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Every once in a while a handy word or phrase comes into popular usage which. seems to fill a current need. Of course there may be a wish to be fashionable in those who take up the new word or phrase -- and work it to death -- and there may be a bit of stuffiness among those who reject what is newly coming into vogue.

In talking about the subject of human nutrition, for example, there is a rather recent phrase, now almost a cliche, which occurs frequently in current discussions. This is the phrase "life style". It is a handy and maybe even useful word combination. The use of "life style" is not confined to discussions of nutrition, however, and I'll

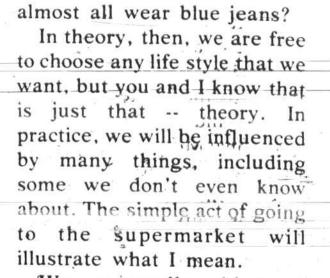
# SPRING AINING BEGINS RUARY 23

## What Are You Eating?

### By Dr. Howard A. Schneider. **Director of the Institute of Nutrition** b of the University of North Carolina

guess that you have found it popping up in your newspaper, your magazines, on TV, on the radio, and just about everywhere. I don't know who introduced it, but sociologists and economists seem to use it a lot, and now it is being taken up by the public health scientists in general. It is the use of the term "life styles" by these professionals who are in the business of guarding our health that I think is worth looking at a bit more closely.

When you think about it, "life style" suggests a certain freedom of choice in goingabout the business of living. But at the same time there is a pressure from society to make choices of a certain kind. It is the old dilemma. When, if ever, are we truly free? We all recognize the subtle pressure of "style". Take high school and college students, for example. Is it any wonder that once the idea spreads that blue jeans are "in" that



We generally think of supermarket shopping as a series of free choices we ourselves make concerning foods we want to eat. But how many times do parents of young children buy a particular product under pressure from their children. who have seen the product advertised on TV? Food marketing is a very complex business which involves psychology, sociology, economics, and billions of dollars a year. Hundreds of experts join together to do one thing: cajole you to buy their product.

While it would seem that our food choices are freely made, they actually are subtly manipulated by food marketing experts. It is no wonder that we sometimes make poor choices.

And so when it comes to

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matters of health it is rather a change of direction for the public health experts to be saying that if you are in bad health it's your own fault; that it's really not a matter of their responsibility; that it's all-aa result of the life style that you have chosen for yourself. And so, in matters of nutrition too, they often add, if you aren't eating properly you have no one to blame but yourself.

Well, "blame's is a pretty . strong word, and in this matter of choosing what to eat I really don't think it should apply. I find that most people would really like to choose correctly -- as far as they can afford it -- but the advice from all sorts of "experts" is so conflicting -- and changing -that they are honestly puzzled. I think this puts a load on the public health worker. They are correct, it seems to me, to suggest that "life style" choices are open to you, but at the same time they should take into account the limitations of the word "style." In the real world choices are not all that "free". And then most importantly, I think these same public health experts should re-double their efforts to improve the quality of advice you are getting, and further, should not shift the burden entirely on to you, but live up to their title of "public" health experts to see to it that our "public" supplies of food -- and the food See Eating, Page 10

