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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

MONDAY, January 1, 1940

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "THE 1940 FOOD BUDGET". Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Each year as the chimes ring in the New Year, millions of resolutions are made---some for public purposes, some purely personal--some gay, some serious. One resolution, I happened to hear about, is both personal and serious. It's the resolution made by a young homemaker to "do something" about the family food budget.

A few days ago she wrote me and asked, "Can you give me a workable plan for feeding my family the best possible diet at a reasonable cost? I'd like to have some method that I could start using on the first of the year..."

The first thing I did was to send her a copy of a bulletin put out by the Federal Bureau of Home Economics. It's called, "Diets to Fit the Family Income." And that title exactly describes the bulletin. It contains weekly market lists to be used in planning diets at four different levels of income---ranging from the very low cost diet for emergency use, to the liberal diet that provides for a varied menu.

The woman, who wrote the letter, went on to explain that her husband worked in an office where he sat at his desk all day. But she said that he got some exercise by walking back and forth to work---gardening in the summer---tending the furnace and shoveling snow in winter. She, herself, does her own housework--including the washing and ironing.

So I suggested that she use the recommended weekly plan for a family of two moderately active adults. This plan gives the amount of the different kinds of

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food she will need to buy during the week in order to meet all their food requirements.

Some women enjoy keeping an accurate record of the weight and the cost of every bit of food they buy throughout the year. But others don't like to bother with records all of the time. I suggested that this woman who wrote the letter, keep records for two or three weeks--at least. If she compares her records regularly with the suggested weekly plans in the bulletin--this should be long enough to serve as a guide for planning well-balanced meals. It would also show what proportion of their total family income she must spend for food.

Now if you're interested in starting a food budget, you can get your free copy of this bulletin by writing to the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D. C. Just ask for Farmers' Bulletin 1757--that's F.B. 1757. And it's called "Diets to Fit the Family Income."

You'll be able to work out the marketing plan for your own family from the lists that are given--unless you have some special diet problem. First find the weekly plan at the cost you can afford. Then take each of the individual members in your family and find the column that describes them--their sex, age, and activity. Add up the amounts of the different kinds of foods needed by each person. And there you have the total weekly marketing order.

Of course, the diet plans refer to food under general headings, such as "milk" or "flour and cereals." So you'll have to decide for yourself what form of milk you will buy and what kinds of flour and cereal you will get.

And if you're bargain hunting for food values you will want to remember that you can buy nutritious foods at different levels of price. For example, one kind of green vegetable may cost less than another, and still be equally good. Beef liver is less expensive than sirloin steak--yet it contains more food values.

Now I also have some other news about food today. You've heard that the difference between a good diet and one that is just ordinary--is chiefly that there are more protective foods in the good diet. In other words, the good diet calls for plenty of eggs and airy products and lots of fruit and vegetables--especially the green and yellow kinds.

Here's the news about those particular foods...

The United States Bureau of Agricultural Economics estimates that the .. nation's table will have an ample supply of them for the early part of 1940. Egg supplies are expected to be adequate and there should be all the dairy products that we'll be needing. The fresh winter vegetables--cabbage, cauliflower, kale, celery, carrots, and others--are plentiful. There is also a good supply of canned vegetables in storage. (And don't overlook canned vegetables. They help to bring variety into winter meals.) Fresh fruits are abundant, also. And oranges and grapefruit deserve special attention for their usual bountiful crop.

Although pork and wheat aren't really "protective" foods, here's some news about them, too. There's been a great increase in the production of pork. In fact, pork has raised the total meat supply higher than it has been for several years. Wheat is also plentiful--all we need for bread and cereals here in the United States, and enough left over for export.

I'd like to go back and tell you more things from that bulletin on planning diets, but it would take too long. Anyway if you're interested in using the food plans for checking the diet of your own family--I suggest that you write to the United States Department of Agriculture in Washington, D. C. for your free copy. It's Farmers' Bulletin 1757, and it's called "Diets to Fit the Family Income."

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