

Office of Price Administration
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HIGHLIGHTS OF RECENT FOOD RATIONING ACTIONS

In carrying out provisions of a directive from the Office of Economic Stabilization, OPA has tightened and expanded the food rationing program.

Here's a brief review of the supply situation for the commodities affected the changes in rationing:

Civilian supplies of sugar, butter and commercially canned fruits and vegetables are at the lowest point since the war began, and meat supplies are declining.

Sugar.

According to present estimates there won't be as much sugar to meet 1945 civilian needs as was used in 1944.

Present stocks are low. Government needs will be higher, and shipping and man power limit an increase in supply.

The majority of people have already spent sugar stamps and canning certificates issued in 1944, to meet their 1944 needs. The remaining old unused stamps and certificates were cancelled, so that the 1945 supply can be divided to meet 1945 needs.

The current sugar stamp No. 34 is good for 5 pounds of sugar. There will be a new one on February 1, which will have to last 3 months instead of 2 1/2.

No announcement has been made concerning the details of the sugar for home canning program. However, ration coupons for no more than 700,000 tons can be issued for home canning in the 1945 season. It is felt that with this amount housewives will be able to can as much as they did in 1944 if all the sugar allotted for home canning is used for that purpose, and if home canners stay within the sugar limits recommended by the Department of Agriculture.

Butter.

There are no new reasons for the scarcity of creamery butter, but recently when production fell below the normal seasonal decline, all the old familiar problems became more acute. Truth is, a point value of 20 points a pound was simply not high enough to divide the butter evenly to fit the low supply. In many areas, butter sold faster than replacement stocks could be produced and distributed. Many stores were out of butter a good part of the time. Although butter production will pick up in the spring, we are now faced with the lowest trade stocks of butter since the beginning of the war. The new value of 24 points per pound should level off consumer purchases enough to permit the maintenance of a working inventory within the current civilian allotment, and thus make what butter there is more generally available throughout the entire country.

The government, which buys butter heavily during the "flush" season, is not buying now. Civilians are getting all supplies currently produced. It is impossible to direct more milk to butter production largely because

(1) government needs for other manufactured dairy products are up, and (2) civilians are drinking about 34 more quarts of whole milk per person than they did in prewar years. Considering the nutritional value of whole milk, this is a habit to be encouraged.

Meat.

Total meat production for the entire year will run well beyond that of prewar years but some 2 billion pounds less than last year. Supplies for civilians, for the various kinds and cuts are shifting. For example, there will be less utility beef but more beef of the better grades for civilians, and not nearly as much pork as last year at this time when the hog run was unusually large.

Military needs for meat continue high. There will be about 15 percent less meat for civilians in the first quarter of 1945 than during the first quarter of 1944. For the year as a whole there will be a little more per person on the average, than the amount consumed during some of the prewar years.

Restoring of points to many cuts and grades of meat will tend to correct the unequal distribution which made shopping extremely difficult in many areas when only 37% of the meat was rationed.

Canned Vegetables.

Total production of commercially canned goods has been going up steadily since 1941. But military requirements have been advancing even more rapidly. The amount of processed foods set aside for government use jumped from 25 per cent of the 1943 pack to 41 percent of the 1944 pack (pack year beginning July 1).

Because of heavy military requirements, coupled with strong civilian demand arising from large wartime incomes, the supply of canned fruits and vegetables available to civilians is now less than at any time during the war. In the current pack year, civilian supplies of canned fruit are only about half of prewar (the 1941 pack year), with canned vegetables down more than one-third.

On December 1, 1944, supplies of canned vegetables in the hands of processors and wholesalers were only 56 percent of supplies available on the same date in 1943.

Points were restored to several canned vegetables in order that the supply of these commodities could be made to last on a shared basis, for the remainder of the pack year.

Invalidation of Stamps.

Back issues of red and blue stamps were cancelled for much the same reason as were the old sugar stamps and certificates. People who needed their stamps to buy rationed foods had already used them for that purpose.

OPA was faced with this dilemma. If the first quarter of 1945 rationed food supplies had to be stretched to cover all outstanding food stamps, point values would have to be much higher than they are now. Many families so dependent on rationed food that they have only the currently valid stamps left, would have had their point spending power decreased a disproportionate amount, while those with back stamps to spend would be able to buy more than their share of the current supply. In the present situation, OPA felt the fairest action to the majority of consumers was to get rationing back on a current spending basis.

RATIONING NOTES FOR THE FARMER-PRODUCER

Farm Slaughtered Meat.

The sale of farm slaughtered meat is subject to the provisions of wartime rationing which affect meat obtained from any other legitimate source. However, farm families who raise animals for their own use are not required to give up points for meat from these animals if home or custom slaughtered. Farm families may also borrow and lend meat to each other without exchanging points. But when rationed cuts of home or custom slaughtered meat are sold or given away, red points must be collected by the farmer and turned into the local War Price and Rationing Board. All farmers who sell rationed meat may get from their War Price and Rationing Board the new Official Table of Point Values. The smaller cuts are listed on the consumer table. Large cuts or carcasses--such as a quarter of beef, a half of hog, or a whole carcass--are listed on the trade point value table. Both tables are printed on the same sheet. Families buying meat from a farmer may use as many as 18 red stamps from each book in advance of the general validation dates. This gives the consumer 180 extra points per book for buying farm meat in large quantities to store for future use.

Farm Butter.

Although creamery butter is now up to 24 points a pound, there has been no increase in the point price of farm or country butter. No collection of points is required for families who churn their own butter for home use, but if they sell a portion of it they are required to collect 12 red points a pound and turn them into the War Price and Rationing Board.

Points for Home Canned Foods.

The return of corn, snap beans, peas, asparagus and spinach to the ration list means that the housewife with home canned varieties of these vegetables to sell must now collect points for them. Tomatoes which have never been point free when commercially packed now require the collection of points when home canned.

The exact number of points to collect for any home canned food is listed on the official table of point values. Farm families with home canned food to sell are able to secure their copies of the new OPA point table from the local War Price and Rationing Board.