1940

A Variety of Careers Rolled Into One

Alvina Iverson

Iowa State College

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Recommended Citation

Iverson, Alvina (1940) "A Variety of Careers Rolled Into One," The Iowa Homemaker: Vol. 20 : No. 6 , Article 2.

Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol20/iss6/2
A Variety of Careers Rolled Into One

Alvina Iverson, ’39, describes duties of Iowa State alumnae with the National Live Stock and Meat Board

The National Live Stock and Meat Board is by no means the exception proving the rule that Iowa State alumnae are found whichever way you turn in home economics circles. Five members of the home economics staff can “remember way back when” about the well-known alma mater. Four of the five are in the homemakers’ service department of the board which offers opportunities in one of the most familiar fields of commercial home economics—cooking school demonstrating.

Emily Conklin, ’31, and Edalene Stohr, ’33, are regular members of the staff while Anne Kingsley and Lucille Harris, ’27, play a dual role. As professional home economists, they do special demonstrations when the schedule of cooking schools is particularly concentrated; as homemakers they disprove the old paradox by showing their husbands and friends that, believe it or not, a cooking school teacher really can cook.

The purpose of the cooking schools sponsored by the National Live Stock and Meat Board is to show large groups of homemakers all over the country how to buy meat intelligently, cook it properly and serve it attractively, and how to bake good things to eat, using lard as the shortening.

Miss Conklin, lecturer, and Miss Stohr are travelling together at present. One week is spent in each city on the cooking school schedule. Four sessions are usually included in a week’s program, and are generally held in the afternoon.

Each session is about two hours in length and the size of the audience each day may be anywhere from 500 to 5,000, depending upon the size of the city. During the period of a year the board’s cooking school lecturers will contact about 800,000 homemakers. Cooking schools, sponsored in most cases by newspapers, are recognized of value in creating good will.

When it comes to the actual demonstrating, the work of the two is closely united. Miss Conklin tells how to make a certain dish and demonstrates making it up to the point where it is ready for the actual cooking process; Miss Stohr has everything ready for the demonstration, sees that the dish turns out as intended and garnishes it attractively to bring the final “ohs” and “ahs” when displayed on a revolving mirrored table in the final revue. About 15 different dishes are prepared during one session of a cooking school—yes, it’s a big day’s work!

The National Live Stock and Meat Board offers another type of work in commercial home economics, altogether different and equally as interesting. The department of home econom-
ics, which publishes educational literature on meats and meat cookery, is under the direction of Inez S. Willson.

A booklet, such as the ones illustrated, is in some phase of publication at all times. Such booklets are planned, written and “laid-out” in the office.

The department sends regular releases to newspapers all over the country. Each month photographs of meat dishes with accompanying articles and recipes are sent to 98 metropolitan papers; all photographs are taken in the experimental kitchen. There are many things to consider in preparing the food, arranging the table and seeing that everything is just right “for the take.”

Another newspaper service is a clip sheet, sent bi-monthly to 7,357 newspapers. Radio stations receive a similar service in the form of a tabloid containing radio talks, and in addition are sent a series of talks for each week of the year. Each month a more scientific publication is sent to home economics instructors and to a special mailing list.

A weekly radio talk, frequent special radio programs and occasional cooking demonstrations provide an interesting diversion in the network of deadlines, as did the talking picture recently released by the board as its first venture into this particular type of educational endeavor.

But if variety is the spice of life, then the mail is definitely the seasoning of this career. The department acts as a sort of clearing house for questions on meat and meat cookery. Requests come from teachers, students, extension workers, business organizations, professional groups, home service directors, radio stations, women’s clubs and homemakers. Also there are inquiries from men and women of science wanting authentic information on the nutritive value of meat.

A cooking school career is not easy, but it’s fun. It calls for sound home economics training, the ability to handle foods, the ability to handle people, an attractive stage appearance with convincing presentation and plenty of what it takes to “rise to the occasion.”

Three of the graduates of Iowa State building a career as home economists with varied professional roles on the National Live Stock and Meat Board are: Edalene Stohr, ’53, Alvina Iverson, ’39, and Emily Conklin, ’37, who tell the uses of meat and meat products.

February, 1941