

Editorials

Anytime Is Turkey Time

GOBBLE, GOBBLE, GOBBLE. This turkey talk as freely translated by the National Turkey Federation means "summertime, holiday time, anytime is turkey time." And to convince consumers that this is so, July 25 to Aug. 4 has been designated for a whopper of a 1957 mid-summer turkey time promotion. USDA is helping through its "plentiful foods" program.

In the past, consumers have been inclined to regard turkey as Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday food. They haven't thought much about it, or bought much of it, at other times of the year. But the turkey growers believe their product is too good to be confined to so brief a market.

The mid-summer turkey time campaign was tried out on a rather modest scale last year. It proved so effective that the growers, under the leadership of the National Turkey Federation, decided to make it an annual event.

Food dealers will be supplied with posters and other promotion devices, which will make it easy for them to feature turkey. Storage stocks are adequate to meet a substantial demand. And production is up again this year.

Industrial Use of Farm Products

A DYNAMIC AND IMAGINATIVE approach to farm-product utilization as an important way of dealing with farm surpluses is emphasized in the final report of the President's Commission on Increased Industrial Use of Agricultural Products.

In diagnosing the surplus problem, the Commission finds that American farmers have succeeded so well in the necessary effort to increase their efficiency that they now consistently outrun the capacity of the economy to consume what they produce. And, although population is growing and living standards are rising, the productive capacity of our agriculture promises to keep increasingly ahead of both for many years.

The Commission reports that any substantial increase in exports of agricultural products seems unlikely because other countries are becoming more and more self-sufficient. The basic question therefore is, "Can the economy develop profitable industrial markets capable of absorbing enough of the excess farm production to minimize, possibly even to eliminate, the need for costly restrictions, supports and surplus disposing operations?"

The Commission believes the answer to this question is an emphatic "yes," provided the necessary steps are taken promptly and vigorously.

Here are the essential steps, as summarized in the recommendations:

- (1) Increased participation by public and private institutions in an effective research network.
- (2) Greatly expand basic research on use of farm products.
- (3) Increase use of grants, fellowships and scholarships to increase the nation's supply of scientists.
- (4) Place more emphasis on government-industry sharing of research costs.
- (5) Expand research and development work with new crops.
- (6) Make wider use of commercial-scale trials of new products.
- (7) Offer eco-

Whether this national promotion will be so successful as to stimulate an increase in turkey production in Montana, northern Wyoming and other states remains to be seen.

Growers have turned away from turkeys to more profitable lines of production in this area in recent years. In 1944, 153,000 turkeys were produced in Montana bringing an estimated cash income of \$960,000. By 1955, this production had dropped to an estimated 67,000 with a valuation of \$306,000.

But in 1956, production increased to 84,000 birds, a 25 per cent larger crop than in 1955. It is estimated that in 1957 there will be a further increase in production of 6 per cent.

If this nationwide turkey promotion should really catch fire and bring about a longer seasonal demand, expanded production would surely follow.

But turkey is not alone in its effort to win greater consumer favor. Beef, lamb, pork and broilers are all headed for extensive promotion programs. Producers of these foods believe anytime is their time, too. It's a case of every product for itself and the poorer market take the hindmost.

conomic incentives to growers and processors to bridge the gap between research and established users of crops.

The Commission urges at least a three-fold increase in funds for industrial utilization research in the Department of Agriculture.

For the administration of the proposed industrial use program, the commission proposes either (1) the establishment of a 5-member non-partisan agricultural research and industrial board, appointed by the President, or (2) placing the responsibility for the program in the USDA under a director with the rank of assistant secretary of agriculture, in charge of research and education within the department.

In the past, USDA and other agencies engaged in agricultural research have concentrated largely on methods of increasing and improving production. In the meantime, many industrial concerns have developed synthetic products which have displaced agricultural products in the market.

Thus nearly half the market for natural fibers—cotton, wool, flax, silk—has been taken over by synthetic fibers. Two out of three pairs of shoes are now made partly, or wholly, of leather substitutes. Much of the soap has been replaced by detergents which do not use natural fats. In the same way, paint and varnish manufacturers now by-pass linseed and other vegetable oils.

With few exceptions, farm products have not had the intensive and systematic laboratory attention that has been given materials from other sources. But when careful research has been applied to agricultural materials outstanding results have been secured, as in the case of commercial methods for producing penicillin, frozen concentrated fruit juice, nylon from corn cobs and various commercial products from soybeans.

Raw materials produced by farmers are

made of chemical components, just as are most of the non-agricultural materials that are used so extensively in industry. With sufficient research, farm produced materials also can be "modified, tailored to particular needs, taken apart and re-combined to make new products with new properties," the Commission believes.

In carrying out their assignment the Commission members consulted with nearly 200 of the country's top leaders in agriculture, industry and science. Their studies convinced them that the possibilities of industrial utilization of farm products and materials are tremendous. They see an end to the agricultural surplus problem in the years ahead, if a broad and vigorous research program is developed promptly.

Straws in the Wind

Strong support is building up in Congress for a limitation on the size of soil bank check for an individual farm operator. In the House measure recently passed, there is a limitation of \$2500 per farm. The main criticism of such a limitation is that it would drive the big operators out of the program and to that extent reduce the effectiveness of the surplus control feature of the plan.

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Read the labels on containers of insecticide, weedicide and other agricultural chemicals before using. These products are highly effective when properly used but they can be dangerous when carelessly handled. Some are irritating to skin, eyes and nasal passages, so follow directions closely.

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There's wide disagreement among scientists as to the danger from radioactive fallout resulting from testing of atom and hydrogen bombs. Some say the danger is very real and widespread. Others contend that there is very little danger of injury to human beings except in the vicinity of the explosions. Still others take an "on the fence" position. Scientists, in other words, are people. And like other people they frequently differ widely in their interpretation of available facts. The less they know about any particular situation, the more extreme are likely to be their statements regarding it.

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One reason why the surplus problem is not so serious with beef as it is with wheat is that beef is a perishable product. Cattle cannot be held and stored indefinitely like grain. They must be marketed. Price adjustments, while frequently severe, are not as long lasting. Another advantage enjoyed by beef is that per capita consumption is on the rise.

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