

# FIGURES RELEASED BY USDA ON FOOD COSTS PER FAMILY

(Editor's note: This is the first of a series by a Klamath Falls homemaker who assisted in the U.S. Department of Agriculture survey on what Americans eat and how much it costs. She has generously consented to summarize a dozen thick volumes of statistics released by the USDA on the findings of that 1955 survey, which is the latest one made, so Klamath Falls families may compare their food budgets with the national and regional averages. — F.M.)

that Americans are well-fed and on a well-balanced diet, at that. The average, typical family sets aside about one-third of its income for food, or about \$31 a week (as of 1955). With the number of persons in the family averaging 3.6, food per day had a value of \$1.23 per person. The major portion of this food was eaten at home, but meals, snacks and drinks away from home accounted for \$5 of the \$31 total.

As you read and compare these figures with your own budget, bear in mind the statistics were gathered during a "typical" week in the spring of 1955 and have been computed to provide for 21 meals at home, counting meals away from home as equal to meals at home. The survey reveals that 1955 was a relatively good year for most families, in terms of price and income. Moreover, in the spring of that year, supplies of meat were plentiful and prices relatively low.

Although the general picture is one of abundant family food supplies, the averages conceal the great variation in family food practices.

For example, for all the families of two or more, the average money value of all food used at home in the week came to \$7.50 per person. But for more than one-fourth of the families, the value of a week's supply of food was less than \$6 per person and in another quarter of the number, the figure rose to \$10 per person.

The largest portion of the food dollar, 36 cents, went for meat, poultry, fish and eggs and less than half that amount, 15 cents, for milk and milk products, excluding butter. About 19 cents was spent for potatoes, vegetables and fruits, 10 cents for fats, sweets and all other items.

In terms of quantity per person, the average selection included four and one-eighth pounds of meat, poultry and fish in this, one-third was beef and one-fourth, pork; four and one-half quarts of whole milk or its equivalent in milk products (in terms of calcium content); two pounds of potatoes; four pounds of other vegetables; four

pounds of fruit; one and one-fourth pounds of sugar and sweets; nearly one pound of fats; one and one-half pounds of bread; over one-half pound of other commercially baked goods; nearly two pounds of flour and other cereal products.

Pound-wise, these figures add up to a generous diet. For example, four and one-eighth pounds of meat would provide enough to serve more than once on most days of the week.

Many factors make family-to-family variability difficult to measure and to predict. Families exercise a great deal of individuality in food selection and the amount of money they are willing to spend for particular items. Some of this diversity reflects likes and dislikes, but an even greater variety stems from distinct degrees of knowledge

about nutritional requirements and food composition. This latter defect has become one of the main reasons for the USDA's food consumption studies and its resultant programs for education in nutrition and food economics. Also, it identifies the population groups which could benefit most from such education.

Three other factors not to be overlooked in an overall study are those relating to the community, those relating to the family itself and, more especially, those relating to the person who has the major responsibility for planning meals.

Analyses also show tremendous differences relative to urban and suburban families and in regional circumstances, to say nothing just of income variances, size of

families, ages, educational levels and the ever-present problems of the homemaker who is employed outside her home.

In general, farm families use more food "calorie-wise", mostly because their strenuous outdoor work requires greater amounts of energy, but also because substantial amounts of food are supplied by the farm garden. It is interesting to note, however, that although gardens still supply about 30 per cent of the food used by the average farm family, this is a considerably less share than in years past. The amount varied, but virtually every farmer raised some of his own food as shown by former studies.

The total money value of food used by farm families shows a ratio of \$7.10 per person to \$9.40

per person for city dwellers. In the fringe areas around cities of 25,000 population or more, this figure was \$7.60. Rural families have generally lower incomes; however, the survey has shown they still spend the same proportion, or one-third, food.

Hardly a startling fact, but the study shows that considerably more eating-out occurred among city dwellers than among semi-rural and rural areas (10 out of 12 for city; 9 out of 12 for semi-rural and 8 out of 12 in rural areas).

Our brothers and sisters on the farm consumed nearly a quart more milk (and milk products) per person and used a larger proportion in its original form. They produced 68 per cent of their milk. City families used a greater share in the form of processed

milks and cheeses. Meat holds a position of lesser importance in the farmer's diet than in that of his counterpart in the city (3.8 pounds to 4.4 pounds). Pork is used more on the farms than in city homes.

On the other hand, the farmer consumed seven dozen eggs to the city family's six dozen, ice cream, sweets, flour and other cereals, all were consumed in larger quantities on the farm than off. City folks used nearly one pound per person per week more of vegetables, fruits and potatoes. Dark green and deep yellow vegetables hold a relatively equal part in the diet of all.

Included in the total food expense

(Continued on Page 23)

By LENORA M. KIRKPATRICK

During April, May and June, 1953, the United States Department of Agriculture conducted an extensive survey into the food and eating habits of some 6,000 households in the nation. This survey had a threefold purpose: to aid economists, nutritionists and marketing services. The work was conducted in the Agricultural Research Service by the Household Economics Research Division and in the Agricultural Marketing Service by the Market Development Branch and the Statistical and Historical Research Branch. Collection and tabulation of statistics was made by National Analysts, Inc., under contract with the USDA.

Within the city of Klamath Falls, all interviewing was done by myself. Extensive rural interviewing was conducted in Lincoln and Benton counties. These were the only two points in Oregon surveyed, although the complete compilation covers the 48 states.

The USDA made similar studies in 1936, 1942, 1948 and 1952, but the 1955 survey was the first since 1942 to include both rural and urban households on a nationwide basis. Later I will note various comparisons.

It has taken the department's analysts much longer than anticipated to compile the statistics. However, the last book of facts is off the press and along with it has come a vast amount of enlightening information. It appears

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SWIFT'S PREMIUM **HAMS** 59¢ lb.

Pork **Shoulders** 39¢ lb.

NEBERGALL'S OLD FASHIONED **Franks** 45¢ lb.

Swift's Worthmore or Oriole **Sliced Bacon** 1-lb. Package 49¢

**VEGETABLES**

**SNO MAID APPLES** 10 lbs. 89¢

**DRY ONIONS** 3 lbs. 13¢

**ORANGES** Large 3 lbs. 39¢

**CELERY HEARTS** pkg. 19¢

Panhouse - 6-oz. jar **Instant Coffee** 99¢

9-oz. Golden Feather **Olives** 4 cans \$1.00

Petite **Prunes** 3-lb. bag 49¢

Gerber's Strained or Chopped **HIGH MEAT DINNERS** 2 cans 33¢

Don't Forget Those Delicious **ETHEL'S HOM-ADE PIES**

**SUNSHINE** 1-lb. Crispy Crackers 29¢  
1-lb. Marshmallows 33¢

**DURKEE'S** **Mayonnaise** 24-oz. Freezer Jar 55¢

Grade AA Large - Ranch **Eggs** Doz. 49¢

**STANDBY** 303 Whole Kernel CORN 6 FOR \$1.00  
303 Solid Pack TOMATOES  
8-oz. Cr. Pineapple

**SWIFT** 1/4 Size POTTED MEATS 2 cans 19¢  
1/4 Size DEVIL HAM 2 cans 39¢  
12-oz. Brown 'n Serve SAUSAGES 45¢

**HUNT** **Tomato Paste** 2 cans 19¢

**PET MILK** 2 Tall Tins 29¢

**DRIFTED SNOW**

**59¢ FLOUR**

FRIED CHICKEN • ROAST BEEF  
GRILLED HALIBUT • MEAT LOAF  
SWISS STEAK • VEAL CUTLET  
HAM STEAK • GROUND BEEFSTEAK

**LIPTON - CHICKEN FLAVORED**

**Noodle Soup Mix** 3 35¢

**Friskies** DOG MEAL 20 lb. bag \$1.98

Denco **Shortening** 3 Lbs. 59¢

MEDO-BEL HOMO. **MILK** Half Gallon 50¢

SPRECKELS **SUGAR** 10 Lbs. 98¢

FOLGERS **COFFEE** 2 Lbs. \$1.77 | 1 Lb. 89¢

Large Loaf - Local **BREAD** 29¢ Loaf

**CHOICE MEATS at Buy Low**

Fresh Cooked **CRABS** 27¢

Swift's Premium Stewing "Whole Body" **CHICKENS** 29¢ lb.

Meaty Lean **Spare Ribs** 39¢ lb.

USDA Choice or Good **Rib Steaks** 79¢

Pure Fresh **Ground Beef** 2 lbs For 79¢

**OIL** Swift's Jewel 45-oz. Half Gallon Size 89¢

**EGGS** 2 doz. 95¢

Chiffon - Facial **Tissue** 2 Boxes - 200 Count 25¢

Kellogg - 10-oz. Cereal **Pep** pkg. 19¢

12 Fruit Flavors **Jello** 6 49¢

Nalleys - Champion **Dressing** qt. 39¢

Diamond - 50 Book Carton **MATCHES** 2 Cr. 29¢

Doumak Pixie - 10-oz. pkg. **Marshmallows** 15¢

**PEACHES** Hunts Sliced or Halves 2 No. 2 1/2 Cans 49¢

**SPINACH** Hunts No. 2 1/2 Tins 2 cans 29¢

**CATSUP** Hunts Giant Size 20-oz. 2 for 49¢

**COCKTAIL** Hunts No. 300 Tins 3 cans 59¢

**POTATOES** Hunts Whole Peeled No. 300 Tins 3 cans 29¢

**CRISP PRODUCE at Buy Low**

Klamath U.S. No. 2 **POTATOES** 10 lbs. 29¢

Crisp - Green **CELERY HEARTS** bag 15¢

Cello Bag **RADISHES** 2 for 19¢

**GREEN ONIONS** bun. 5¢

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