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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Thursday, January 20, 1944

QUESTION BOX:

How store damp outdoor clothes?
Different food in same oven?
When oil sewing machine?

ANSWERS FROM:

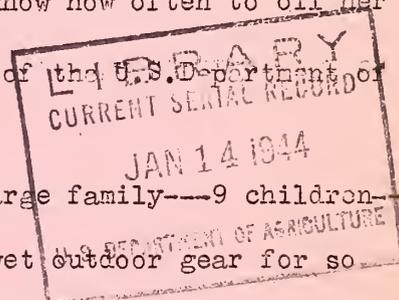
Home economists and extension workers, U.S. Department of Agriculture

--ooOoo--

And now more questions and answers from the mail bag. One woman wants suggestions for storing wet outdoor and chore clothes, at least until they're dry; another questions the advice often given about cooking many things at the same time in the oven; and a third homemaker wants to know how often to oil her sewing machine. Home economists and extension workers of the U.S. Department of Agriculture furnish the answers.

Here's a letter from a farm woman. She has a large family---9 children--- and says it's quite a problem to know what to do with wet outdoor gear for so many when they come in on rainy or snowy days. Extension workers of the U.S. Department of Agriculture find that many farm families solve this problem by having two places for chore and school clothes. One place is where the damp things are spread out to dry. The other is where outdoor clothes are kept until they are wanted again.

The ideal location for drying the wet clothes is a warm, ventilated entry or hall near the side or back door, and if possible, near the lavatory. You don't want to shut damp clothes up in a closet, so you can make a good drying place right in the hallway or entry. Put up a long shelf 12 or 14 inches wide and about 5 feet from the floor. Put as many hooks as the family needs on the under side of this shelf. Space the hooks so coats on hangers will hang free from each other. Wet caps and mittens can go on the shelf. You may need two shelves for this.



You'll also need a movable slatted rack on the floor just under the shelf, for muddy boots and shoes. Have the children stuff wet shoes with crumpled newspaper, but don't let them dry their shoes close to a fire or a radiator.

And here's a suggestion for the littlest members of the family: Put up a row of low coat hooks especially for them,---within their reach,---say 48 inches from the floor. Put a shelf over it for caps and mittens.

Now about the separate closet for dry chore and school clothes. This might also be near the entry. One good design is a long narrow closet with a pair of double doors on its broad side, opening into the entry. When the double doors are open you can reach everything in the closet easily. Make the closet two or more feet deep from front to back, and 6 or more feet long on the side where the doors open.

At each end of this closet put a pole from front to back to take coats on hangers. Have as many shelves as you need above these poles, starting about 63 inches from the floor. Put a slatted rack on the floor similar to the one in the entry where you dry the damp shoes. You can have extra hooks on the back wall for overalls or any other work clothes that don't go on hangers. And you can have low hooks for the smaller children.

Turning from closets to cooking, our next letter says: "Of course it saves fuel to cook as many things at one time in the oven as you can, but some foods need different oven temperatures, so you can't always do this. Can you suggest which foods could be baked together and which should be baked by themselves?"

The home economists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture agree that it is important to consider both the temperature and moisture requirements in cooking things together in the oven. You wouldn't want to bake a delicate cake at the same time you cook a roast of meat, because the steam from the meat might make your cake soggy and prevent its browning properly. You could bake a bread pudding while the meat cooks because the pudding supplies its own moisture. Or you could

bake white or sweet potatoes or Hubbard squash when the meat is in the oven, and possibly creamed or scalloped vegetables with bread crumbs on top.

Remember always the temperature for meat should be kept down to "moderate"- not above 350 degrees. Any foods containing milk or eggs or both, such as custards or souffles, need a slow or moderate oven. You could put a tightly covered casserole and vegetables into a slow oven, at the same time as a custard dessert or scalloped potatoes. If you wish to have hot biscuits for dinner, do not put them in with a steamy meat. They won't brown. Biscuits need a hot oven and meat a moderate oven. After the meat is done turn the heat higher and bake the biscuits. They won't take very long, and meantime you can keep the roast warm and covered on top of the stove.

On the day you want to cook baked beans you could also cook a slow-baked rice pudding, or dry out some bread for Melba toast. But cook quickly baked foods like cookies without anything else in the oven.

Our last question today is about sewing machines. "How often should I oil my sewing machine?"

Home equipment specialists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture recommend oiling a sewing machine regularly. That is, oil it lightly after each day's work, or after 8 to 10 hours of work at intermittent times. This means putting about one drop of oil in each bearing and oil hole.

Whether you use your machine often or not, oil it occasionally to keep the oil from drying and gumming. If a sewing machine runs hard, or makes more noise than usual, it needs oiling. It may even need a complete overhauling and cleaning. Directions for doing this are usually given in the book that comes with the machine. "Clean it first" is a safe rule to follow if a machine is giving trouble. Use cleaning fluid with care, according to directions, then oil all parts freely. Run the machine to work the oil thoroughly into all bearings. Then wipe off all excess oil from all parts of the machine. Stitch a little waste cloth to absorb any excess oil around the needle and the feed works, and be sure the thread is clean when it reaches the cloth.

