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U. S. Department of Agriculture

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Thursday, March 25, 1937

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "MAKING MILK SAFE." Information from the Bureau of Dairy Industry, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Bulletin available, 1705-F, "Milk for the Family."

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Thirty years or so ago every progressive young mother, whether she lived in the city or the country, knew that to make the milk safe for her baby, she had to pasteurize it. She bought the best grade of milk she could get and the rack and kettle to hold the baby bottles. Then she made up her particular feeding formula every morning, sterilized the bottles, filled and pasteurized them very carefully in her home kitchen. The process was not difficult, but it took a little time. In a few years the big milk distributing companies freed the city mother from this daily task, by pasteurizing the milk before they delivered it.

Constant improvement in the management of pasteurization plants has greatly lowered infant mortality and lessened the sick rate among city children. At one time, the milk was pasteurized merely to make it keep sweet a little longer. Now it is processed by scientifically controlled methods whereby all disease producing bacteria are killed.

When people live in the less populous districts -- the small towns and villages -- the protection afforded by the city pasteurizing plant is often lacking. How can a mother be sure her children are getting safe milk? There are two possible courses open to her. She can do as the intelligent women a generation ago were doing -- pasteurize her own supply, whether she gets it from a local dairyman or from the family cows.

Or she can follow a suggestion recently made by O. E. Reed, Chief of the Bureau of Dairy Industry of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Mr. Reed deplored the fact that in many small towns and villages the milk is not pasteurized, and that in many cases there is no milk inspection or control of any kind.

"It may be possible," Mr. Reed suggests, "to establish small cooperative pasteurizing plants in such communities, where milk brought from the farms may be pasteurized, cooled, and then returned to the farm for consumption." If pasteurization is a good thing in a city area, it is equally good to protect the milk in a rural region, he argues. The chief reason it is not more generally practiced is lack of central pasteurizing plants.

Mr. Reed believes in safety first, every time, when it comes to the family milk supply. "The old-time dipped milk has practically disappeared," he says, "and the glass bottle or single-service container is set upon the

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doorstep daily. Thirty years ago, milk from city dairies sometimes soured within a single day. Now it can be kept for several days without impairment of its quality. Milk can now be brought for many hundreds of miles by fast train or auto truck, where formerly the producing centers were limited to the territory close to the cities.

"For this change from insanitary methods of handling milk to the present-day excellence of city distribution we can largely thank our health departments and some of the far-seeing members of the dairy industry. There used to be considerable opposition to inspection and control, but this has very largely disappeared. Market-milk producers are cooperating wholeheartedly with the enforcement officials. Research workers are constantly finding out new things about milk and the methods by which it may be handled in an economical manner to produce a better grade. Dairy equipment has improved."

It is quite generally believed that the safety factor provided by pasteurization far outweighs any possible disadvantages. It is customary to supplement milk in children's diets with orange juice or tomato juice, to make sure of a good supply of vitamin C.

Would you like to know how to pasteurize milk at home? The first step is to put it into bottles, if it is home produced, and fit them with clean paper caps. Each bottle should be a little underfilled as milk swells when it is heated. In the cap of one bottle punch a hole, and insert a thermometer. Then set all the bottles of milk on a rack in a pail filled with cold water nearly to the level of the milk, and heat until the thermometer in the milk registers 145 degrees Fahrenheit. Remove the pail from the heat and leave the bottles in the hot water for 30 minutes, reheating if that is necessary to keep the milk at 145 degrees. After the 30-minute period, replace the hot water gradually with cold until the milk has cooled, preferably using ice in the last water. After cooling, keep the bottles in the coolest place available.

Simple, isn't it? And yet this simple step will make a great difference in the safety and keeping quality of your milk. You will find the directions I have just given in a free bulletin published by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. It is Number 1705-F, "Milk for the Family," and in addition to instructions for taking care of milk and pasteurizing it, there are suggestions for using milk in sauces and soups, in beverages, batters, doughs, and desserts. If yours is one of those families which do not want to drink all the milk they should have every day, these suggestions will help to get more milk used in other ways.

Whether you pasteurize your milk yourself, or have it delivered at your home from a community pasteurizing plant or a city milk company, keep it cold, clean, and covered. Put it right into the coldest spot in your refrigerator. Determine where this is by actually taking the temperature of the box. The milk compartment should not go above 45 degrees Fahrenheit. If you have no refrigerator, do the best you can. Keep the milk in a cold well or a cold basement, and use it up promptly. Keep it covered to exclude not only dirt, bacteria, and spilled food, but also flavors and odors from other foods. Never mix new milk with old except for immediate use. Never pour back into a partly filled container milk that has been out in the air or on the table. When using milk in cooking, put the container away as soon as the required quantity is measured out.
