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Kernels

Bland Rice

Although rice is a staple of many people's diet, some find the food grain too bland for their taste.

Researchers at the U.S. Department of Agriculture are finding ways to change that. Using gas chromatography tests to determine chemically the aroma of rice, they have determined certain species of rice popular in Asia have aromatic chemicals in them similar to popcorn.

By producing in the laboratory the chemicals present in the rice popular in Asia, USDA researchers have developed a technique for giving rice a mild popcorn aroma.

The new rice should appear in grocery stores within one year.

U.S. Mail

The mail still must get through, but it gets through much faster now than it did when the Pony Express first began.

The service began on April 3, 1860, and followed the well-known Oregon-California trail from St. Joseph, Mo., and Sacramento, Calif. — a 1,996-mile trip that took about 10 days.

Relay stations stood 10 to 15 miles apart along the route. Riders usually carried only two revolvers and a knife to defend themselves against attacks by Indians and bandits. They rode day and night in all kinds of weather.

Soon mail will be delivered in all-aluminum postal trucks with a 1,000-pound capacity, replacing the old jeeps on the road today. The new trucks will have a 24-year lifespan compared to the eight-year lifespan of the Jeeps.

Kennedy Speaks

Twenty years ago today Sen. Robert Kennedy spoke before a crowd of 900 persons at a rally at Mahlon Sweet Airport before being swept away in a 30-car motorcade to the Eugene Hotel.

At the gathering, Kennedy asserted the year 1968 will determine what direction the United States will take and that "we can establish the U.S. as a

peace-loving country around the world, and that includes Southeast Asia," according to the April 17, 1968, Oregon Daily Emerald.

Roughly a month and a half later, Kennedy was shot in Los Angeles, moments after announcing his victory in the California primary. He died the next day.

Little-Known Facts

•Every day, more than 107 million Americans — seven out of 10 adults — reads a daily newspaper.

•About half the population of Americans older than the age of three wears glasses.

•Camels can go without drinking for as much as eight weeks in cool weather. After such abstinence, they can consume as much as 100 quarts in 10 minutes.

•Steak is 74 percent water by weight.

Milking Sows

Oregon State University has four student teams participating in the sixth annual Academic Quadrathlon, according to the OSU Barometer.

The four OSU teams, which began competition April 3 with teams from 16 other universities, "visited the swine barn, where they had to milk a sow, proceeded to the meat lab to evaluate pig carcasses for quality and identify various degrees of marbling, and then went to a range station to identify feed and formulate rations," the paper reports.

Other stations included working with sheep, dairy cattle and horses.

The second part of the Quadrathlon consisted of a 15-page exam, where, "Among other things, they were asked how to grade wool, draw the general structure for an amino acid and to answer various in-depth questions about sheep, swine and beef breeding," the paper reports.

The final two categories in the

competition are the college bowl, complete with questions and buzzers, and a 15-minute oral presentation with a question-and-answer session. Oral presentations begin tomorrow.

Earwax

Earwax, or "Cerumen," is a natural secretion from the ear's ceruminous gland, and the amount secreted varies between individuals, according to experts from the National Hearing Aid Society.

In most cases, excess earwax dries up and falls out on its own and only causes problems when a person attempts to clean his or her ears with a cotton swab. This can cause the earwax to compact against the eardrum.

The NHAS recommends that people never insert anything sharp or pointed into the ear. In addition, only use swabs on the outer end of the ear canal.

Too Much Help

While schools and athletes can be punished for wrong doing concerning student athletics, the National Collegiate Athletic Association has no punitive power over athletic boosters.

It can order them to stay away from the school's athletic program, but nothing more, according to the March 30, 1987, edition of Sports Illustrated.

But after the recent Southern Methodist University football scandal, the relative immunity of the boosters is being attacked by others outside the NCAA.

The Internal Revenue Service may investigate whether SMU boosters deducted their slush-fund SMU contributions.

Another threat is the possibility of a lawsuit. Texas State Sen. John Montford has drafted a bill that would permit athletic conferences to sue boosters for loss of television and ticket revenues if the contribution makes the team ineligible for play.

The SMU Student Senate also is considering suing boosters involved in the football scandal for tarnishing the university's name and devaluing its degrees.

STUDENTS

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