ee New Uses For Peanuts After

Climbing from Humble Surroundings to Big Place In A New Economy

By ELLIS HALLER From The Wall Street Journal, Chicago Bureau

Chicago-The lowly peanut, the five-cents-a-bag merchandise of the circus vendor, is going to win a higher rank in the fight to lick the fats and oils shortage.

The little goober-best known to Americans in candy, peanut, butter, and "in the bag"—is also prime source of vegetable oil. The war economy means that it must give that oil this year-and abundantly.

In pre-Pearl Harbor days, coconut oil from the Philippines, palm oil from the Dutch East Indies and Malaya, and tung oil, They cite several new develop-(it's been cut off longer) from ments in the field which promise China account for about 50 per sustained production and concent of this country's vegetable-fats-oils imports. That's all out the window now.

this—a 1942 production 133 per cent above the 1941 figure.

With reasonably satisfactory growing conditions and an average yield of 700 pounds to the acre, peanut production this year should reach 3 1-2 billion pounds, compared with the 1,588 billion pounds harvested from 1.9 million acres in 1941.

Such a phenomenal crop will assure the street-corner peanut from wool. vendor his usual stick-in-trade Peanut of this fall. But it will also bolster Uncle Sam's dwindling supply of oils for foods, soaps, munitions and a hundred other uses.

The government's 1942 peanut production goal calls for not on-ly a 1.9 million acres crop — the equal of last year's-for "normal" domestic consumption, but also counts on the harvest of an addi- from the nuts is peanut flour. This tional 3.5 million acres to be crushed for oil purpos

How Industry Has Fared Since 1900

For old-timers in the peanut in-dustry here—brokers, warehouserefiners-the war-born revival of interest in the peanut as source of edible oil high-energy food product sumturn of the century.

gae of vegetable oil boosted production ,and up to the time of the Armistice, many farmers thought the peanut had solved their cash-crop problem for all time. But after 1918, importation of oriental peanuts and peanut oils increased domestic acreage declined. The crop just about held its own until the late twenties, when acreage again started to increase. In recent years, plantings have averaged well over 1 million acres annually.

Will the end of the present war another decline in peanut pro duction and a collapse in normal markets? Some branches of the trade are hopeful that it will not. sustained production and con-

Development of Cloth Fabric

According to W. B. Jester, ex-The peanut growers' answer is ecutive secretary of the National Peanut Council, Inc., research has developed a satisfactory cloth fabric made from the protein of peanuts.

This cloth has the appearance of a good quality Scotch woolen," Mr. Jester explains. "To the eye and touch it has the appearance of all-wool material. The wearing has been found to be quality practically the same as cloth made

Peanut cloth was invented by a Scotchman and was first patterned in England. Recently patents were taken out in the United States by Imperial Chemical Industries, Ltd. Up to the present time, the cloth has not been plac-ed on the market in commercial quantities.

One of the newest developments product has a high food value and high vitamin content, and is obtained from the protein left after oil is removed from the nut. Production has not yet reached the rarehouse- large-scale stage, as only one mill began to move eastward from and as a production is going into a concen-

Other Experiments

PEANUTS AND WAR

Holding a prominent place in the production of peanuts for many years, Martin County farmers, as a whole, this year heard their country's call and increased their acreage by about one-third or more than 6,000 acres directly for the war effort. They knew that the price for oil peanuts would not compare with that for those going into the edible trade, but it is just another where Martin farmer and peanuts are going all out

and even for a synthetic cork.

For a relative newcomer, the penaut plant has entrenched itself quite solidly in the agricultural economy. The crop has been cultivated in the United States for less than 75 years. Sixty years ago, annual production was less than 40 million pounds.

The origin of the peanut plant is still pretty much of a mystery. Department of Agriculture experts have concluded that it originated in Brazil or Peru where it grew wild as a shrub, and was carried by early slave ships to Africa. The nuts were first brought to North America by slave traders in Colonial days, and apparently were used as food for slaves on shipboard because of their cheapness and high food

For many years, the few peatry were confined to the Carolinas Virginia. Peanuts were not used much as a food until after the Civil War. Union soldiers were said to have carried roasted nuts back north with them, and in this form they soon became popular as a confection.

ern crop, more and more farmers turned to peanut growing. Many Experiments, meanwhile, have of them grew the crop chiefly as During the first World War, the utilized peanut hulls for insula- a food for fattening hogs, using South had a peanut boom. Short- tion board, for fertilizer material, the plant's vines as cattle fodder.

content, although peanut oil proessing did not develop in any ex-

In the little town of Enterprise Ala., peanuts brought such a high degree of prosperity in compari-son with the traditional cotton that the citizens once voted \$3,000 for the erection of a monu-ment to the boll weevil—as "The Herald of Prosperity."

Like all tropical plants, pea

nuts need moderate rainfall, plenty of sunshine and hot weather. Hence their cultivation centered in Virginia, the Caro-linas, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Oklahoma and Texas. There are three principal varieties grown in this country—Spanish, South-eastern Runners, and Virginia Jumbo, Bunch and Runner. crop is planted generally in April and May and under favorable weather conditions matures in about 160 days. At harvesting time the plants are ploughed up and piled into stacks around poles to permit the nuts to dry. Picking machines to separate the pods from the vines, and the peanuts are discharged into bags. Later they are taken to mills for cleaning, grading and shelling.

Less than 10 per cent for Roasting During the early days of the industry, most peanuts were sold for roasting in the shell. Nowa-days, less than 10 per cent of the commercial crop reaches the pub-lic in that form. Of the total annual domestic production, about 45 per cent goes into candy and confectionery, about 35 per cent into peanut butter, 10 per cent for roasting and miscellaneous

Within the past few months plan. arge numbers of carloads of raw shelled peanuts have been sold to Great Britain under the lend-ease arrangement. The governent here has also bought substantial quantities of peanut butr for use as a food for the milirv services

Chicago is the candy center of account for a large share of the cotton bags, but there are not en-orop. Other important peanut mar-ough of these to go around.

Others sold the nuts for the oil kets are Baltimore, Boston, Cleve land, Los Angeles, Cincinnati, and New York. According to the tensive fashion until the early tional Confectioners Association, years of the present century. the country's candy makers use about 200 million pounds of pea-nuts each year—the production of some 437,000 acres.

Because of its position as a cen-

tral storage and shipping point, Chicago also receives quantities of nuts for shipment to other manufacturing or refining points. Some of these supplies come by boat via the Mississippi, others come from the South by rail.

Peanut Butter Making

Manufacture of peanut butter, now one of the most important uses for the nut is a fairly recent development. It was about 40 years ago that food researchers discovered a palatable paste could be made from ground peanuts, but it took some years to gain popularity.

Most of the refining of peanut oil is done in the south, although some manufacturers of salad oils and shortenings refine the prod-uct at their northern plants. Among the larger refiners Proctor and Gamble, Swift & Co., Southern Cotton Oil Co., and the Durkee Famous Foods division of the Glidden Co.

Peanut oil can be transformed into a variety of useful products. It has been used chiefly in vegetable shortenings, oleomargarine, cooking fats and salad oils. It also goes into soaps, shaving crea cosmetics, glycerine, printers inks and pharmaceuticals.

In the past, peanut oil has had

cottonseed oil and imported oils; but wartime shipping difficulties have indirectly eanut oil on a better competitive

Difficulties Anticipated

Planters are expecting their share of difficulties in getting this fall's crop harvested. There is a shortage of farm machinery for cultivating the crop and for picking the nuts. Labor is becoming an increasingly important prob lem, particularly in areas near he peanut candy business, and industry plants. Scarcity of burnnual shipments to the market lap bags has forced substitution of

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