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An Economist Interprets Food Problems

Dorothy Conquest
Iowa State College

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An Economist *Interprets* Food Problems



This homemaker, having distributed her ration points carefully, thinks seriously before using more points for glassed fruit

Dr. Margaret Reid stresses the importance of gardens in her report on the 1943 food situation

HOME gardens take an important place in the nation's home economy as transportation and harvesting problems become more difficult to solve. Dr. Margaret Reid, of the Economics and Sociology Department at Iowa State, presented the food situation and the 1943 outlook to representatives of agencies and organizations concerned with food preservation at a state-wide conference held in Des Moines last month. The purpose of the conference was to make plans for a coordinated program of food preservation activities this year and to avoid duplication and overlapping of their work.

Because home gardens use labor and resources not otherwise employed they should not detract from any other part of the war effort. The food thus obtained can help fill the gap left in civilian supplies by the large amount of foods going to the armed services and the allies. The best gardens, Dr. Reid stated, will help expand production of the foods that nutritionists recommend and thus build up the nation's nutritional status.

Dr. Reid pronounced the food supply picture not quite as bad as has sometimes been painted. Seventy-five percent of the total production of foods will be allotted to civilians, she said. Americans will, however, have to accustom themselves to a shift in the types of foods available. Some of these changes are an old story to the homemaker, who has searched the grocery store shelves in vain for cocoa and tea and who has given up ration coupons for coffee and sugar.

But more of the food we produce at home is going to the armed forces. Dr. Reid predicts that there will be less canned fruits and vegetables and cheese for civilians because these foods are easy to store and transport.

As for the protein foods, Dr. Reid believes that there will be a plentiful supply for civilians. Production of eggs and meat is indicated to be at only slightly lower levels and there is as much of the cereals as people are willing to eat. Homemakers will be using their ingenuity in discovering new ways to serve cereal foods and supplement other proteins in the diet.

Fluid milk, potatoes and poultry, despite local shortages, will be produced during 1943 in quantities as great as or greater than during 1942, Dr. Reid stated. Dried skim milk and butter stocks will suffer this year. However, butter will be in part replaced by fortified margarine now being produced in larger quantities.

Weather will be the deciding factor in the fruit supply this year, Dr. Reid said. The crop will be as large in 1943 as in 1942 provided no catastrophe resulting from unexpected changes affects the crop.

The commercial vegetable crop will be somewhat smaller this year due chiefly to labor shortages on the farm, with several vegetables dipping as much as 15 percent below the 1942 output. In planning the goals for commercial vegetables an effort has been made to expand production of those which give high return in nutrients per unit of labor. Cabbage and carrots are examples of these important foods.

Home economists can aid in the home gardening program by encouraging gardeners to plant foods that have a high nutritive value, Dr. Reid emphasized.