

Hiking Along

—By—
J. BIRD

A column devoted to the fields and streams and woodland of this section.

It is interesting to talk with different persons who spend a fair share of time out-of doors concerning their preference for "table" game. Many who have eaten wild turkey, properly prepared, rank this bird as number one on their game list for flavor and texture of meat. Others express a preference for bear, defending well cooked bear meat as excellent in flavor if a little course in texture. There seems to be a wide difference of opinion concerning deer meat. I have talked with persons who do not

care for deer regardless of how it is prepared, and others who are quite fond of this particular form of venison. I have always liked deer meat soaked a while in vinegar before cooking, or cooked with just a little vinegar to make less perceptible the some, times rather "strong" taste that is characteristic of the flesh of many wild animals. Incidentally, it has been my experience that much of this "wild" taste can be eliminated by freezing the meat before cooking. I have eaten bear steak which remained frozen for several weeks prior to cooking and bear steak chilled only a few hours before it was placed on the fire, and the former was not only more tender, but possessed a decidedly better flavor.

Man's habits are strongly influenced by precedence, and un-

fortunately so, in some instances. We refrain from eating many really fine meats because they are not commonly thought of as accepted items of diet. Ruxton, an Englishman who lived in the West many year ago, said, "Throwing aside all the qualms of conscientious scruples of a fastidious stomach, it must be confessed that dog meat takes a high rank in the wonderful variety of cuisine afforded to the gourmand and the gourmet by the prolific mountains. Now, when the bill of fare offers such tempting viands as buffalo beef, venison, mountain mutton, turkey, grouse, wild fowl, hares, rabbits, beaver tails, etc., the station assigned to dog as No. 2 in the list can be well appreciated—No. 1 in delicacy of flavor, richness of meat, and other good qualities, being the flesh of panthers, which surpasses every other, and all put together." Many travelers in the West in the early days were fond of dog meat. Lewis and Clark, in speaking of dog flesh, say, "The greater part of us have acquired a fondness for it . . . While we subsisted on that food we were fatter, stronger, and in general enjoyed better health than at any period since leaving the buffalo country."

The expression "eat crow" was in common usage at one time

and meant doing something that one had no taste for. Actually, while crow is possibly inferior to chicken, it is by no means unpalatable. I have eaten young crow with relish and when a boy, many were the sparrow "pies" that my mother prepared for me when I returned from the hedge-rows proudly bearing a brace of English Sparrows killed with the trusty Daisy air rifle.

Many who survived the siege of Paris testified that from a culinary point of view, cats were really delicious. To quote one of these, "Those who have not tasted couscousou of cat have never tasted anything . . . it is far more delicious than stewed rabbit."

Rattlesnake together with frog legs is considered a delicacy, and used to sell for as much as a dollar for a small can in the better stores in Florida.

Coon is another animal whose meat, while "strong", is not unpleasant. Last winter I killed a medium sized female coon which Mrs. Bird cooked, after much persuasion, but flatly refused to eat. The children would have none of it and I was forced to dine on coon chops, coon steak, coon roast and finally coon hash for an entire week. It wasn't bad at all for the first few days.

After all, those of us who eat

raw oysters and all of the pig but its squeal have little right to criticize those who eat fresh, wholesome wild meat, regardless of source.

Actually, while I cannot speak from experience and would hesitate to recommend it, even leather contains a semblance of nourishment. An extract from the diary of Sir John Franklin is rather grimly humorous, "There was no tripe de roche (an edible lichen that grows on rocks in the far North), so we drank tea and ate some of our shoes for supper."

In extreme cases of "eat or die", almost anything is edible. While I have never been in position where I was forced to eat the reindeer moss which is found so abundantly further north, I have on several occasions, eaten a gelatinous substance made from this moss by continuous boiling. I never learned to like it, but it does fill an empty void and affords a semblance of nourishment.

All of which emphasizes the fact that often many of us who live in the midst of plenty do not appreciate the excellent food to which we are accustomed.

One hundred years ago on September 10, two men in Memphis, Tennessee, were issued a patent on a cotton picking machine.

September Social Security Payments Will Be Bigger

Here is what happened to old-age and survivors insurance in this area when President Truman signed the 1950 amendments to the Social Security Act.

All monthly insurance checks now being paid to the social security beneficiaries in the area administered by the Fayetteville Field Office will be raised substantially, beginning with the September checks, according to Vernon D. Herbert, Manager of the local office. Mr. Herbert explained that these automatic increases, for September, are scheduled to reach local beneficiaries during the first week of October. Increases will range from about 50% to about 100%. For example, the average primary benefit of approximately \$26 per month for a retired worker will be increased to about \$46. A widow with two children who had been receiving \$55 a month will now receive about \$110 altogether.

Manager Herbert said that under the old terms of the social security law the 2,030 beneficiaries in this area would have received about \$28,230 (total) for the month of September. Under the new increases, however, total payments for September are estimated to be about \$53,200, or an immediate increase of some \$24,970 monthly in insurance benefits to this area.

Under the new law the amount of earnings which a beneficiary may make in a month, and still accept his insurance payment for that month, is raised from \$14.99 to \$50. This applies to beneficiaries under age 75, and for earnings in a job covered by society security. After attaining age 75, a beneficiary may have any amount of earnings and still accept his insurance checks.

A very important aspect of the new legislation is the more liberal qualifying conditions. Mr. Herbert pointed out that any individual now age 65 or more who has at least six "quarters of coverage" may be immediately eligible for monthly benefit payments. It has been estimated that about 750,000 old people in the United States may qualify for insurance payments under this clause. Many aged persons may now claim benefits even though they have not been employed long enough to qualify under the former requirements. Mr. Herbert said that this would affect a considerable number of aged persons in this area who had once filed claims for social security benefits but had not at that time been able to qualify.

The social security office has been reviewing records for several weeks to screen as many as possible of these persons and will send letters notifying them that benefits may now be payable if the claims is renewed.

The new definition of "employee" in the amended law accounts for an additional 350,000 to be covered by social security. This new definition extends Federal insurance to full-time life insurance salesmen, agent-drivers or commission drivers engaged in distributing meat or bakery products, vegetables or fruit products, beverages (other than milk) or laundry or dry-cleaning services. Full time traveling of city salesmen (other than house-to-house salesmen) are included.

Still excepted from social security coverage are farm operators, ministers and members of religious orders, and certain self-employed professional people.

The benefits will continue to be paid for in the same way - by payroll taxes on the workers and employers involved - but since self-employed as well as employed persons are now covered, a new way of collecting part of the taxes was called for. Self-employed persons will report their annual earnings and pay their special social security tax (2 1/4% to start with) when they make their income tax returns at the end of each year.

The new Undersecretary of Agriculture is Clarence J. McCormick, an Indiana farmer.

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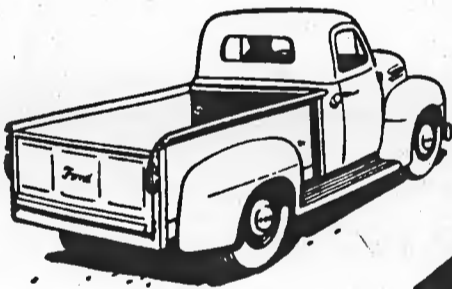
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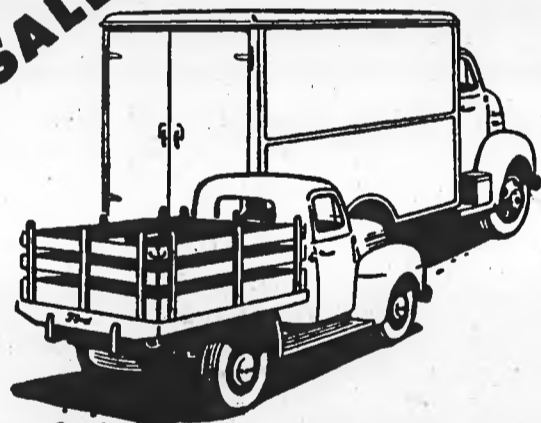
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