

"Black Markets" Are Said to Threaten Country's Food Supply In War Crisis

Heavy Demand for Goods Spurs Delivery on Side: Many Retailers Reported as Paying Extra Money for Meat; Say Food Trucks Hi-Jacked; Many Goods Upgraded.

America has a black market! That in short, is the name that has been pinned on the illegal distribution of commodities throughout the country since the government began to regulate production and establish price ceilings.

For the most part, "the black market" has existed in meat, so much that Secretary of Agriculture Claude

Wickard warns that unless operations cease, civilians will get less than two pounds of meat a week when rationing begins. Increased employment and higher wages have put more spending power in the pockets of the people. Those who are used to eating well don't feel like changing their habits now, and the army of new workers in busy war industries build up big appetites and get bigger pay checks to spend.

But army and lend-lease requirements are taking a large portion of American meat production, partic-

ularly in pork and beef, and the government has set slaughtering and packing quotas for civilians, approximating 70 per cent of 1941 consumption. This means civilians can purchase about 30 per cent less meat than they could two years ago, even though the demand has increased since that time.

With this condition prevailing, a host of illegal practices have come into being. Some violations have been unintentional, arising from an ignorance or misunderstanding of the law. But a good many others have been deliberate efforts at underhandedly supplying the demands of the trade.

Cattle Killed in Country: Sold to Retail Trade.

Fanciful stories have arisen about the old Capone gang's dealings in restricted commodities to recoup illegal revenues recently lost from gambling and labor rackets. But more factual, although less exciting, practices have been revealed.

Some of these practices concern farmer or country slaughter of animals and sale to small town retailers. In such cases, just several or maybe, even one, head of cattle, are involved; but federal officials frown on such business, saying it breeds waste and unsanitary conditions, and privies slaughterers and packers of badly needed cattle volume. Some farmers are supposed to be paying packing-house slaughterers fancy prices for coming to the barn yards to kill animals.

According to the regional OPA office of Cleveland, estimates have been made that as high as 40 per cent of the meat sold in the area adjoining Cleveland comes from bootleg sources. The office claims that from 40 to 50 per cent of the offerings on the Cleveland livestock market are bought by country interests at prices from 1 to 2 cents above the ceiling allowed inspected packing houses. The office further contends that bootleg beef is selling from 1 to 5 cents over set prices. Certain packers are said to be selling over their quota to civilians through the wholesalers and jobbers they can trust.

Retailers Sign False Invoices
In the New York area, some retailers were reported to have bribed speculators and paid bonuses for the choice meats. Dealers assert that \$250 to \$300 bought 25 hindquarters of good beef. Retailers then sold cuts above ceiling prices to willing customers.

OPA was said to have received confessions from some butchers in the eastern states of New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware that they connived with distributors in obtaining illegal supplies of meat.

According to these confessions, the butchers paid higher prices than invoices showed, paid for meat not delivered although listed in invoices and paid for higher grades while receiving lower grades. OPA said that the butchers claimed it was necessary for them to engage in such practices if they wanted to get their ordinary quota of meat from distributors to keep their shops operating.

One of the common procedures in the "black market" has been in the upgrading of different cuts of meat. By upgrading lower cuts, of course, operators have been able to obtain higher prices for their sales.

Hi-Jackers Dilute Coffee.
Large quantities of beef, coffee and sugar are reported to have been hi-jacked. It is said that stolen coffee is stretched by mixing cheaper brands with the best, with the mixture being sold at top grade prices.

Sugar hi-jacking has been for the benefit of illegal distillers, it is said. Rationing of sugar has cut deeply into the inventories of alcohol bootleggers. To get the necessary stocks to keep their stills going, they have resorted to hi-jacking.

Capitalizing on the increased demand, certain "black market" operators are reported to have sold inferior or substitute goods to consumer outlets. Horse meat is supposed to have been sold as beef. Hamburger sold in low-price restaurants has to undergo regular tests by government chemists in some districts in an effort to maintain healthy quality.

About the only solution of the problem might lie in increased production of food; but with army and lend-lease requirements up, and with farmers beset with problems of labor and machinery, little relief can be expected from this direction. In fact, state agricultural commissioners predict a ten per cent decrease in crops from last year.

The exact extent of the "black market" especially in meat, is unknown, but packers think it is big. The department of agriculture estimated the marketing of over 7,000,000 pigs in January, for instance, but only about 5,000,000 were shipped. Packers are trying to figure if "black market" operations might account for some of this deficiency.

NOW COME THE "MOPS" WORKING FOR VICTORY

They are working on the home front—those housewives doing their bit behind the frying pan, washing machine and bassinette—taking their cues from the WAACS and WAVES and banding together in the "Maternal Order of Patriots—"Mops" to you. Read about these patriotic women in the March 14th issue of the AMERICAN WEEKLY, the big magazine distributed with the BALTIMORE SUNDAY AMERICAN. Ask your newsdealer to reserve your copy.

Prediction



New York's mayor La Guardia shakes hands with Undersecretary of War Robert F. Patterson as they appeared at the American Labor Press association luncheon in New York. In an address before the group Patterson declared that the indications are that the Nazis and Japs will "lay down their arms in 1944 or 1945."

The Week In Washington

A Resume of Governmental Happenings in the National Capital

Washington, D. C., March 2.—"The thing that amazes me most about Washington," said a prominent member of the government, "is that in spite of all the fights, the confusion, the waste, the fast-changing regulations and the many changes in personnel, we still seem to be getting things done."

That statement expresses a general attitude in Washington. Practically everyone here is extremely conscious of the many muddled and complicated situations, but they are optimistic in the belief that we can accomplish more, in spite of muddling, than other nations can accomplish, no matter how efficiently their war program is managed.

The most dangerous fight of the many pitched battles going on in Washington, is that between the army-navy leaders against the War Production board. As it now stands the WPB has the upper hand in that it has been given power by the President to direct the scheduling of munitions output—a function which the war and navy department are convinced should be given to them. The fight has reached the point, said one military official where chairman Nelson of WPB will either be forced to quit or the under-secretaries of war and navy will resign.

Mr. Nelson, however, has indicated that he has no intention of quitting nor of giving in to the army and navy—and he has strengthened the power of WPB by giving Charles Wilson, his executive vice-chairman, practically the same powers as he wields himself.

The army and navy are also battling with congress over the selective service. Congress feels strongly that there is no need to draft fathers until after all other available men have been drafted, and it favors legislation to provide that no fathers in a state shall be called until all unmarried men under 38 as well as those without children are taken.

There is also another battle regarding selective service being waged by the farm bloc which is pressing for legislation to provide that no more farm boys can be drafted until next January and that farmers now in the army be released during the farming season. Because of the critical shortage of labor in farm areas, the congressmen from farm states believe such a regulation is imperative and they also want the Manpower commission to rule that men cannot leave the farms to go into war industries without approval of their local draft boards.

Action by both houses of the new session of congress makes it apparent that the members intend to get the legislative body back into the driver's seat of government and will

no longer simply be "yes men" for the President. The most obvious example of this, so far, is congressional action to get rid of the \$25,000 limitation on income which went beyond his constitutional powers in issuing this order in the first place and they feel that, even if the curb on large incomes is to be continued, it should be as a result of congressional action.

It is expected that the greatest test of power, as between the President and congress, will come when legislation is considered to curb labor unions, to prevent strikes and show-downs, and to freeze labor's wages. This is admittedly a touchy subject which may be avoided temporarily but it is apparent that the present congress is in no mood to make any further concessions to labor, and, as soon as any new difficulties flare up, a flood of labor regulation measures are apt to be introduced.

Rural Women Pledge "Food For Freedom"

Mrs. Estelle T. Smith, assistant home demonstration agent at N. C. State College, has announced that all rural women in North Carolina will be given the opportunity of signing a pledge in the "food for freedom" campaign, which will be held during March.

Presidents of the home demonstration clubs, county federation presidents, district chairmen, members of the executive boards, and home demonstration agents are all taking a part in the drive. Home demonstration club women, with the assistance of neighborhood leaders, will visit every family in their district and explain the food situation.

Mrs. Smith said that "live at home" is not just a popular slogan, but is an

idea which should receive the serious consideration of every farm family throughout the state. Plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables during season and enough home-canned products for the remainder of the year, will relieve the strain on rationed foods, and guarantee an adequate supply of commercially canned products for the armed forces and for the Allies.

Rural women are asked to make plans for about one ton of food for each member of their families for the year. As a result, the Victory Garden will be a No. 1 project on every farm. Meetings for canning, brining and drying foods will be held. Thousands of home demonstration club women throughout the State have produced and conserved enough food for the entire family in the past, and these leaders will attempt to make the "live-at-home" program a reality on every farm in 1943.

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Mr. Customer! KNOW YOUR POINTS

The information is printed here for your convenience by your groceryman. Study it! Clip it out and save it. It will save you time and trouble.

Here are excerpts from the official OPA table, showing point values in the common sizes of the most widely sold processed foods.

The public is urged to study this table and have their points figured up before making their purchases. This will save the time of our clerks as well as that of the purchaser.

CANNED AND BOTTLED

Item	No. 2 No. 2½ No. 3		
	Can	Can	Can
Fruit, Fruit Juices:			
Apples, including Crabapples)	10	15	23
Applesauce	10	15	23
Apricots	16	24	37
Berries—all varieties	14	21	32
Cherries, red sour pitted	14	21	32
Cherries, other	14	21	32
Cranberries and Sauce	14	21	32
Fruits for Salad and Fruit Cocktail	14	21	32
Grape Fruit	10	15	23
Grapefruit Juice	10	15	23
Grape Juice	10	15	23
Peaches	14	21	32
Pears	14	21	32
Pineapple	16	24	37
Pineapple Juice	14	21	32
All other canned and bottled Fruits, Juices, and Combinations	10	15	23
Vegetables and Vegetable Juices:			
Asparagus	14	21	32
Beans, Fresh, Lima	16	24	37
Beans, green and wax	14	21	32
Beans, all canned and bottled dry varieties including Baked Beans, Soaked Dry Beans, Pork and Beans, Kidney Beans and Lentils	10	15	23
Beets, including pickled	10	15	23
Carrots	14	21	32
Corn	14	21	32
Peas	16	24	37
Sauer Kraut	5	8	12
Spinach	14	21	32
Tomatoes	16	24	37
Tomato Catsup and Chili Sauce	14	21	32
Tomato Juice	14	21	32
Tomato Juice	14	21	32
Tomato Products, all other	16	24	37
All other canned and Bottled Vegetables			
Vegetable Juices and Combinations	14	21	32

(Following are the approximate weights of the popular-sized cans: No. 2—from 1 lb. 2 oz. through 1 lb. 6 oz.; No. 2½—from 1 lb. 11 oz. through 2 lb.; No. 3—from 2 lb. 12 oz. through 3 lb.)

DRIED, DEHYDRATED FOODS

Item	12 oz.	16 oz.
Prunes	15	20
Raisins	15	20
All others	6	8
Dry Beans	8	Points Pound

OTHER PROCESSED FOODS

Soups, Canned and Bottled, all varieties	6 for 10½ oz.
Baby Foods, Canned and Bottled, all varieties except Milk and Cereals	1 (4 oz. through 5½ oz.) 2 (5½ oz. through 9 oz.)

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