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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Thursday, May 8, 1941.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS." Information from several bureaus of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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Our correspondents remind us constantly that there's little truth in the old saying--"There's nothing new under the sun." When we start to run down information for them, we're always discovering something new. Take the very first query in the mailbag today, about cotton insulation. A new one to us, and probably to many of you. The Surplus Marketing Administration of the Department of Agriculture has been trying to solve the problem of surplus cotton among other surpluses, so we asked their specialists about cotton insulation. Then we learned some new points from other bureaus in the Department of Agriculture on keeping the kitchen cool in summer, on egg flavor, and summer curtains.

It seems that cotton insulation has been used very successfully in all sorts of climates, from the Arctic Circle to the Torrid Zone,-- in damp places and dry ones. You can use cotton insulation to make any house warmer. A great deal of cotton insulation is going into the construction of low-cost houses. But that's another story, as Kipling used to say.

Now as to just what cotton insulation is like. New clean cotton batts are first treated to make the cotton flame-proof. Then they're glued to a moisture-proof backing, in strips as wide as the builder wants them, to suit the spaces between studs in a house. Usually the cotton batt is about 4 inches thick. A home owner can nail it in place himself, and because of the backing, it never settles or sags. The first cost is somewhat less than some of the other kinds of



insulation on the market. Oh, yes, I almost forgot one other advantage. Household insects, such as clothes moths, carpet beetles and bedbugs do not attack clean cotton. So cotton insulation may be regarded as insect-proof as well as flame-proof and moisture-proof.

Here's another question about houses and about cotton. "Every spring my mother used to take down the winter draperies and leave the windows bare. But in our part of the country there is too much glare. What do you suggest for summer curtains?"

Well, Bess Morrison of the Bureau of Home Economics suggests marquisette glass curtains, preferably just long enough to reach the sill. You may want straight tailored curtains in the living-room, and ruffled tie-backs in the bedrooms, or you may prefer to have the same kind throughout the house. You don't need side drapes or valances.

Some of the marquisettes are all cotton, some are rayon and cotton mixtures. And here's the new point Mrs. Morrison brought up: When you wash fine all-cotton marquisette curtains they shrink more crosswise than lengthwise. Rayon-and-cotton marquisettes shrink considerably just the other way. Both materials shrink in length, so, as in making any washable curtains, put an extra fold in the heading or make a double hem that can be let out.

But: in buying fine all-cotton material, get it wide, even if your curtains look a little full at the start. A 40-inch all-cotton marquisette may shrink as much as 5 to 6 inches crosswise the first time it is laundered.

Now if you choose a piece of rayon-and-cotton marquisette, make the curtains very long-- to the bottom of the apron of the window casing, instead of to the sill. That's in addition to the double fold in the heading or hem.

One more house question, of a different kind. "We are remodeling our house. How could we make our kitchen cooler?"



The engineers of the Bureau of Agricultural Chemistry and Engineering say that if your present kitchen is not located at a corner of the house, preferably on the shady side, it would be well to put it there. Provide enough windows and doors for good cross ventilation.

Then put the stove in whatever part of the kitchen has the strongest cross ventilation. If your house is all on one floor, or if there is nothing over the kitchen you can get more summer comfort by having a ventilation opening directly over the stove. It should be at least 2 or 3 square feet. Run a stack of wood or metal through the roof above this opening to carry the heat out. Fit the top with a hood to keep out rain, and also have a screen or grill in the ceiling of the kitchen. If you have a hinged lid in the kitchen ceiling so you can close the hole in winter-time, you can keep the heat in when you need it. Where electricity is available a small exhaust fan can be installed in a hole cut in the wall or in place of a window pane.

A farm woman writes: "Most of my pin-money comes from the eggs I sell. I have had some complaints lately about the flavor and also the color of the whites and yolks of eggs I know were fresh when delivered. I keep the hens away from wild garlic. Is there anything else that would affect the taste of the eggs, or their color?"

Yes, poultry specialists of the Bureau of Animal Industry report that turnips, onions, garlic and leeks are among the worst offenders in causing off-flavors in eggs. Some fish oils cause a fishy flavor, but fortunately good quality cod-liver oil and sardine oil do not, if fed in moderate quantities.

Shepherds-purse and field pennycress eaten by chickens may produce a green color in both whites and yolks of eggs. Cheese-weed may give the egg white a pinkish tinge. So much for freshly gathered eggs. If any of your eggs are to go into cold storage, better limit the amount of cottonseed meal in the hen's diet. A diet of more than 5 percent of cottonseed meal tends to cause mottled yolks after the eggs have been stored for several months.

However, don't let these feeding problems discourage you from raising a good poultry flock this year, feeding heavily to get every possible egg from laying hens, and saving over every good layer for next fall and winter. The Secretary of Agriculture, Claude R. Wickard, said recently that everyone should increase laying flocks up to housing capacity this year, as a matter of national defense. The country needs to produce at least 6 percent more eggs than it does.

