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Testing and Tasting

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A Woman's World of Tasting

Food Technology majors often have as many as 25 job offers awaiting them at graduation.

"Products for the home must first appeal to women—why not hire women to design them," says Dr. Frances Carlin, head of Food Technology. Here she checks temperature in experimental meat case.

by Rosalyn McBride
Dietetics Junior
NO MORE sticky pots and pans to wash! This homemaker's dream is almost a reality.

Soon you will be able to store and cook food in its original wrapper. Scientists at Iowa State have been working on a new plastic food package which won't become brittle when used for storage in the freezer and still won't melt when this same package is popped into the oven. Although one commercial company thinks it has the answer to this problem now, much testing remains to be completed.

In the future you may find at your grocer's meat counter crusty chicken sticks or turkey rolls of either white or dark meat. And perhaps you will buy meat injected with antibiotics to extend its storage life for several days.

These are all parts of research being done by the Department of Food Technology. "The average homemaker is particularly interested in 'How does it taste? We try to approach most of our problems from this angle," says Dr. Carlin. A two-story shingle building almost hidden behind the new agronomy building is the workshop of graduate students and full-time researchers presently studying pre-cooked frozen foods to discover what gives them their "warmed-over flavor," the use of heat and oil in egg preservation, and many other problems.

Ever been amazed at the tasty angel food cake which comes out of a box these days? The story of this fluffy delicate structure begins with about five years of research at Iowa State.

Scientists knew the Chinese had successfully produced dried eggs for many years. Still the eggs produced in the United States for use by our armed forces and allies during the war were notoriously poor. They received universal criticism — could not be used commercially because they would not whip, turned brown and had an undesirable flavor. Two Iowa State scientists, Dr. George Stewart and Dr. Ralph Kline discovered the cause was a small percentage of glucose in the egg. A method was then devised whereby the glucose could be removed by a yeast fermentation process. Next, a spray method of drying was developed which made it possible to reconstitute the egg white so it could be whipped without loss of volume. This method is now used in all

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Mary Marcy, grad student, measures heighth of egg thick white in her study of shell egg preservation.

Food Technology

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commercially prepared angel cake mix·es.

Iowa State scientists have since worked on improving methods of canning meat, producing concentrated milk, packaging cheese and reducing the metallic taste in milk and cream. As many as 250 dozen eggs were used in just testing storage methods.

Projects are often done in conjunction with the Agriculture Division. For instance, the Animal Husbandry department has been using a hormone in animal feeds to speed the rate of weight gain. Foods people questioned how this hormone affected the flavor, proportion of meat to fat, cooking losses and tenderness of the meat. So two graduate students and Miss Eula Morris, research associate, investigated the problem with lamb meat. Their report is now being written, but preliminary analysis seem to give the go-ahead signal on the use of this hormone. It does not seem to detract from the quality of the lamb meat. Now students are working on ways to effectively use all cuts of the lamb carcass. At the present, housewives tend to use just lamb chops and legs of lamb.

Only five or six colleges in the United States offer food technology.

The other colleges are mainly working in the fields of fruits and vegetables rather than animal products as we are. Therefore, sometimes a problem is studied cooperatively.

The present food technology building contains test kitchens, huge ovens, a record room and evaluation booths. In the booths, special lights are used to mask the color of food so appearance does not affect the judges' decision.

When the new home economics wing is finished, plans are made for food research to occupy some of the vacated space in the old building. Further expansion plans for food technology have been shelved indefinitely since the bill for capital improvements of Iowa State supported schools was vetoed last spring by Governor Loveless. The bill included a $300,000 appropriation for a food technology wing to be attached to the Dairy Industry building. This wing would be conveniently placed for those women who enter the new department of Dairy and Food Industry (formerly the Dairy Industry Department).

Undergraduates interested in food research major in Experimental Foods or Related Science which prepares them for test kitchen work with recipes and food preparations. On the graduate level this major is Food Technology which may lead to research positions.

Dr. Carlin stresses the great demand for women with this type of training. Graduates often have as many as 25 job offers. "And there is no competition with men," she smiled. "Men never seem to worry about 'How does it taste?' only 'How can we do it?' General Mills, Pillsbury, Better Homes and Gardens, Proctor and Gamble all are in need of food technologists. A graduate might also teach or consider research in colleges or in government laboratories.

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