

Fear key to misleading health promotions

According to a recent Dairy Council Digest, there has been much capitalizing on people's fear of food additives, pollution and hopes of freedom from disease (increased longevity). A number of individuals and quasi-professional organizations are instrumental in disseminating a wide range of misleading nutrition information. Natural, organic and health foods, mega-doses of vitamins (A, B, E and C), non-vitamins (laetril or vitamins B17 or vitamin B12), and antiflouridation measures are among the types of misinformation being promoted.

Passage of the Proxmier Bill in 1976, removing the FDA's legal authority to regulate the sale of over-the-counter vitamin supplements, legalization of laetril in several states, government proposals to define the meaningless terms "organic" and "natural," thus lending endorsement to such fakery and the vigorous opposition to water fluoridation (a safe, economical and effective means to diminish tooth decay), are examples of the glory of success of proponents of nutrition misinformation.

An informed public can lessen the potential danger of anecdotal information replacing good scientific findings. Several anti-quackery organizations are helping the public to distinguish between fact and fiction in nutrition and health matters and are exposing individuals and organizations exploiting nutrition.

Low prices hurting turkey producers

By the time this year's Thanksgiving holiday arrives, Northwest turkey producers may be in no mood for giving thanks.

The reason for the turkey farmers' gloom is the current low price of turkey that, although good for consumers, is poor for producers.

"Right now, turkey prices are down in the 60 to 65 cent per pound range and are likely to remain there through the holiday season," said Charles Fischer, Oregon State University extension poultry specialist. "These prices are 18 to 22 cents per pound lower than they were at this time last year."

According to Fischer, at the present market price, there's no way the producers can make a profit and in fact, they are probably losing anywhere from 50 cents to \$1 per bird.

Several factors have contributed to this situation but chief among them is the large number of turkeys now on the market. Fischer said indications are that there will be abundant supplies of all sizes of turkeys through the holiday buying season.

"This high amount of poultry production came about largely as a result of a USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) meat production forecast for 1981 that came out last December," Fischer explained. "The USDA forecast a decrease in pork and beef production this year and consequently, the poultry producers upped their production to fill the expected shortfall."

As it turned out, pork and beef production was down nationally, but not as much as the USDA anticipated. The result is an abundance of all kinds of meat on the market and this has caused not only poultry prices to drop, but beef and pork prices as well.

Another possible cause of low meat prices may be the current recession, which meat industry sources say is causing consumers to buy less meat than they ordinarily would. Fischer said that this may be a factor, but that he has yet to find any solid evidence of it in his study of the evaluation.

"As long as there is a large variety of abundant supplies of meats, poultry and especially turkey prices will remain low in relation to production costs," Fischer noted.

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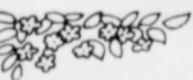
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