homemakers' chat
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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

TUESDAY, AUGUST 19, 1941

QUESTION BOX	Answers from
What causes "buttery" ice cream? Pickles and relishes versus canned vegetables Iron kettle discolors tomatoes What side up for roasting chicken? Directions for fruit butter	dairy scientists and home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture

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Qustions and more questions from the mailbag today with answers from scientists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

The first question comes from a housewife who complains that the ice cream she has been making at home has a buttery texture. She writes: "Can you tell me what could cause ice cream to be buttery? The cream I've been freezing lately seems to have little bits of butter all through it. My neighbor uses the same recipe, but she never has this trouble."

Ice cream specialists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture say a buttery texture is the result of churning cream before it freezes. The trouble may be that the cream misture is not cold when you put it in the freezer. It takes a little time to chill. And during that time the turning of the freezer churns the cream. Or the trouble may be that you turn the freezer too fast at first. That may also churn the cream before it has time to freeze. You can avoid this buttery texture by having the cream misture well chilled before you pour it in the freezer, and then by turning it slowly at first.

Now to answer the lady who asks about the food value of pickles and relishes compared to the food value of canned vegetables. She writes: "My family likes pickles and relishes better than plain canned vegetables. If I put up more pickles and relishes this summer, won't they take the place of vegetables in next winter's meals?"

The answer from nutrition scientists is: No, indeed. Pickles and relishes are appetizers. They are too highly flavored to eat except in small amounts. And they contain very little food value -- nothing to compare with the minerals and vitamins in good canned vegetables. Pickles and relishes are extras or luxuries on the canning budget.

Here's another food question. A homemaker writes: "I cooked some tomatoes in an iron frying pan the other day, and they turned so dark in color I didn't dare use them. Will you tell me whether cooking in iron poisons tomatoes?"

No, cooking in iron does not poison tomatoes, or make them dangerous to eat. The acid in the tomatoes acts on the iron and may change the color so that the tomatoes are not attractive looking, but they are not harmful.

Let's turn now to a question about roasting a chicken. A young housewife writes: "I don't know whether a chicken should go in the oven on its back or on its breast."

Meat cookery scientists of the Department of Agriculture say: Start roasting the bird with the back up and the breast down -- a little sidewise or squarely on the back depending on the shape of the bird. Every half hour turn the bird for even cooking, and baste with the pan-drippings or with melted butter or other fat. When the bird is started with one side of the breast down, turn it in order from one side to the other side, then breast up and repeat. For birds started squarely on the breast, turn alternately breast up and then breast down.

That reminds. Very often letters ask how to turn a bird in the over without breaking the skin. Here's how. Use clean folded clothes in each hand and lift the bird at the head and foot. Don't use a fork or other sharp utensil that would tear the skin.

You'll find the answer to most of your questions about cooking chicken in the

leaflet called "Poultry Cooking" published by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. As long as the free supply lasts, you are welcome to a copy. Just send a postcard with your address and ask for "Poultry Cooking." Address the postcard to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

Last question for today: "Where can I get directions for making fruit butters of various kinds?"

Answer: From another publication of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Write for a bulletin called, "Homemade Jellies, Jams and Preserves." The number is 1800. Copies are free as long as the supply holds out.

And that finishes our questions for today.