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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

QUESTION BOX:

How make "Hopping John"?
What caused crack in wooden bowl?
How make liver sausage?

ANSWERS FROM:

↑ Date
Scientists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture

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Homemakers ask just as many questions at holiday as at other times of year.

The mail bag today brings one on making that favorite New Year's dish in the South, Hopping John.... a question about a wooden bowl that cracked.... and a request from a farmer's wife for a recipe for liver sausage. Answers are from scientists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

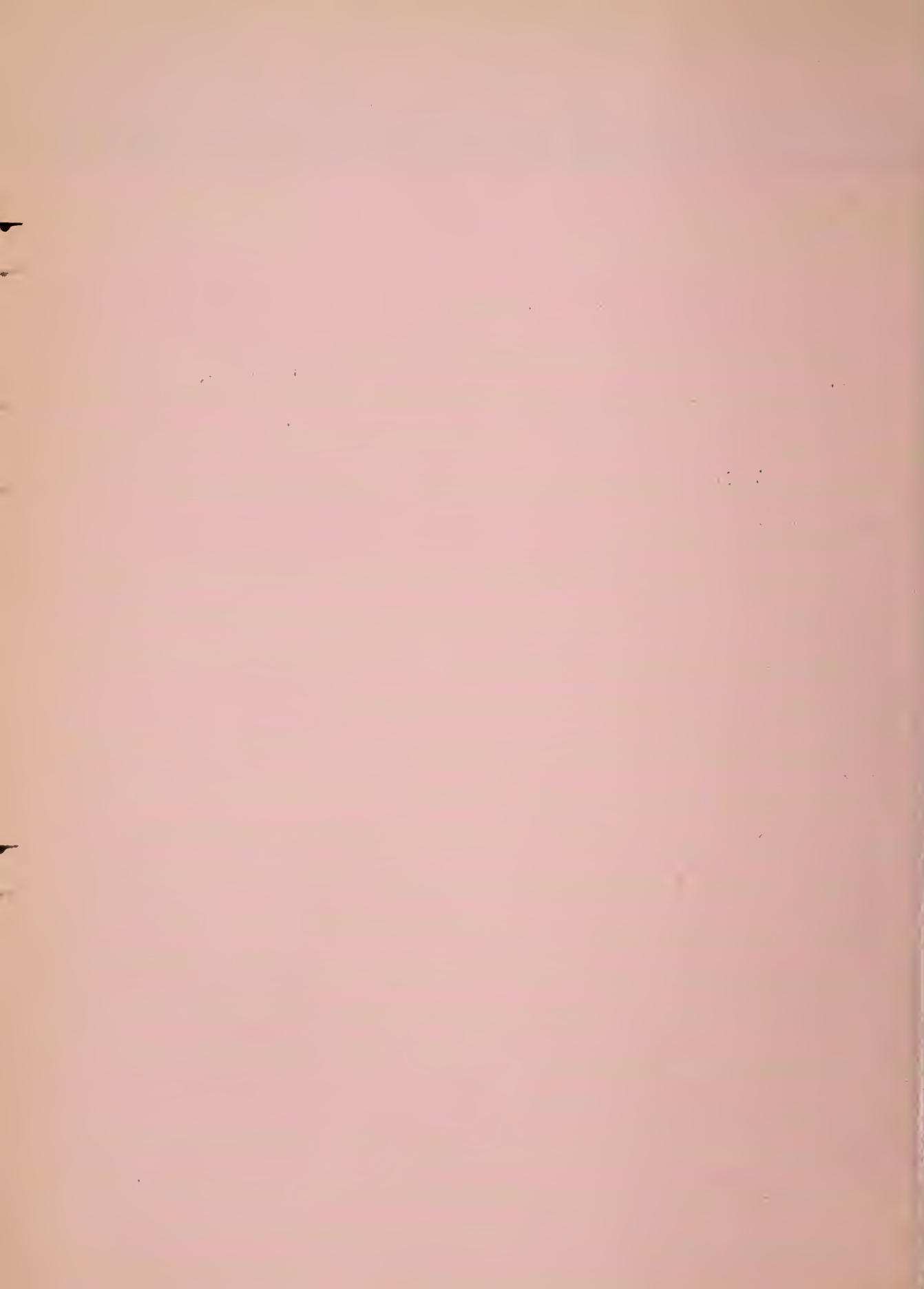
In different parts of the country, special dishes go with special days... and here's a timely question now that New Year's Day is right around the corner.

"I've been told that the traditional New Year's dish in the Deep South is "Hopping John". I should like to know how to make it."

"Hopping John" is a mixture of black-eyed peas, or beans, and rice flavored with a ham knuckle. Here is a recipe for making enough Hopping John for 5 or 6 people. It's from home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Wash and soak dried black-eyed peas or beans overnight in enough water to cover them. Cook a ham knuckle in 2 quarts of water for 2 hours. Then add 1 cup of the soaked peas or beans. Cook until the peas are almost tender. Remove the ham, add 1 cup of washed rice, and salt and peper to season. Boil gently about 20 minutes, or until the rice is soft, and the liquid almost cooked away. Serve on a hot platter topped with pieces of the ham.

In the South the tradition is that Hopping John on New Year's Day brings prosperity for the year. The home economists don't make any quarantees about that. They just say that Hopping John is a filling and economical dish, and an easy holiday dish, too, since it's all served on one platter. A side dish of greens would



round out the menu nicely, with fruit for dessert.

Next comes a question about the care of a salad bowl. "I have two beautiful hand-turned wooden salad bowls. One has cracked. Please tell me what caused the cracking, and how to avoid such a misfortune in the other bowl."

Wood specialists of the Department of Agriculture say the bowl probable cracked because it was put in hot dish water or left standing with water or liquid salad dressing in it. Most of the finer wooden bowls are finished with a thin transparent lacquer or varnish. Some are waxed. If the wax coating or the varnish is melted off by hot water or acid, the wood is no longer protected from cracking.

Remember that the curved shape of the wooden bowl was probable carved or "turned" on a lath out of a solid block of wood. The grain runs in different directions.... that is, at some points the wood is cut with the grain, at others, across it. If the bowl gets watersoaked it swells, then shrinks as it dries, and splits where it is weakest.

The best way to care for a wooden bowl is to wipe it out with a damp cloth after using, then dry it thoroughly. Avoid putting the bowl down into water, or letting it stand with moist salad materials in it after the meal is over.

The third question is from a farm housewife who wants to make liver sausage at butchering time and asks for full directions. This question is answered by a meat specialist of the Department of Agriculture.

Liver sausage is one of several products you can make from small parts of pork that are hard to bone unless the meat is cooked off. The head, feet, and other parts have considerable meat on them. When you cook them, they also give a fine jelly-like stock which you can use in the sausage and in other ways.

Every bit of the meat you plan for the liver sausage must be well-trimmed and thoroughly washed before you start cooking it. For liver sausage, put the head, tongue, skin, heart and small pieces of trimmings on to cook first, and simmer them until the flesh is tender enough to come away from the bone easily. Now scald the liver for about 10 minutes in the liquid the other meat cooked in. The liver gives

the sausage its distinctive flavor. Use up to one-fifth as much liver as other meat. Don't overcook your materials this first time or your finished liver sausage won't have good texture.

Grind all the cooked materials, including the liver, moderately fine. Weigh them. Add some of the liquid they cooked in.... about one-fifth as much by weight as you have meat. Use enough of the soup or liquid to make the mixture soft, but not sloppy. Season to taste and mix thoroughly.

Now about the standard proportions for seasoning. For 10 pounds of ground meat you would need about a half cup of salt,... about 5 level teaspoons of black pepper.... and, if you like spicy and hot flavors, 4 to 6 level teaspoons of sage, ... one teaspoon of red pepper,... and one teaspoon of allspice. Taste the cooked, seasoned mixture to see if the amounts of seasoning are enough.

After you season the sausage and mix it well, stuff it into beef casings and simmer in water until it floats. This may take from 10 to 30 minutes. Plunge the cooked sausage into cold water, chill it for at least 30 minutes, and hang it up to drain. If you are not putting the sausage into casings, recook the mixed seasoned sausage for 10 or 15 minutes, pour into shallow pans, and chill promptly.

You can use any soup you have left after making the liver sausage to make a kind of corn-meal mush called "panhas." The recipe for this--as well as for different kinds of sausage-- is in the free bulletin called "Pork on the Farm", Number 1186. A postcard addressed to the U. S. Department of Agriculture at Washington, D. C. will bring this bulletin to you, as long as the free supply lasts.

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