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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Thursday, July 2, 1942.

ANSWERS FROM:

Home economists and plant
scientists of the U. S.
Department of Agriculture

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

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In 3Hh
QUESTION BOX:

Loss of vitamin B-one in cooking?
Clinkers in firebox?
Care of dusters?
What are cheese dreams?

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Preventing waste is one of the chief jobs of the housewife these days, and the mail bag reflects concern over wasted vitamins, wasted fuel and equipment, wasted food. Many of these questions are answered for us by scientists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Our first question is from a woman who wants to know if there is much loss of vitamin B-one in cooking.

The home economists of the Department say that it depends on the kind of food, the way you prepare it, how high a temperature you use cooking it, how long you cook it, and so on. In general, they say, when you cook vegetables by the usual kitchen methods you destroy about 20 percent of the vitamin B-one.

If you use soda in cooking you may do even more damage. So don't use soda. Also, B-one readily passes from the food into the cooking water. The amount you lose in this way varies according to the kind of food, the way you prepare it, how long you cook it, and how high a temperature you use. Usually you leave behind more than 25 percent of vitamin B-one in the cooking water, so make some use of it. For example, serve it with the vegetables, or make it into a sauce or gravy, or add it to soups.

B-one is destroyed to a greater extent in cooked meats than in cooked vegetables. That's because you have to use higher temperatures and a longer cooking time than for vegetables. You destroy very little B-one in frying meat as chops,

compared with the amount you destroy in roasting. That's because in frying the cooking time is short and the temperature not very high. In general, the loss of B-one in cooking meats is roughly 40 percent.

Next we have a couple of practical questions around the house. The first question is: "What is the best way to get clinkers off the walls of the firebox in my cookstove? I burn hard coal."

The household equipment specialists of the Department explain that ash from coal melts at high temperatures, and forms clinker, which fuses and sticks to the fire box lining. If you try to break the clinker off with a poker, you may crack the fire box lining. The way to remove the clinker easily is this: Wait until you have a good clear red fire. Then draw the hot red coals away from the firebox lining. Drop in about a quart of oyster shells or one pint of lime, close to the door. Close the door and keep the fire hot. The lime, or the lime in the oyster shells, will make it easy to tap off the clinker with the poker when the fire is out.

Another question brings up the matter of conserving dusters and dust mops, like all the other home cleaning equipment we must try to make last. "Please give correct care of dusters and dust mops, both oiled and not oiled."

On this point the home economists answer "A dirty dust cloth gathers no dust," and say that correct care for cleaning cloths and mops is simply a matter of keeping them clean so you don't smear the surfaces you dust.

The best dustcloths are lintless, like fine soft wool, linen, or soft cotton knitted material or cheesecloth. Silk and rayon do not make good dusters. They do not take up dust as well as other fabrics. Another tip,--while you're dusting, stop and shake out the duster often.

Wash all dustcloths frequently in hot soapy water, before they get very dirty. Rinse and dry them thoroughly before you put them away.

You wash oiled dusters often, too, and afterwards, recoil them. You may have to use several suds to get them thoroughly clean. To oil a dust cloth, just put a few drops of lemon oil or paraffin oil on the cloth and put it in a closed can for 24 hours. Of course you store all oiled cloths in closed metal or glass containers because of the danger of the oil catching on fire suddenly.

Care for a dry mop or dust mop just the same way as a dust cloth. Use a vacuum cleaner to take loose dirt out of the head, or shake the mop out -of- doors, then wash. Dry the mop out-of-doors if you can. It's easier to wash or oil the mop head if you remove it from the handle. Oil a dust mop by enclosing the head in a can after putting on a few drops of oil. Store in the same container. Oil mops need frequent washing.

Using foods that are abundant is another way of preventing waste. The government has told us recently that there's plenty of cheese, - enough and to spare, both for our Allies and ourselves. And here's a cheese question. A homemaker wants to know if there's such a thing as "cheese dreams" except the kind you have in your sleep.

And the home economists reply that cheese dreams to eat are very good, and easy to make. You slice bread thin-- as many pieces as you think will be eaten,-- remove the crusts, and without buttering make into sandwiches with thin even slices of American cheddar cheese for the filling. Season with salt and a drop or two of tobasco sauce. Now melt enough butter in a skillet to cover the bottom, and brown the sandwiches delicately and rather slowly on both sides. Add more butter if necessary, but be careful not to let the butter get too hot and brown the sandwiches before the bread is heated through and the cheese melted. These "cheese dreams" go well with luncheon or supper salads, and you can make them in a jiffy. If you dream at all after eating one, you'll dream of having more!

