

normal blood pressure in middle and old age, however, does not conflict with the fact that persons with lower blood pressures have a better chance to live longer.

Limits of normal blood pressure at ages over 40 should be raised, the scientists state, adding that they are now working on the development of new standards.

Science News Letter, April 24, 1943

CHEMISTRY

Food Research Reported

Nutritional values of meat proteins for troops and lend-lease shipments are found to be preserved in processing.

➤ MEAT for our armed forces overseas and for lend-lease shipment to our fighting allies keeps its nutritional value under the processing methods used, a three-man research team in Swift and Company's laboratories learned by test feedings to white rats. They experimented with the proteins of beef and pork as processed in four different ways: dehydration, canning, roasting and frying. In all cases, the results indicated "that from a practical standpoint there was no significant decrease in the nutritive quality of the proteins."

This report was presented to the American Chemical Society in Detroit by Dr. C. E. Poling, Dr. H. W. Schultz and Dr. H. E. Robinson.

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Processed Milk Valuable

➤ PROCESSING milk leaves its proteins unimpaired in nutritional value, Prof. Carrell H. Whitnah of Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station told the Society. The milk samples used in tests on that most accommodating of animals, the laboratory rat, were evaporated, canned and sterilized. Some of them were also irradiated to produce either 270, 540, or 800 units of vitamin D per quart. In all tests, the variously treated samples of milk were found to be "without loss of protein quality as measured by digestibility or biological value."

Other tests showed no difference in digestibility or biological value in samples of evaporated milk at various periods from two weeks to 14 months after preparation; in other samples protected against spoilage with various preservatives, and in still others selected at various stages in the cow's lactation period.

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Sulfa Affects Nutrition

➤ UNFAVORABLE effects of some of the sulfa drugs on the nutrition of patients receiving them was reported by Dr. Gustav J. Martin of the Warner Institute, New York. At least part of these drawbacks to the use of the "miracle drugs" are due to action of the sulfa compounds in discouraging the growth of the bacteria in the digestive tract, which appear in some way to aid the formation of certain vitamins.

One vitamin in particular, the hemorrhage-stopping K, is dangerously diminished by sulfa treatment, so that the patient is apt to bleed troublesomely from minor wounds. This condition can be corrected by adding vitamin K to the diet. It appears also that vitamin C acts as an "encourager" to vitamin K, so that the addition of C to the sulfa-treated patient's diet is helpful as well.

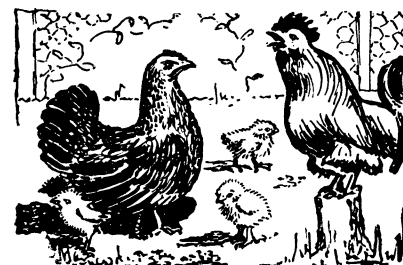
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Test Loss of Thiamin

➤ EFFECTS of various steps in the canning process on the thiamin (vitamin B₁) content of several vegetables were reported before the meeting by Dr. L. E. Clifcorn and Dr. D. G. Heberlin, of the Continental Can Company.

The preliminary process of blanching, that is, brief scalding of the vegetables with steam or hot water, seems to have variable effects. Even size has something to do with it; large green peas lost less thiamin upon blanching than did little ones. Asparagus showed no loss of the vitamin after blanching in hot water at 170 degrees Fahrenheit for 90 seconds. After blanching, whole green beans were found to have retained 94% of their original thiamin content, but their retention in cut beans was only 84%.

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Mixed Symbols

➤ EASTER EGGS, gaily dyed and decorated, have come to be taken pretty much for granted as just something we do at Easter time, just as candles are an accepted part of the Christmas celebration. Most of us have forgotten the symbolism once taught us at Sunday School: that the egg, capable of producing a living chick when its seemingly lifeless shell was cracked, is a sign and token of "resurrection, and life everlasting," breaking the seal of the sepulcher.

Presence of a rooster, somewhere in the background, fitted well enough into the Easter picture: was it not one of these trumpet-voiced birds that chided Peter for his weak-kneed denial, and put into his spine the stiffening of repentance?

All this is wholly orthodox and proper Christian symbolism; but there are elements mixed in with it that represent survivals of remoter, more nearly forgotten pagan observances. Giving gifts of eggs at all is a pre-Christian custom: the old spring festivals were seed-time rites, and anything suggesting sprouting and fertility was proper to the occasion. Eggs and chickens, rabbits and their young, wreaths of flowers for the hair, all belong to these dimly remembered ceremonials of the childhood of our race.

It is, perhaps, not too violent a stretch of the imagination to suggest that even our most sophisticated Easter bonnets are such survivals. All the ladies have done is interpose a bit of straw or felt between their hair and the flowers, and substitute non-wilting artificial blooms for the perishable gleanings from spring-time meadows and woodlands. Confirmation of this theory of the paganness