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Tuesday, Jan. 5, 1942

Farm Security Administration

advisors and home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture

ANSWERS FROM:

QUESTION BOX?

How keep track of family spending? How save electric iron?

How avoid repeating menus?

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Sometimes a housewife says to herself, "If I could only run by home without having to consider what other people do !" But homes and families are not like that. Other people take part in the family life, and today's questions show some of the household problems that come up where different people are involved.

For example, one questioner has the problem of keeping track of family money when different members of the family use one fund.

Another complains that several people use her electric iron and often damage it. A worried mother complains that at school her child often gets the same foods for school lunch at noon and home supper at night. Help in answering these questions comes from home economists and others in the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

The first week in January is a good time to set family money problems straight, so let's take the family pocketbook question first.

"Different members of our family have to handle family money at times. I keep the accounts and I have a hard time keeping track of what has been spent. Can you suggest any plan to make it easier to keep records of family spending?"

A family conference where all members understand the problem is the first step in solving it. Everyone in the family should agree to be more reliable in reporting money transactions promptly to the one person chosen to keep the

 family accounts. This person is often the mother. She records family spendings under the proper headings in a family record book.

That's the way it's done by farm families working with advisors of the Farm Security Administration of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. When one person keeps the books, she can insist on reports in writing from other members of the family. And a record book that's all in one handwriting looks neater than one which different people write in.

Here's a plan for family account-keeping as worked out by a Colorado farm family. This plan may be helpful to you.

The mother in this family keeps the records. She puts a spindle or clip in every room in the house to receive bills or notes about money transactions. Every week before the mother works on the record book, she goes from room to room and gathers up all these slips; then she writes the items in the account book each under its proper heading.

This family also keeps records of home-raised food products eaten by the family. So the mother has tacked a blank on the inside of the kitchen cupboard door. Whenever any vegetables, fruits, eggs, chickens, or other foods come in, she writes down the amount and value of the food. She keeps these figures also as a permanent record in the yearly account book.

Now for that question about an electric iron used by several different people. Electric irons are precious these days, so it's very important to take good care of them. Here's the question:

"Our family is large and we have just one electric iron that the boys and girls both use for pressing. Though I try to keep watch of the iron and tell the children to take care, still it often gets out of order. Has the Government any bulletins on the correct way to use and care for an electric iron? I think such a bulletin would impress them more than my words."

Yes, there's a new bulletin on making your ironing equipment last longer.



Write to the U. S. Department of Agriculture at Washington, D. C. for a copy.

It is free while the free supply holds out. The three cardinal rules in caring for an electric iron are: Don't overheat it...don't drop it... and don't put it in water. When you overheat an electric iron, you waste current, create a fire hazard, and damage the heating element in it. Irons often overheat when you leave the ironing board without turning off the current. Turn the iron off when you leave if even for a short time.

Dropping an iron often breaks one of the connections inside. Then the iron won't heat. Also dropping an iron may break the thermostat, or throw it out of adjustment. Always set an iron down firmly on a stand, or on its heel rest... never on a slipperyor sloping place.

After you're through using an iron, let it cool, then wipe it with a damp cloth to clean it, and rub it dry. Never put the iron in water... That might damage the heating element and rust the metal.

From money matters and electric irons, let's switch to still another whole family problem. Here's a letter written by a mother that says:

"My little daughter gets a hot lunch at school every day. But every now and then our night meal happens to have about the same foods the school served at lunch. This means she has to eat some foods twice in the same day. I want her to have a balanced diet. So, how can I avoid this repeating of foods?"

Home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture answer that eating the same foods twice in one day may be monotonous, but it does not necessarily mean the diet is unbalanced. If this repeating happens often, perhaps you could call the school and find out in advance what the lunch menu is and plan your home meals to avoid the same food.

Menus for school lunches are probably made out for a week or more ahead. Your daughter's teacher can probably tell you if there's anyway for you to get the menu list for the lunches. Some schools send this list home regularly. Or you could bring your problem up at some Parent Teacher Association meeting. That completes the questions and answers for today.

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