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Equipment Economics

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In case you get your wires crossed
Miss Madden Presents—

Equipment Economics

by Gwen Griffith

"I just finished cutting an angel food cake that was baked in a roaster, and it was just as nice as any I have ever seen come out of a range oven," said Miss Faith Madden, research assistant of the Household Equipment Department.

In an obscure but much used corner of Home Economics Hall, research is carried on under the direction of Miss Madden. Equipment research is necessary and constant in order to provide adequate and accurate data for the use of the consumer.

During the last year, Miss Madden has edited a household equipment handbook and a technical handbook. The object of the household equipment handbook is to provide definite scientific consumer information for equipment on the present day market in regard to selection, care, operation and cost of operation. This handbook is written for the lay person in an understandable way, while the technical handbook is handled more scientifically and consists of a survey of scientific research in household equipment up to the present time.

The latter includes methods of research in commercial laboratories, practical research in laboratories set up by magazines and more technical research in agricultural experiment stations.

At the present time Miss Madden is working with electric roasters: Setting up methods for testing different makes of roasters, and comparing operating cost, thermostat accuracy, interior temperatures and results of cooking certain types of food in them.

"By checking these points on the roasters, recommendations can be made to the manufacturer in regard to thermostat settings and times and temperatures that are given in the recipe books published by the companies," stated Miss Madden. Three out of the four roasters she has tested so far have maintained fairly accurate interior temperature readings, according to their thermostat readings.

In addition to the roaster problem there are three and possibly more projects planned for this year. Miss Madden plans to do a cooperative project with the University of Nebraska on electric mixers. She will study the possibility of reducing the speed of the mixer motor.

Mr. Arthur Baragar, Research Assistant in Home Economics, University of Nebraska, is setting up a test model, which is necessary for this experiment, and that beaters of all makes will fit. The work will include study on the shape, size and thickness of beater blades; shape of bowls; and method of rotation of the bowl. This experiment may prove that there is a possibility to cut down the speed of the motor without affecting the efficiency.

It will be necessary to apply pressure to the next problem to be undertaken in equipment research. Miss Madden will attempt to determine the proper amount of energy in electric units necessary to maintain constant pressure in pressure cookers over a period of time at five, ten and fifteen pounds pressure, loaded and unloaded.

Last on the temporary schedule and yet important, is the experiment on electric irons. Miss Madden's problem will be to determine the amount of moisture and the ironing temperature most satisfactory for different fibers and fabrics; to determine effect of weight and balance of iron and material of sole plates on fatigue; and to determine the relationship between the weight of the iron and the temperature used.