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Home Economists Look to New Horizons

Katherine Goepfing, a former home economist in business and now professor of journalism at Iowa State, reports the last word on new opportunities for home economists in business. This article is based on a questionnaire sent to persons in positions to observe national trends—home economists in business, vocational guidance chairmen, college placement directors, trade association officials, manufacturers.

NEW positions, such as those in television and foods photography, are opening up for home economics businesswomen today. Existing departments are expanding rapidly to meet new demands, particularly in food, textile, and equipment firms.

There are more positions, new and old, but a shortage of home economists to fill them. The situation is accounted for in part by competition from the teaching field. Where graduates can start in teaching positions at from \$2,000 to \$2,250 for a 9-month period, they are reluctant to accept lower-paying business positions. Many home economists plan to work only a couple of years and are not interested in ultimate salaries. Some business firms find that beginners need a year of apprenticeship before they are ready for higher paying positions.

Turnover in the home economics business field has been quite rapid because of this competition of higher salaries in other fields and women leaving the field for marriage. However, one interviewee reported that graduates who had entered more lucrative positions during the war are now anxious to enter the business field. They will find interesting new positions open in television, radio, food photography, visual aids preparation and in home economics libraries, in addition to openings in long-established fields.

One interviewee stated: "The fields open to trained graduates now are so varied that specific training is necessary." College courses in newer fields, such as television and preparation of visual instruction material, could well be part of such training.

Television highlights the attraction of radio. Home economists can give classes in infant care, cooking, party and menu planning, and other homemaking skills via television. For this, of course, they will have to perfect their techniques and be better groomed than ever. Facsimile broadcasting—use of charts, maps, graphs, or illustrations—is another tool the home economist in television can use. And there is a place here, too, for home decorators and costume designers to assist in program preparation. Yes, many opportunities are appearing for home economists who have dramatic and speaking talents as well as the personal appearance to make themselves known and felt in the field of radio.

Another new type of position opening to the home economics graduate is that of directing production of educational films which depict homemaking situations. In the same zone, foods photography is demanding more technicians trained not only to prepare food but to arrange it and handle the photography, too.

FROZEN foods occupy the spotlight in food service. Homemakers need to be taught how to use their quick-freeze equipment, as well as how to prepare and serve frozen foods. Too, dehydrated and concentrated food processors need home economists to teach consumers about their products.

Return of electrical appliances and appearance of newly developed textiles in the market call for home economists to handle still other types of promotion and instruction work.

For the graduate who is transportation-minded, railroads and steamship and airline companies are



opening more positions, both in food service and in care of children who are traveling.

Personal shoppers in department stores and consultants for clubs and churches doing large-quantity cookery are examples of other business openings. Free lance home economists are needed, too, to serve advertising agencies who require home economics consultants for some of their accounts.

Architects need home economists trained in house planning so that new homes will be easier to live and work in.

Demand for home economics journalists, both in editorial and advertising work, continues—even ghost writers for big-name home economists are demanded.

Many utility companies throughout the United States are expanding their home service work and have need of home economists. Wholesale distributors, too, demand their services in product promotion.

The increasing demand for home economists is apparent. Iowa State College had 2,768 requests for graduates during the year prior to June 1. Almost half of these requests were for teachers. Requests for graduates for food service positions were one-third over the year before. Demands for hospital dietitians doubled. To add to this competition, one-third of the June graduates planned to be married immediately.

The situation adds up to a lively challenge to the graduate who has ideas and ability, knows where she wants to go and is willing to be an alert apprentice.

—Reprint from *Journal of Home Economics*