

condition in the store in the higher income area, while in 4 percent of the cases, the quality was better in the store in the low-income area. The corresponding figures for the "volume selling" quality were 82, 12 and 6 percent.

PRICE MARKINGS FOR FOOD

The BLS agents were asked to report for the items included in the survey whether or not the prices were marked in each of the stores they visited and, for those that were marked, whether the marking was on the package or by other means (i.e., shelf, bin).

In a relatively few stores, prices were not marked for certain categories of goods; no case was reported in which prices were not marked on a wide range of items. Generally, commodities for which prices were not marked were those on which prices change relatively frequently or which are highly perishable. In outlets with meat counters attended by a butcher, prices were often not marked on fresh meats. With nonmarking so infrequently reported in both income areas, no valid comparisons can be drawn between the two areas with respect to this characteristic, but there does appear to be a tendency for fresh fruits and vegetables to be less frequently marked in outlets in low-income areas, and prices of fresh milk and eggs to be unmarked more frequently in higher income areas.

DIFFERENCES IN QUANTITY UNITS MOST COMMONLY SOLD IN THE TWO INCOME AREAS

One of the purposes of this study was to investigate the differences in the quantity units most commonly sold by stores located in the two income areas, and the effect of these differences on average prices when converted to standard units.

The quantities designated for pricing in the CPI specifications are based on the volume selling quantities as reported by the full CPI food outlet sample in that particular city; it was assumed that these represented the volume selling quantities of the outlets in the higher income area sample used for this study. Outlets in low-income areas frequently reported that for five items—flour, milk, sugar, bread, and cola drinks—the units they sold in greatest volume differed from those designated in the CPI specification. Frequently, prices were reported for different brands for these two sizes. In analyzing differences in prices in standard quantity units occasioned by differences in these sizes, only quotations reported within the same outlet on the same brand for the two different quantities were used.

In most cases when differences were reported, the outlets in the low-income area reported small quantities were more popular than those designated in the CPI specification. For flour, CPI quotations related to a 5-pound sack; outlets in low-income areas frequently reported a 2-pound sack to be the volume seller, but a few in Atlanta reported a 10-pound sack as the more popular. The price per pound ranged from 14 percent higher in New York City to 35 percent higher in Chicago when purchased in 2-pound sacks rather than in 5-pound sacks. Milk in half-gallon containers is priced for the CPI; sales in quart containers were more frequent in a number of outlets in the low-income area. When converted to a standard unit, consumers paid a premium ranging from less than 1 percent in Atlanta to 2 percent in Washington for purchasing in the quart sizes. Sugar was frequently sold in 2-pound packages rather than in 5 pounds; the price per pound ranged from 13 percent higher in Atlanta to 3 percent higher in Chicago when purchased in the smaller container.

A few low-income area outlets reported their volume of sales to be for larger-size loaves of bread than that designated for CPI pricing, while occasionally smaller loaves were reported to be more popular. Differences were too infrequently reported to draw any general conclusions, but it appears that the savings made by buying a large loaf usually exceeds the premium paid for a small loaf.

Cartons of cola drinks are priced for the CPI. Outlets in low-income areas frequently reported their volume of sales were for single bottles or cans and often for brands not available in the sample of outlets in the higher income area. In a number of low-income area outlets cola drinks were available only in chilled bottles from a dispensing machine.

AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES

Information was obtained from store managers about the availability of certain services to their customers in an effort to determine whether, in general