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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

SUBJECT: "MAKE MEAT GO FARTHER." Information from home economists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Let's talk about meat again today, ~~the meat situation~~, and what you can do about it.

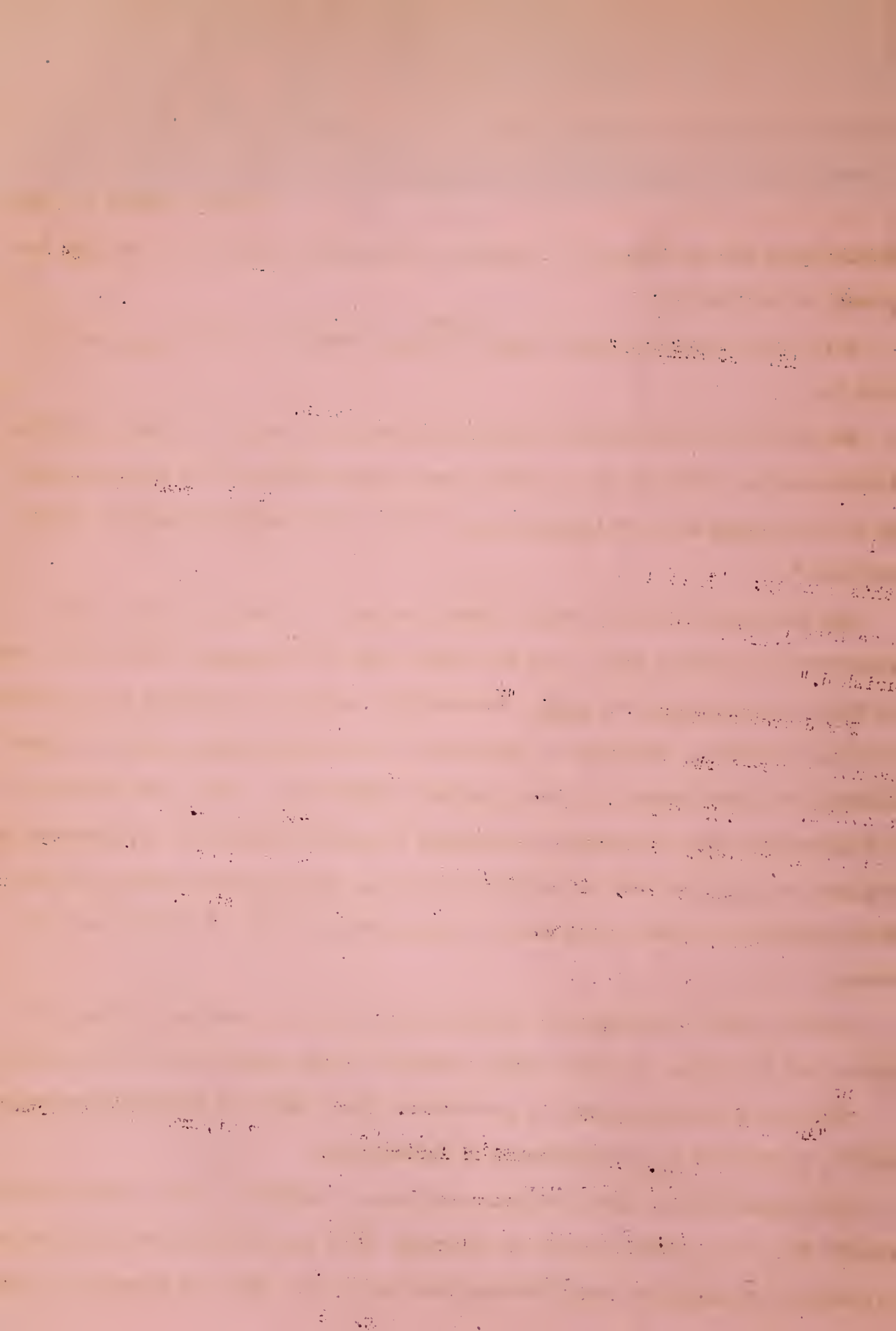
Not long ago the Secretary of Agriculture said this about the meat situation in this country: "We will be on shorter meat rations than we have been recently. But we have enough meat and other protein foods to keep American families well-nourished."

The Secretary went on to say: "Housewives can do as much to help as the Government can—perhaps more. For one thing, they can use more of foods that are plentiful, and less beef and pork. Fortunately, we have an abundance of the foods that supply protein. Supplies of cheese are at an all-time high. There are more chickens than ever before. If every American family has a cheese dish instead of pork chops more often than usual, or chicken instead of beefsteak, the pressure on pork and beef supplies will be eased a great deal. And although beans aren't an exact substitute for meat, they make a good nourishing dish. We have plenty of beans.

"Another thing that American housewives can do is to serve more stews, and hashes, and the like. In other words, when they do use meat, make it go farther."

When you do use meat, make it go farther. How? Here are suggestions from meat cookery specialists of the Department of Agriculture.

One suggestion is: Save trimmings and bones. Preparing a cut of meat for the pan may call for a certain amount of trimming. Save all well-flavored lean tidbits to make stew or grind for meat patties, hash and so on. Save the trimmings of fat.



If those fat trimmings have a good flavor, melt them down at low heat, strain, keep cold and use for cooking. Save all meat bones for making soup.

The second suggestion for making the most of meat is this: Always keep meat clean and cold so none will go to waste from spoilage and poor flavor. Fresh meat spoils quickly and easily. As soon as fresh meat, either ground or in a piece, arrives in the kitchen, take off the wrapping paper and store it, covered loosely, in a cold place. If you do not have a refrigerator or some other place just as cold, cook the meat promptly. Ground meat is very perishable. It spoils quickly even in a cold place so cook it within 24 hours. If meat in the piece is to be kept as long as 2 days, store it, if possible, at 45 degrees Fahrenheit or colder. Meat keeps even longer in the freezing compartment of a refrigerator.

The meat organs---liver, kidney, sweetbread, brains and so on---spoil more quickly than other cuts of meat, so they need prompt cooking.

Frozen meat requires special care, too. Thaw it slowly, and cook as soon as possible. Do not try to freeze it again after it has begun to thaw. Frozen meat, once thawed, spoils more quickly than fresh chilled meat.

Many housewives are confused how and where to keep cured ham. This is because the modern mildly cured ham differs from the old ham or strongly cured pork. Here's the difference:

Store mildly cured ham in the same way as fresh meat---that is, store it in the refrigerator or other cold place. Strongly cured meat needs a cool, dry, dark place screened from insects but not necessarily a refrigerator.

The third tip for making the most of meat is: Cook according to cut and fatness. A tender, well-fatted cut of meat cooks best by roasting or broiling in an uncovered pan. Add no water because water in a covered pan makes steam, and steam forces out juice and makes meat lose flavor and weight. Tender, well-fatted meat holds its juices, and cooks perfectly in an open pan at moderate heat.

Tough meat, on the other hand, requires long, slow cooking in a covered pan with water or steam. So turn the less tender cuts into pot roast, stew, or some other braised dish. Or, grind them and then cook like tender meat. Meat cooked in water or steamed is juicier if it cools in the juice for an hour or longer.

Now the fourth tip for making the most of meat: Cook with moderate heat. If you've been cooking with high heat, you have probably been losing more juice from meat and shrinking meat more than necessary. Moderate heat cooks meat evenly and makes it tender. And moderate heat keeps cooking loss low, so more meat is left to serve for each pound purchased. Browning meat develops the rich flavor, to be sure, but it's likely to cause more loss in cooking.

To make the most of food value and flavor, cook meat until tender but don't overcook. Cook stuffed roasts, and braised or stewed cuts until the meat is tender when speared with a fork or a skewer. Pork must be cooked well done as a health safeguard.

Here's still another tip: Use different seasonings in meat dishes. Try new flavors. Garden herbs and other seasonings add zest to many a homely dish at little or no cost. Here are some of the seasonings especially good with meat: Onion, garlic and tomato sage, thyme, sweet marjoram, basil, leaf savory, mint, and parsley, fresh or dried, from your garden; celery tops and seed, fresh or dried, bay leaf, caraway seed, cloves, pepper, paprika, green pepper, curry, and horseradish. In wartime you may not be able to find all these on the grocer's shelf, but you can grow many yourself.

Then, too, you have many ways to stretch meat. You can stretch it with a sauce like cream sauce, or tomato sauce, or brown sauce. You can stretch it with gravy. You can stretch it by adding vegetables. You can stretch meat by combining with breadcrumbs, rice, spaghetti, biscuit or pie crust and potato. Tidbits that make a meat pie one day can make chop suey the next day, or a baked spaghetti dish another day. Experiment with stretching. It's an art worth knowing especially in wartime.

Last tip on making meat go farther: Send to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. for the bulletin called "Meat for Thrifty Meals," No. 1908. It's free—and full of recipes for making the most of meat.

