

# American Farmers Make Food Biggest Bargain On Earth

## FOOD & FARM: 5

Editor's Note: "Man's dream since creation" is the way John Strohm sums up the successes of American agriculture. The famous newsman and farm authority points up how the real cost of food has decreased in 20th Century America. The significance of this fact to all of us as consumers, taxpayers and citizens of the Free World concludes this last of five reports.

By JOHN STROHM  
Newspaper Enterprise Assn.  
CHICAGO (NEA)—Your food is the biggest bargain the earth has ever seen.

Never have people been able to buy so much food, of such a variety, for such a reasonable price as they can today in the U.S.A. Thanks go to America's No. 1 Success Story, the American Farm.

Mrs. America, after taxes, pays out on the average only 20 per cent of her income for food. By contrast, the Russian family must spend 95 per cent; the Chinese family nearly 75 per cent; in Italy, 33 per cent; Nigeria, 70 per cent; Peru, 40 per cent.

This means Americans can have guns and butter too. You have more money left for the so-called good things of life—education, recreation, television sets, two cars.

The real pay-off is the little time it takes a worker to win the daily bread. The average American industrial worker works only 38 hours to earn the monthly market basket, but the Russian works three times as long for less food. To earn a pound of butter, the average American works less than 20 minutes; the Russian, 193 minutes. A pound of rice costs an American 3 minutes of work; a Japanese,

25 minutes. A pound of sugar costs an American worker 3 minutes of work; a Russian 75 minutes.

In the U.S. 8 per cent of the people live on the land and enough food to feed himself and 28 others. In Russia, with 45 per cent of the people on the land, one farmer has a hard time feeding three or four others.

This is the true significance of the American farm accomplishment.

It means we can give Russia to the moon, without giving up luxuries or necessities. Yet the Russians have not been able to provide sufficient food, clothing or housing for their people. Fifty five per cent of their farm workers are women who work in the fields to produce food.

In the U.S. we have an average 80 per cent of every dollar of the highest wages in the world to spend for other things besides food. Russia has only 45 cents of a smaller number of dollars to spend for other things.

No wonder Russian housing is tremendously short by our standards. No wonder only one Russian family in 100 has an automobile.

That's why the American food story has vast significance for the rest of the world.

Food is cheaper than in the "good old days" when beef was 14 cents a pound and bread two loaves for a nickel. The real cost adds up like this: Granddad worked for \$10 a week in 1912, and spent \$5 or 50 per cent for food. His industrial worker grandson earns \$100 and spends only \$25 or 25 per cent or more and better food.

For one hour of labor your dad bought 1.2 pounds of round steak

—and you can buy 2.2 pounds. He bought 7.8 pints of milk and you can buy 18.4 pints. He bought 15 oranges, while you buy 36 oranges.

"But I spend more," protests the homemaker. One answer to that is that \$3 out of every \$20 spent in the supermarket where you have 6,000 items to choose from goes for a wide variety of non-food items—from basketballs to bobby pins. Actually the food price index since 1947-49 has gone up only 23 per cent, compared to 34 per cent for housing, 53 per cent for transportation, 46 per cent for rent.

The housewife's can opener and other built-in maid services have been the butt of jesters and cartoonists whom we suspect are nostalgic men longing for the kitchen virtues of their mothers. The U.S. homemaker does buy time in the form of "instant" and heat-and-eat food and boil-in-bag containers. Such conveniences have reduced her daily food preparation work from five and one-half hours to one and one-half hours, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture studies.

But the housewife need not feel guilty. She can work four extra hours for 45 cents an hour and save \$1.00, or she can devote that time to her children, to community activities or to keeping up with the world. Furthermore, convenience foods have made it possible for many of the nearly 25 million women who work outside the home to hold jobs.

All because farmers continue to make giant strides. If our farms were no more efficient than the Russian collective farms

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**BIGGEST BARGAIN IN HISTORY**—The American housewife has the biggest food bargain in history. In early 1900s, Granddad shopped at the general store such as this one (on the left) in New York. He spent 50 per cent



of his income buying food for his family. Today his grandchildren shop in modern supermarkets offering over 6,000 different items, and the average housewife spends only 20 per cent of the pay check on food.

where I've visited, 20 to 25 million American industrial workers would have to go back to the farm. Think what a devastating blow that would be to our standard of living and our ability to match missiles with the Communists.

Our U.S. farmers continue to make giant strides. One hour of labor produces more than four times as much food as it did in 1929. An acre produces 65 per cent more. Each breeding animal produces 94 per cent more. Farm labor efficiency increased 5.3 per cent per year in the 1950s, compared with a 2.2 per cent increase for U.S. industry. And since we'll need much more food by 1975, and we have no more land—our farmers must be more efficient in the years ahead.

Why are our farmers more efficient? Why are our processors doing a better job? The answer lies, I believe, in our free enterprise system, based on incentive. In our over-all government business climate those who render the most service to the most people at the most reasonable rate get the biggest rewards.

But a free market economy is a strict disciplinarian. We may shed tears at the passing of the corner grocery or the one-horse farm, but we know that the cheaper and better way of doing the job spells good for the citizens—and progress for the country.

The Soviet dictators arbitrarily raised the prices of basic foods like butter and meat by 25 to

30 per cent recently. In the U.S. the citizen-consumer is king and sets the price by his vote at the market place.

Are there any clouds on the horizon to this continued progress? Frankly, yes!

Farm efficiency is threatened by strict government controls. Proposed farm laws would put a ceiling on our abundance and variety of food. It would tend to freeze farmers. The reason: An attempt to shore up the farmer's

income, despite opposition by most of the farmers who produce most of the food.

In summary: What does the "food and farm" problem mean to you?

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**WAGE DIFFERENCES**—A Russian works 75 minutes to buy a pound of sugar. An American works just three minutes.

### Higher Hunting Fees Proposed

SALEM (UPI)—Sportsmen called for higher hunting and fishing license fees here Wednesday at a meeting with the House Fish and Game Committee.

Allen Kelly, president of the Izaak Walton League, said hunting places are dwindling. He said it will take more money to open up new lands for the sportsman.

Kelly and other witnesses said higher fees will give the State Game Commission the money it needs for research, rehabilitation and game law enforcement.

The bill would raise the resident hunting license fee from \$4 to \$5 and the resident fishing license fee from \$4 to \$6. Other fees would be raised correspondingly.

### 4-H NEWS

**RUSY BAKERETTES**

Eleven girls met at the Home Economics room after school at the Bonanza School on Tuesday, Nov. 27. Our leaders are Mrs. Alice Drew and Mrs. Porter Willis. We elected Cathy Angel president; Susie Wooten, vice president; Janice Reid, secretary; treasurer; Marie Angel, program planning; Nancy Angel, health; Kathy Terpening and Patty O'Connor, community service; Betty Lou Steber, and Debbie Jacobson, safety; Marilee Willis, song leader, and Julie Murphy, reporter.

The name of our club is the Busy Bakerettes. We plan to meet once a month.

Julie Murphy, News Reporter

**NEW TYPE CRANK**  
LONDON (UPI)—Scotland Yard today warned hospitals to watch for an "oxygen crank"—a short, poorly dressed man who has slipped into at least four hospitals recently and turned off oxygen supplies.

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**EGYPT TODAY**—An Egyptian worker works 40 minutes to buy a loaf of bread. In the United States it takes only six minutes.

### Judy Drops Divorce

CARSON CITY, Nev. (UPI)—Singer Judy Garland was admitted to Carson-Tahoe Hospital here early today with what a physician described as "a slight weakness of the right side."

Miss Garland, 39, collapsed in her dressing room and was unable to appear as scheduled Wednesday night at Tahoe Harrah's casino lounge at South Lake Tahoe. Dr. Peter Irving said her condition appeared to be the result of "complete physical exhaustion."

Dr. Irving said she was unable to appear at Harrah's Monday night because of a virus infection. He said she was scheduled to be examined at the hospital later Wednesday.

Las Vegas attorney Harry Claiborne announced Wednesday that Miss Garland and her husband of 12 years, producer Sid Luft, 43, had called off their plans for a divorce trial.

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**CHINESE WORKERS**—Chinese works for two to four hours for a pound of rice. Americans work only five minutes.

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