

Beef prices are stabilizing

Beef prices have been erratic lately because of winter storms and the difficulty in getting animals to market. But prices are leveling off and should stay about the same until summer, says Rachel Kinlaw, extension foods specialist, North Carolina State University.

"Look for specials on round steak, roasts and sirloin. You can also expect some sales on steaks during the cold months when few people are cooking outdoors," Mrs. Kinlaw says.

The large sub-primal cuts give you the most for your money, but the cost may put this good buy out of range. You can also save by buying "reduced for quick sale" items. The beef may have turned a light brown color, but it is caused by oxidation. The meat is still good if it is used

immediately or frozen and used within a month. When buying reduced meats, look for expiration dates and know the store policy for returns.

If a full cut round steak is on sale, have the butcher cut a piece 1 1/2 inch to 2 inches thick. Use the top round for a roast or London broil. Then slice and pound the eye and bottom round to be used as Swiss or country-style steak.

Prices at the supermarket can be discouraging, but "think of food buying as a challenge to see how smart you can shop," Mrs. Kinlaw says.

"You'll feel good when you figure cost per serving," shop ads and look for specials. You'll also learn to know when a special is a special," says the extension specialist.

Americans consume too much sodium

Talk about low-salt and low-sodium diets can be confusing.

"Salt is a chemical compound which is 40 percent sodium and 60 percent chloride. Although the body must have sodium, most Americans eat much more than they need," explains Sarah Hinton, extension nutrition specialist,

North Carolina State University.

On the average, a person needs less than 1,500 milligrams of sodium a day. Most people get 5,000 to 7,000 milligrams a day. A level teaspoon of salt contains 2,300 milligrams of sodium.

Sodium seems to contribute to higher blood

pressure in some people. These people can help control their blood pressure by reducing the amount of sodium they eat.

"Salt is our number one source of sodium, so avoiding the salt shaker is a good first step," Mrs. Hinton says. "But sodium is found in many foods we eat."

Gwendolyn Brooks

Gwendolyn Brooks (1917-)

Gwendolyn Brooks was born in Topeka, Kansas, but has lived all her life in Chicago, where she became thoroughly familiar with the reality of the urban ghetto. She brought an honest, harsh realism to black poetry, rage, and frustration of those trapped there. Her first book appeared in 1945, *A STREET IN BRONZEVILLE*, and *ANNIE ALLEN* (1949), won her the first Pulitzer Prize for poetry ever given a black writer. Her works include several more volumes of poetry, a novel, and an autobiography. She has been a lecturer and teacher of creative writing for many years. Through her own writing and her encouragement of younger authors - who have reciprocally respected her as a pioneer poet of black consciousness and protest - she has bridged the literary gap between her generation and theirs. Because of her ability to strike out in new directions in her use of poetic forms and techniques, she has made herself one of the most influential and widely-read poets among readers of all ages.

Try to use ice cream, ice milk and sherbet within two weeks. Longer storage may cause crystal formation and affect taste.

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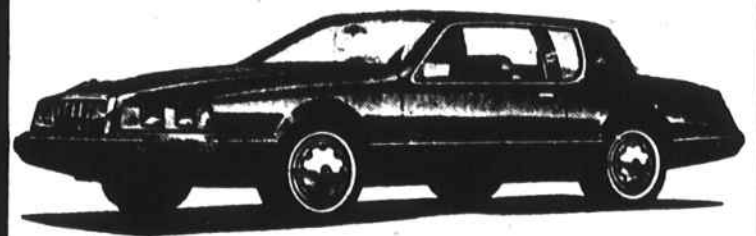
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