

RADIOLOGY

Irradiated Foods Considered Safe

► FOODS that are preserved by radiation are considered as safe for human consumption as foods processed by conventional heat.

Careful studies made during the past 15 years have failed to demonstrate that irradiated foods are less safe than others, Dr. Herman F. Kraybill of the U.S. Public Health Service reported to the International Conference on Radiation Preservation of Foods in Boston.

Irradiation subjects the food to low-level doses of gamma rays which kill most bacteria causing decay. This process has come under a more critical safety evaluation than any of the accepted preservation methods such as freezing, salting, dehydration and canning, Dr. Kraybill said.

Radioactivity induced as a result of radiation processing can theoretically have only a short half-life with rapid disappearance within 24 hours, Dr. Kraybill reported. This is comparable to natural radioactivity in food, he pointed out.

The conference was sponsored jointly by the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council, the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission and the U.S. Army Materiel Command's Natick (Mass.) Laboratories.

• Science News Letter, 86:239 October 10, 1964

Nature Note

Rhino, the Ugly Giant

► BIG, MEAN and ugly, the rhinoceros is one of the most formidable beasts on the face of the earth. So temperamental and dangerous is this monster that lions and tigers rarely attack it, and only the elephant has its grudging respect.

Rhinos are stupid and unfriendly—so unfriendly that they do not even like each other's company, and usually travel alone. Although vegetarians, they will attack other animals and humans without provocation.

Their eyesight is miserable, but their senses of smell and hearing are sharp.

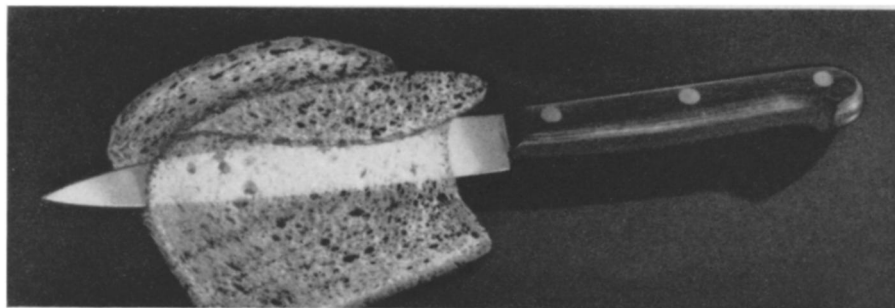
Rhinoceroses are found in both Asia and Africa, and come in five varieties, the Black African Rhino, the White African Rhino, the Great Indian Rhino, the Javan Rhino and the Sumatran Rhino.

Of these, the most common is the Black African Rhino. The largest is the White African Rhino, which stands six feet high at the shoulder, and weighs as much as four tons. The Indian Rhino is the meanest and ugliest of the five species; its hide is gray and lumpy and looks like armor-plating.

The rhino's famed horn is not made of bone; it is thick hair held together by natural "glue."

Rhinos prefer to roam at night and on cloudy days. All rhinos are good swimmers, and like to wallow in mud and dust, presumably to rid themselves of insects.

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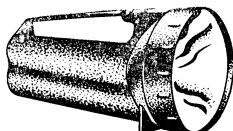
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