

NUTRITION

# More Enrichment

**Sturdier staff of life as a support through possible scarcities, and pastries, cakes and crackers added to enriched list are possibilities for next winter.**

By JANE STAFFORD

► BY THANKSGIVING, or soon after, Americans may be having a new cause for thanks in the food line in spite of rationing and war-caused food shortages, if the latest proposal of the War Food Administration goes into effect promptly.

This proposal is to require all white flour sold for human consumption to be enriched with certain B vitamins and iron according to the latest federal definition of enriched flour. The proposed order's 120-day allowance for millers and bakers to make the changeover would be just about up by Thanksgiving if the order were issued shortly after announcement of the proposal.

The stuffing of the Thanksgiving turkey or his substitute in that case may be more than just stuffing. The crust of the mince meat or pumpkin pie would be in the "good for you" class. And bread, traditionally the staff of life, would be a sturdier staff than it has been in a long time.

Equally important, everyone of us in the United States, if the order goes into effect, will be getting this mineral and vitamin enriched bread, whether we buy bread from the grocer or baker, eat it in restaurants, or bake it at home.

Rolls, pies and other pastries, cakes, biscuits and crackers will, if the proposed order goes through without change, be made from enriched flour, making them more nourishing than before. Up to the present, these foods, as well as home and restaurant baked bread and rolls, may or may not have been made of enriched flour. Food Distribution Order No. 1, issued last January, required all bakery white pan bread to be enriched, but other flour products, including home-baked, were not covered by the order.

## Protection from Disease

The object of the proposed new order for enrichment of all white flour with certain B vitamins and iron is to protect civilians on wartime diets from vitamin lack diseases, such as pellagra and beri-

beri, and even from such mild states of undernourishment as make them feel tired and cranky and keep them from doing their best work. Our soldiers are already protected by an order under which the Army buys only enriched flour, although Army rations are planned to include plenty of other vitamin-rich foods. Civilian diet will depend much more on bread and flour as the war continues.

Our new enriched flour may be coming as a war measure but it will not be a dark flour, nor will bread made from it be a dark, wartime bread such as the English national loaf of 85% extraction wheat flour. It will make bread which will carry even more nourishment than the English national loaf, or than has been in the enriched flour sold in some communities during the past two years.

Announcement of the new enrichment proposal comes on the heels of two significant acts which probably few American bread eaters know about. One of these is a new Food, Drug and Cosmetic Administration order increasing the minimum amounts of certain vitamins and iron required in enriched flour. The other is a U. S. Supreme Court decision upholding the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Administration whose regulations on enriched flour and farina had been challenged.

## Within Legal Rights

The Supreme Court found that this federal agency is quite within its legal rights in setting standards for the number, names and proportions of ingredients which may be added to food sold under a common or usual name, such as enriched flour. If there were no standards of identity for enriched flour, for example, the consumer would have to rely on the label on each package to learn which vitamins and minerals and how much of each had been added to a certain company's enriched flour, and how much nutritional benefit he might get from eating that flour in his bread.

That requires more technical knowledge, the decision points out, than the

average consumer is likely to have. As a result, he might be misled into thinking he would get more benefit from the product than would actually be the case. It was to avoid such a state of confusion that Congress empowered the Federal Security Administrator, under one of the provisions of the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, to set standards of identity for food when he considered this action necessary to promote honesty and fair dealing in the interest of consumers.

With this green light from the Supreme Court, the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Administration has issued the new standards for enriched flour which will go into effect about October 1. After that date, any flour sold as enriched will be richer by at least a third in the morale vitamin B<sub>1</sub>, or thiamin, than enriched flour had to be in the past. It will contain more than two and one-half times as much of the pellagra-preventing vitamin, niacin, and more than twice as much iron as the previous minimum standards called for. In addition, it will contain another B vitamin, riboflavin.

## Recently Made Available

Original plans for flour and bread enrichment called for this vitamin but only recently has enough of the synthetic riboflavin been available to make it possible to add it to flour or bread. Calcium, bone-building ingredient found abundantly in milk, remains an optional ingredient within certain new limits of some enriched flours but becomes a must ingredient in enriched self-rising flours.

The reason for increasing the amounts of vitamins and iron in enriched flour is that scientists have made further studies of the nourishing factors in the diets of various income groups and the population as a whole and of the daily allowances of various vitamins and minerals required for health. As a result, they found that the original standards for enriched flour would not give people eating it the degree of nutritional improvement expected on the basis of findings before the enrichment standards were set. Nor would it give the improvement consumers are entitled to expect from the publicity regarding enriched flour and bread made from it.

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