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# homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE

MONDAY, JANUARY 11, 1942

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SUBJECT: "NEWS NOTES," Information from agricultural economists marketing officials and home economists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

—ooOoo—

News notes from scientists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture are on schedule for this midwinter Monday.

First, a note about wartime soap coming on the market this new year. The soap you will buy in the months to come may not give suds as fast as the soap you have been used to. That is because the war stopped the huge imports of coconut oil that used to come into this country from the Pacific. And coconut oil has been a very important ingredient in soap because it made a soap that lathered quickly. The domestic oils now taking the place of coconut oil make soap that does not lather so quickly. These oils are cottonseed, soybean, flax and peanut, all coming from crops American farmers are raising to help the war effort.

So one of these days if the suds comes rather slowly when you rub on the soap, you will understand that this is just part of the war picture. Fortunately, the scientists say, the United States should have no shortage of soap such as there has been in some other countries. In the United States the supply of tallow and grease, not good enough for food but quite good enough for soap, is large. And beside this supply of inedible tallow and grease, there is the household fat and grease which women all over the country have been collecting and turning in to help make explosives. Manufacturers extract the glycerin from this fat for explosives. The fat left after the glycerin is out still is useful for making soap. So you don't have to worry about a soap shortage, though you may notice that the suds are a little slow.

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Now another note about a domestic oil that is taking the place of foreign oils imported before the war.

Salted peanuts--usually cooked in coconut oil--are now coming to market fresh out of a bath of peanut oil. That's only one example of the many ways that home front peanut oil is taking the place of oils the country used to import--coconut, palm, olive and so on. Abroad peanut butter is popular not only with American troops but in Great Britain and Russia where it is important because it is concentrated nourishment.

The war has brought the peanut into special prominence. This far the Department of Agriculture has bought 208 million pounds of peanut butter for Lend-Lease. Civilians in this country will probably eat more peanut butter than ever before this year because peanut butter is high in both protein and fat so helps pinch-hit for meat and also serves as a favorite for bread when butter is scarce.

The school lunch program fostered by the Department of Agriculture has an estimated use of about 9 million pounds of peanut butter a year, allowing a half pound each for the 7 million children to be fed.

As for oil, that has gained favor with housewives both as a cooking oil and a salad oil. It is particularly good for deep-fat frying. Industry uses peanut oil for shaving lotions, cosmetics, dyes, axle grease as well as for soap. And an important medical use is in massage for victims of infantile paralysis.

Now let's turn to a note about wartime blankets. As the war tightens up on supplies of wool, manufacturers look more and more toward mixtures of blends of different kinds of wool as one way of making this important fiber go farther. But before they make these mixtures, they--and the consumers who will buy them--want to know how they will wear, how much they will shrink in laundering, how well they will keep their warmth and strength.



Textile scientists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture have been making tests of blankets to find the answer to some of these questions. Using a Government hospital as a testing place the scientists have been testing 3 different wool mixtures in blankets to see how they stand up under hard hospital wear and frequent laundering. One mixture was good quality new wool and poor quality new wool. Another was good quality new wool and wool reprocessed from knit goods. The third was good quality new wool with mohair.

Of these 3 blends, the one that gave the best service was the mixture of all new wool--good quality new wool and poor quality new wool combined. Second best was the mixture of good new wool and mohair. Ranking third and last in the test was the mixture of good new wool and reprocessed wool.

These wool mixtures in blankets were tested every two weeks for two years ...had not only hard use but also from 48 to 60 launderings each...and none of them was worn out at the end of the test period. So, though the new wool mixture proved best for service, the others stood up well, too.

That's all the news from scientists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture today.

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U.S. Department of Agriculture