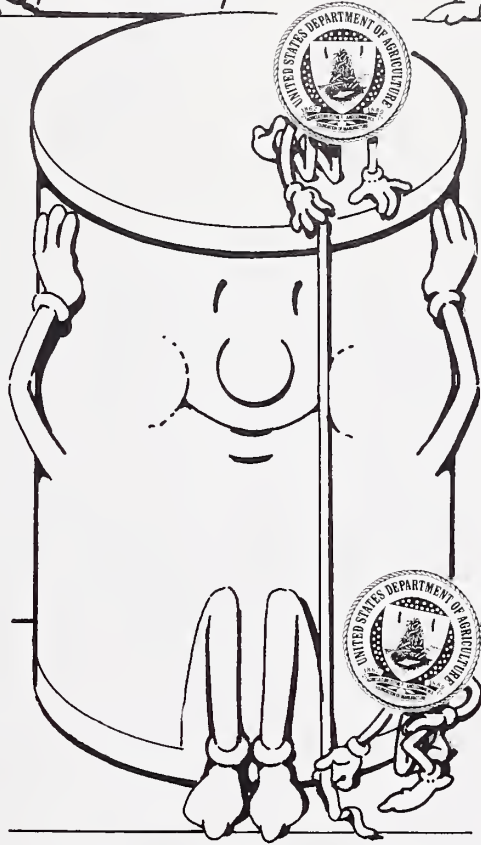
Responsibility

Food labeling is the shared responsibility of three agencies. USDA’s Food Safety and Quality Service (FSQS) regulates the labeling of meat and poultry products. FDA handles all other food products. FTC ensures that food advertising is both truthful and accurate.

In the past, these agencies have not fully coordinated their regulatory actions. They also have had to deal with recent dramatic changes in food processing armed only with labeling laws passed more than 40 years ago. The result: a confusing and inadequate food labeling system.

Foreman said the agencies decided that if they are to really serve consumers, they ought to write regulations that are as consistent as they possibly can be. “Then we thought,” she said, “if we’re going to write regulations about labels for consumers, it’s important to find out what consumers want.”

In 1978, the agencies initiated an intensive information-gathering campaign, holding public hearings across the country. Individual consumers and consumer groups in Wichita, Kans.; Little Rock, Ark.; Washington, D.C.; San Francisco, Calif.; and Boston, Mass.; had an opportunity to express their views about food labeling.



The agencies also invited written comments, and FDA conducted a food shopper survey. Hundreds of consumers testified; more than 9,000 put their thoughts in writing.

“The fundamental purpose behind food labeling is consumer education,” said Foreman, “so we were really pleased to find consumers so responsive to our call for help.”

Consumer Concerns.

Less than 10 percent of the respondents expressed specific concerns about present food labeling policies. This fact might suggest that consumers aren’t really interested in food labeling. Yet, the comments demonstrated that many consumers would like to know more about the foods they buy.

For example, the shopper survey showed that a majority of consumers are worried about preserva-

tives, artificial colors and flavors, salt, sugar, and other substances that may pose a health risk to some people. This implies that there are quite a few people who would read food labels if only they provided useful and usable information. Clearly, there is a gap between what people want to find and what they do find on food labels.

“Consumers told us that first and foremost, they want more ingredient information on food labels, and they would like this information to be expressed in amounts, if at all possible,” Foreman said.

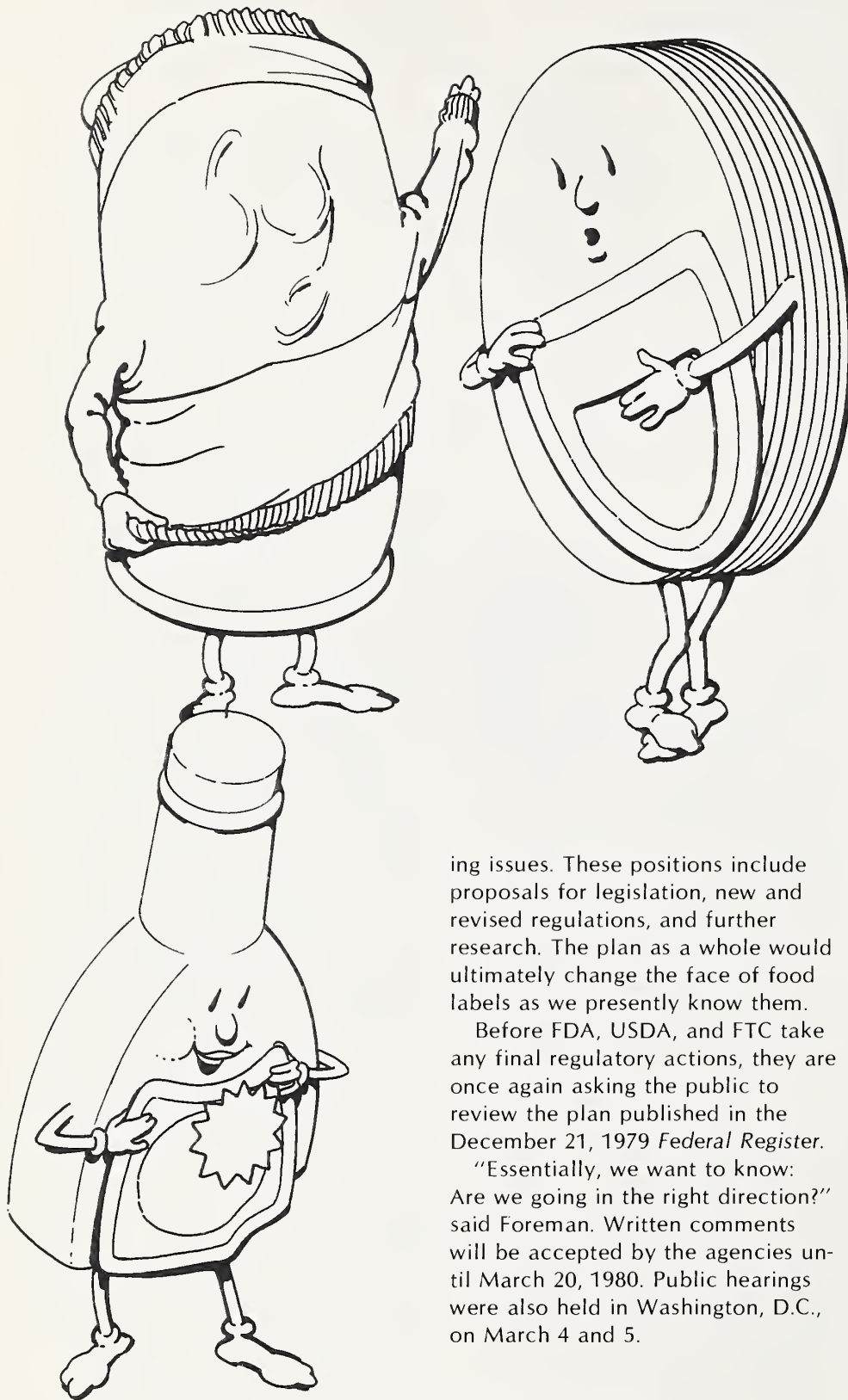
They also asked for more, improved nutrition labeling, information about when product freshness is expected to change (open date labeling) to appear on more foods, and greater federal control over food fortification practices.

Consumers also want to find more “readable” language on food labels. “Perhaps the most distressing problem facing consumers is the complex labeling language they must contend with daily,” Foreman said.

“The current labeling regulations do not fully reflect the scientific consensus that has developed linking diet to health,” said Foreman. “It has been suggested that we eat less salt, sugar, and fat. Consumers need informative food labeling so they can choose foods to help them make those changes.”

Response

In a direct response to consumers, the agencies evaluated all the data they collected, and reviewed current labeling laws and regulations with an eye toward modernizing and streamlining federal food labeling policy. They came up with tentative positions on a number of food label-



position to the plan, consumers can expect to see some changes in food labeling this time next year. Soon after the close of the comment period, FDA and USDA intend to publish a series of proposed regulations. One new labeling feature would help consumers make use of information that is presently required on the labels of all processed foods. Many consumers are apparently unaware that ingredients are listed in decreasing order by their weight—the first ingredient is the most abundant; the last ingredient, the least abundant. A mandatory label statement would explain this fact in simple language.

Another regulation that FSQS-USDA expects to propose would provide consumers with information on amounts of significant ingredients in meat and poultry products. These ingredients, such as the beef in beef stew and the turkey in turkey pot pie, would be expressed as percentages.

Other proposals would include measures to provide more complete information on fats and oils present in foods; provisions to label certain meat and poultry products with information on calories, fats, and other nutrients as part of the nutrition label; and mandatory open date labeling for such products as frankfurters, bacon, sausage products, and sliced luncheon meats.

"In some cases, it was clear what consumers want," Foreman said, "but we're going to have to ask Congress to pass some new laws in order to enable us to go that way."

Additional legislative authority is needed before the agencies can require that labels list the amounts of all ingredients present in foods, list all colors and spices by their specific names, and list flavors that have been found to cause health

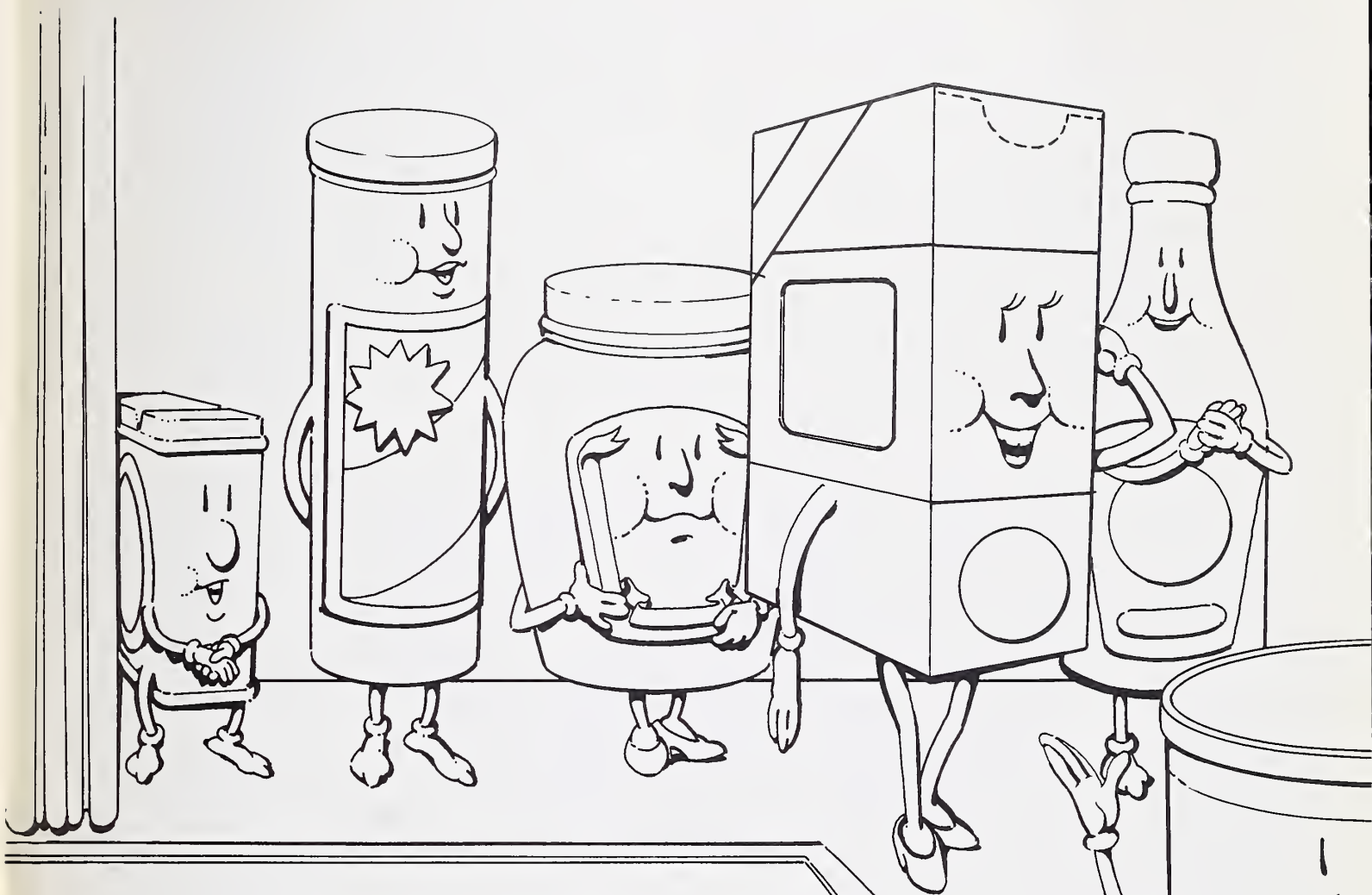
ing issues. These positions include proposals for legislation, new and revised regulations, and further research. The plan as a whole would ultimately change the face of food labels as we presently know them.

Before FDA, USDA, and FTC take any final regulatory actions, they are once again asking the public to review the plan published in the December 21, 1979 *Federal Register*.

"Essentially, we want to know: Are we going in the right direction?" said Foreman. Written comments will be accepted by the agencies until March 20, 1980. Public hearings were also held in Washington, D.C., on March 4 and 5.

Labeling Changes

Unless there is overwhelming op-



problems for some people. Other goals needing new laws include nutrition and open date labeling for more products, and greater federal control over food fortification.

In other areas, such as the labeling of imitation and substitute foods, and how to best present nutrition information, Foreman said the consumer response left the agencies without quite knowing where they ought to go. Therefore, FDA, USDA, and FTC are seeking additional public input, and will devote further study to these issues.

"I think that the most important thing about this subject is that we're trying to help the public shop better. We're trying to make information available to consumers. So clearly we couldn't go into a small room and make all those decisions

without asking them," Foreman concluded.

Although the new plan is a significant step toward changing the way foods are presently labeled, the process is far from over. The agencies are continuing to ask for public input during the 90-day comment period, and will open each regulatory proposal to public comment as well.

For additional information on the food labeling plan, write Food Safety and Quality Service Information, Room 1160-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250, or call (202) 447-9113.

Editor's Note: Extension agents across the Nation were actively involved in the public food labeling hearings discussed in this report. "Consumerism at the Grassroots", an article about one Extension agent and her involvement at the local level, appeared in the Fall 1979 issue of *Extension Review*.

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