

homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Monday, April 24, 1944

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Subject: "THE BEST FED FAMILY IN THE WORLD." Information from Production
Specialists of the War Food Administration.

In spite of rationing and a few food shortages, Mr. and Mrs. America and their children are the best fed family on earth. The American housewife can still heap her grocery basket higher than shoppers in other major countries.

War, of course, is a hearty eater. It takes tons and tons of food to keep soldiers on the firing line and workers on the production line. But while many other nations are fighting this war on a scarcity basis, we have plenty. 'Plenty in spite of the fact that our grocer always seems to be saying, "Sorry, but we're out of this," or "Sorry, but we're out of that." It's true we can't get unlimited meat and sugar and canned goods these days, but not even the most choosy of us need leave the table with a hollow, empty feeling

Naturally we have shortages in some food items and we'll continue to have them for some things. But much of the talk of food shortage comes from the fact that we have more money to spend now for food than ever before.

Unfortunately, our food supply is reduced somewhat by waste and black markets. Too much food still goes to waste in kitchens and on dinner plates and elsewhere. And black markets take their toll by dislocating supplies. Also, some folks are still slow to "put the war first" and adjust their eating habits to war conditions. On the other hand, the men in our armed forces require more food than they did as civilians, and we are sending some food to our Allies abroad.

Speaking of our men in the armed forces, America's army is also the best fed in the world. Mr. and Mrs. America's son--and often daughters-- in their country's service today are getting "the cream of the crop" in energy-producing foods.

Soldiers are getting the vitamin-filled food that decides how straight they shoot, how steady their nerves are, how long they can keep from tiring, and how fast their wounds heal if they are injured.

Today's fighting men need the best of food because they not only use up tremendous energy in modern warfare, but handle complicated weapons or operate machines that require the greatest alertness and concentration. American troops anywhere in the world now can get many of the same plain, popular foods they've been used to at home even to spaghetti and meatballs for dinner in New Guinea, and buckwheat cakes for breakfast in North Africa. They get the best balanced meals that skilled nutritionists can plan and it's food they like as well as food that is good for them.

When we're inclined to feel sorry for ourselves and fret over what we can't get at the grocers', we can also consider how much better off we are in this war than we were in World War I. During World War I there were meatless days, wheatless days, and restrictions on buying sugar. Now meat and sugar aren't abundant but there is enough and there's plenty of flour for everyone. Not only is wheat available, but today's wheat products have body-building elements that were not in the over-refined wheat flour of earlier years.

From the standpoint of food values, we eat better now than we did in the last war - when less was known about vitamins and balanced diets. Now we stress producing and eating such foods as meat, milk, eggs, fruits, and vegetables as well as starchy foods. Also we have more to eat than we did in World War I. Our American farmers have seen to that - not only our big commercial farmers but our small farmers, half a million of whom Uncle Sam helped with credit and supervision to turn out the largest increases of all.

We've been producing more food - more meat, milk, eggs, and more of many other products than our farms ever turned out before. We've done it largely through careful planning and good management. Our wartime harvests haven't been just big;

they've been made to measure--tailormade to fit our needs and the needs of our Allies. Production goals have been set by farmers before the crop year to try and meet our war demands within our farm land capacity, to go all out in spite of war time shortages of manpower, machinery and supplies.

This year farmers have been asked to plant 19 million more acres of crops than they planted last year. They will not only increase their acreage, but they will grow "bigger acres" by more careful cultivation of land and greater thought for soil fertility. Through better management, they will try to increase production from livestock--such as more milk per cow by better feeding and handling. They will make fuller use of their farm lands and their limited farm manpower--and womanpower.

Of course, in the past few years we've been feeding ourselves better than ever before. Even when the war is over, we'll want to help feed others. We'll want to help the people abroad who will be hungry and homeless, whose fields will be scorched, cattle slaughtered, tools gone, factories and mines destroyed, and roads and transportation wrecked.

And here at home we'll try to see that all our own people get all the food they need for the best of health and vigor. Freedom from want is one of the things we are fighting for.

