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# Homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE

Thursday, May 18, 1944.

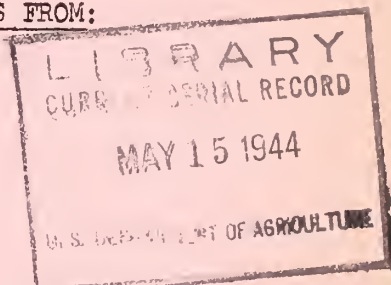
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QUESTION BOX:

What are ceiling prices?  
Where get shoppers' lists?  
New shoe stamp?  
Which canned vegetables point-free?  
Why is butter reduced in points?

ANSWERS FROM:

OPA



--ooOoo--

Just two years ago today, OPA put its general price control program into effect, to ward off wartime inflation. So this seems an appropriate day to devote to some of the recent questions that have come in on ceiling prices, ration points, and so on, OPA answers these questions for us.

Here's a letter from a housewife who says she doesn't understand just what is meant by "ceiling prices." And OPA explains this way:

"Ceiling prices" are simply the top prices dealers are allowed to charge for any articles that come under government price control. That means not only foods, but almost everything you use in your home and the parts and materials that go into the manufacture of a great many articles. These ceiling prices may be slightly different in different classes of stores, but whatever they are, the storekeeper must show them prominently.

Price controls help guard against inflation. If we had no price controls, every seller could charge what he thought he could get for what he had to sell. Those who had the most money could get all the desirable things, or force prices up to a point where people with fixed incomes that have not increased could not buy even necessities.

But ceiling prices have to be guarded. Everyone must cooperate in making them work, by refusing to buy anything above the correct ceiling price. Many homemakers have already taken the Home Front Pledge---to pay no more than ceiling prices. Ceiling prices are prominently displayed in all stores. And now housewives can get food



shopping lists to take to market, where they do most of their buying. These shoppers' lists show the ceiling prices for all common foods. And that brings us to our next question.

"I have heard that you can get a 'shoppers' price list' to use when you go to market. Where can I get one?"

You get the shoppers' price list from your War Price and Rationing Board. It's one sheet of paper, printed on both sides, and when you fold it, it fits conveniently into your purse, so it's not bulky to carry around. The items on this list cover about 40 percent of the foods most families buy. Some of the others do not have any ceiling prices, and for some, the prices change with the season, or the supply reaching a particular region.

When you go to the store you simply compare the posted selling price of any of the items you wish to buy with the ceiling prices on your own list, to make sure you are paying no more than you should. If prices are under the ceiling price, it's all right. The dealer may have reasons for charging less than the ceiling price, but he may not charge more.

As you know, OPA classifies retail food stores into four price groups, and the shoppers' list gives the ceiling prices for each group. Stores fall into different groups to allow for difference in size and methods of doing business.

Now for a question about shoe rationing. This homemaker says: "I don't understand about shoe rationing. I thought that low-priced children's shoes were unrationed beginning the first of May, and then OPA announced a new shoe stamp for the first of May. Will you please explain?"

The unrationed, low-priced children's shoes were only for a three-week period and that expires May 20. So if you need any shoes of that kind for your children you can still get them up to the end of this week. They come only in certain sizes, and must not cost more than \$1.60 a pair. The idea was to give parents a chance to buy some of these serviceable cheap shoes that have been passed over. Many people thought if they paid more the shoes would wear better, so these low-priced shoes



stayed on the shelves.

The new shoe ration stamp became valid May first for buying one pair of rationed shoes for anybody in the family, regardless of the size or the price of the shoes. It is Airplane Stamp number 2 in War Ration Book Three. It will continue good indefinitely. If you still have Airplane Stamp number One, that is also good indefinitely.

Next is a question about canned vegetables. "Which canned vegetables are now point-free?"

Eight additional rationed canned vegetables were made point-free April 30 and will remain on the "no-point" list through June 3, says OPA. These vegetables are: Tomatoes, corn, asparagus, spinach, and other leafy greens, beets, canned blackeye peas, and canned garbanzo dried beans. Waxbeans, green snapbeans and peas, which have been at zero point value for sometime continue. New supplies of some of these canned foods will soon come on the market and will need the space these vegetables now occupy. But point values will go up again for the new pack.

The last question is about butter. "Why is creamery butter now reduced to 12 ration points and other fats made still lower or point-free?"

OPA explains that butter is down to 12 ration points for several reasons. For one thing, more butter is made in the spring. Then the War Food Administration allowed 13 million more pounds of butter for civilians in April this year than we got in April a year ago. As long as butter took 16 ration points people used it sparingly because they also needed red points for meat. Storage companies began to build up their stocks, and when OPA saw there was at last enough for civilian demands at 12 points a pound, they reduced the point values.

Margarine is another good bread spread that has also been reduced---from 6 points to 3 points a pound, while all points have been off shortening, lard, and other fats and oils for several weeks, because supplies are good.

