

income-expenditure curves for both food used at home and food away from home are steeper in 1965 than in 1955. Because of several differences in the two sets of data, however, we are not ready to conclude that there is a real difference in these income-expenditure relationships. Some of these differences are explained in a paper given at the National Outlook Conference last fall.²

Uses of Data From Food Consumption Surveys

Results of food consumption surveys are of value to many public and private agencies and individuals including Congress, USDA, and other Federal agencies, the food industry, and educators. The information provided helps guide farm and food policies, and the appraisal made of the nutrient adequacy of diets furnishes a basis for consumer education and action programs. The data also have wide use in economic and marketing research on the demand for agricultural products. To be more specific, I will speak of five uses.

Profile of national dietary situation. The surveys provide statistical profiles of the dietary situation of population groups in the United States. Comparisons of surveys show trends in food selection and nutritional quality of diets. A brief look at the situation found in earlier surveys shows that in:

1936-37—A third of the households were in great need of better diets.

1942—Considerable dietary improvement had taken place that was credited to higher incomes, concerted nutrition education programs, enrichment of bread and other cereal products and improvements in transporting and distributing foods.

1948.—Continued but less dramatic dietary improvements.

1955—Diets of about a third of the households were still short in one or more nutrients on the basis of the same criteria used in 1936-37. Shortages were still found among households in the upper third of the income scale.

1965-66—?

Results of the 1936-37 survey and related findings gave impetus to the enrichment of white bread and flour with three of the B-vitamins and iron, stimulated programs of nutrition education and provided a basis for the school lunch programs that we now have.

The results of the 1955 survey indicated need for dietary improvement in spite of relatively high incomes in the U.S. The data were used to develop new educational materials for families of both low- and middle-income levels. They also provided baseline data for the pilot food stamp program in 1961.

Food budgets. The food budgets at different cost levels developed about 35 years ago by Dr. Hazel K. Stiebeling of the USDA are revised periodically using survey data as a point of reference for family food habits. These food budgets are widely used in counseling with families on making wise use of available food money and also by welfare agencies as a basis for their food allotments for needy families. Costs are estimated quarterly and published in *Family Economics Review*.

More recently costs of the low-cost food budgets have been used by Mollie Orshansky of the Social Security Administration in developing the poverty yardstick now widely used by the Office of Economic Opportunity. The Department's food budgets are also incorporated in the Bureau of Labor Statistics' City Workers' Family Budget and Budget for a Retired Couple. Still another example of use is in the periodic cost-of-living budgets for employed women developed by States for use in the deliberation of minimum wage boards. In several research projects in our own Family Economics Branch, the food budgets are being used as important reference points.

Control and regulatory use of the data. During World War II, data from the 1942 food consumption survey were used in developing the rationing and price control systems. Of course, we hope we shall not have to use the data for that purpose again, but up-to-date data should be available in case the need arises.

In regulatory work the Food and Drug Administration and the Public Health Service both make use of our data on diets and food consumption in making estimates of amounts of residues, food additives and radioactive fallout in total diets. The statistics from these surveys provide weights for the amounts of various foods to use in estimating total amounts of the elements with which the regulatory agencies are concerned. The data on the food intake of individuals will be especially useful in ascertaining differences in amounts of these elements in the diets of different age groups.

² Changing Patterns of Family Food Spending, talk by Faith Clark at the 44th Annual Agricultural Outlook Conference, November 16, 1966.