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# Homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE

Thursday, April 6, 1944.

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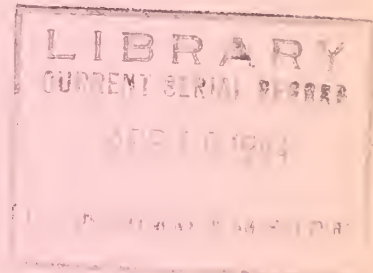
QUESTION BOX:

No expiration dates on red and blue stamps?  
How use shopping price lists?  
How get extra shoes for children?  
Why different ceiling prices?

ANSWERS FROM:

OPA

--ooOoo--



As homemakers generally do most of the family buying, they bring up a good many questions about shopping for foods and other things under wartime conditions. Today's mail bag has questions about ration stamps, price lists, shoes for children, and ceiling prices. All these questions are answered by OPA---your wartime price and rationing agency.

On top of the pile is a letter from a woman who says: "I understand that there are no more expiration dates on red and blue ration stamps. Is this true?"

Yes, it is true, says OPA. When you want to buy meats, fats, oils, and processed fruits and vegetables now, you need no longer worry as to whether or not your stamps have run out. And you don't need to rush to the store the last minute before a certain date to use your stamps. From now on the red and blue stamps in War Ration Book Four will be good indefinitely just as the tokens are.

There isn't any change in the rate at which stamps become good. You can continue to budget your purchases of rationed foods on the basis of three red stamps, worth 30 points altogether, every second Sunday, and five blue stamps, worth 50 points altogether, the first of every month. But if, for one reason or another you don't use all the stamps you are entitled to before the next ration stamps become valid, you can still use them, later on. That will be a boon to the homemaker when unexpected company turns up!



Using tokens for small change in rationing has made it possible to remove expiration dates on stamps. Before we had tokens, the only stamps that could be given in change were the one point stamps. Customers who spent their one-point stamps couldn't get larger stamps changed. Now, with tokens for change, store-keepers will have an easier time, and especially will be relieved of the heavy load of business just before an expiration date fell due.

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Next we have a letter about ceiling prices. This homemaker says: "I want to follow ceiling prices when I market, but often they are not placed where they are easy to read. Or I may be in a hurry. Wouldn't it be better if we house-wives had some way of getting the prices to look over before we go to market?"

By now your local War Price and Rationing Board probably has "shoppers' price lists." You will be able to get this list free by calling at the office of the local board. This list is about the same as the community price list which OPA gives your grocer to hang up in his store, but it's printed on both sides of the page. It tells the OPA ceiling prices for four store price groups.

When you have this list, you can check over the prices for most of the foods you want to buy, such as bread, butter, canned milk, canned and packaged foods, and so on. Then you will know instantly if the storekeeper is selling above the ceiling price. Don't hesitate to call it to his attention or ask your local War Price and Rationing Board if the selling price is higher than your list or ceiling price for the type of store in which you shop.

Now for a letter from a distressed mother. "I have two boys who are very hard on their shoes. I have their shoes resoled, and try to make them last as long as possible, but they wear the shoes out or outgrow them before the next ration stamp can be used. I often use my own shoe stamps to buy the boys extra shoes, but that leaves me with no stamps. Can anything be done about this?"

Yes, the OPA says, there is a provision by which growing children, industrial workers and others who need special or additional shoes may get shoe stamps. If



one of your children needs shoes and you have spent the family quota of stamps, you may write to your local War Price and Rationing Board for an application form for a special shoe stamp. Fill out the form and mail it back.

Local boards may grant this special shoe stamp to an applicant who has less than two pairs of wearable shoes that will fill his need. This applies to children's shoes, adults' shoes for general wear, and, in a few cases, to shoes required for health reasons. Since extra rations must be limited to wartime needs, of course no one can get extra shoe stamps just to be in style or look better dressed.

We've time for one more question on buying problems under rationing and ceiling prices. "Why are price ceilings different in different stores in the same town for the same articles?"

This difference in prices between different kinds of stores has always existed. Homemakers and retailers realize this and so does OPA. So in setting price ceilings, all food stores were divided into four "OPA price groups," to allow for differences in store size and methods of doing business. The small neighborhood stores usually fall into group one or two; the larger stores into group three or four. Every store in the same group in your community observes the same ceiling prices, and must post those prices.

If you want to know the price group of your store, look for the OPA sign which the store manager must display. This sign says "Our ceiling prices are in OPA price group one, two, three or four," --- whatever the store is. If it's a "self-service" and "cash-and-carry" store, it has very few clerks and no customer bookkeeping or credit costs, and no delivery expenses. Such stores have always offered lower prices. Grocers may not charge more than the ceiling prices for stores in their OPA price group, but they may charge less, if business conditions permit.

