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Lunch Program Expands

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WELL-BALANCED luncheon menus for school children have become increasingly important due to wartime emphasis on nutrition. About 7 million children are being given milk or a hot lunch at noon but 21 million have had no provisions made for them.

Although there is no uniform school lunch or school milk program in our country, a plan has been started in some sections and is gaining momentum in the larger schools. Many states have laws against feeding children with educational funds, but since the war some of the states have repealed their laws.

In a recent Iowa survey in which reports on the school lunch program were obtained from 73 counties, it was found that slightly more than one-fifth of the school children received hot lunches under some system of school lunch program. Some programs were financed locally while others were financed both locally and federally. Supervision of these programs is usually done by the home economics teacher, except in the larger schools where a trained person is hired especially for the position. In smaller schools, a local woman is frequently employed to assist with the actual preparation of the lunch.

In the Ames High School, a school lunch program is under the supervision of Miss Doris Hittle, instructor in institution management at Iowa State College seniors in home economics education plan, prepare and serve the food. Each girl goes to the high school twice a week and performs the duties of manager, cook, salad girl, dessert girl or counter manager.

The Ames High School cafeteria, which serves 120 to 140 students every noon, was organized to serve well-balanced meals to the students. The cafeteria is self-supporting and serves a variety of foods at reasonable prices. A typical menu offers a plate lunch or a choice of vegetable soup, chili, creamed cabbage, deviled beef, cheese or egg sandwiches, apple-grape salad and cream pie.

Nearly all the students buy milk. Ice cream, fresh fruit and fresh vegetable salads are popular items on menus. Many students bring their own lunches. Some bring sandwiches and buy a hot dish, others buy all of it in the cafeteria. Faculty members also eat in the cafeteria. The checker and cashier are high school students and a student manager estimates the cost of the food.

In contrast to the school lunch program of the larger Iowa high school is the hot lunch project of the Lytton Consolidated School. The freshman-sophomore homemaking class, consisting of seventeen girls, carried out this project for twelve weeks during the winter months.

During the first two weeks of school in the fall, garden fruits and vegetables were canned by students who brought them from their own gardens to be used for the hot lunches.

When the actual period of serving the hot lunches began, the class was divided into three groups, each of which selected its manager for the week. These groups of five or six girls took turns each week managing the hot lunch. Jobs were rotated so that each girl gained experience in planning menus, marketing, preparing food, serving the food and cleaning the laboratory after the lunch was served.

Parents were urged through letters to take advantage of the hot lunches by encouraging their children to eat them. The plan was to serve three foods, consisting usually of a hot dish, a salad and milk.