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Food Consumption in 1979

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Significant changes in the 1979 food consumption pattern were caused not only by economic conditions and weather variations, but also by nutritional values and cyclical changes in beef production. The greatest substitutions occurred among beef, pork, and poultry consumption.

Less Beef Eaten

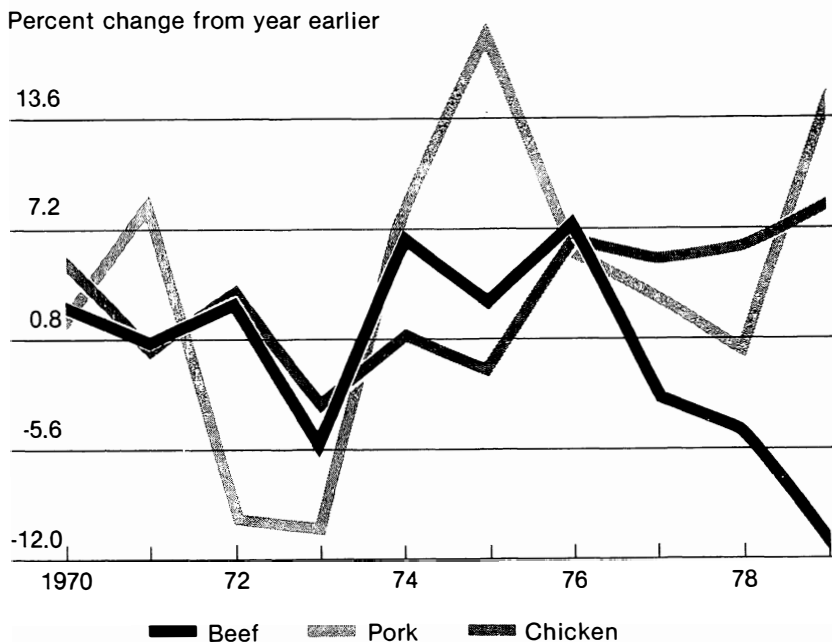
Beef consumption dropped 11.1 percent in 1979 from 89.2 pounds to 79.3 pounds per capita (retail weight)—the largest recorded decline since 1945. This decrease was offset by a 13.9-percent increase in pork consumption from 56.8 pounds to 64.7 pounds per capita (retail weight), the largest increase since 1974.

Poultry consumption increased 8.6 percent from 57.1 pounds to 62 pounds per person, partially offsetting the decline in beef consumption. Production has been the main factor influencing these changing consumption patterns. Basically, 11 percent less beef was available because beef production was sharply curtailed as the industry shifted from liquidation to herd rebuilding. Hogs, which take considerably less time than cattle to produce, increased 15.4 percent; and poultry production, which can be expanded in 3 months, rose 10.5 percent.

The past decade showed a fluctuating pattern of increases and decreases in red meat consumption. The first marked decrease occurred in 1973 when retail prices rose sharply as fewer cattle were marketed due to lower profits for the cattle industry. Consumption of beef increased in 1974 and steadily thereafter until 1977. Beef consumption decreased in the past 3 years while pork and poultry consumption increased.

Fish consumption increased 2 percent in 1979, one of a series of steady increases in recent years.

Change in Per Capita Consumption of Beef, Pork and Chicken



Overall consumption of red meat, poultry, and fish has increased 8 percent since 1969, from 206.2 pounds to 222.7 pounds per capita. Contributing to this increase are a 32.8-percent increase in poultry consumption from 46.7 pounds to 62.0 pounds per capita, and a 22.3-percent increase in fish consumption from 11.2 pounds to 13.7 pounds per capita. Total red meat consumption decreased 4.0 percent in the past 10 years from 153.3 to 147.1 pounds (retail weight) per person. This decrease is attributable to the following declines in consumption which occurred from 1969 to 1979: beef, from 81.9 to 79.3 pounds per capita; pork, from 65.7 to 64.7 pounds per capita; veal, from 2.7 to 1.7 pounds per capita; and lamb and mutton

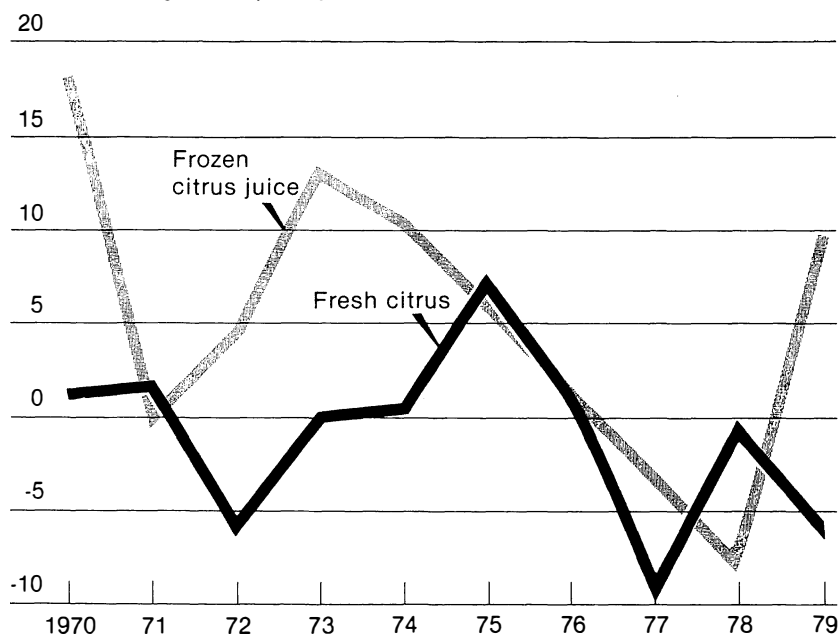
from 3 to 1.4 pounds per capita.

Changes have occurred in the consumption of meat, poultry, and fish for several reasons. Production of these commodities determines the quantities available for consumption. Therefore, changes in production will be reflected in consumption. Prices, which also affect consumption, are determined to a large extent by production. Less beef was available at a higher price in 1979, thus less was consumed. As more pork and poultry were available at a relatively lower price, more was consumed.

Other reasons frequently cited for tradeoffs among meat, poultry, and fish, but which have a more gradual effect, are nutrition information and ease of preparation.

Changes in Per Capita Consumption of Citrus Fruit Products

Percent change from prior year



More Cheese Chosen

Cheese consumption in 1979 reached 17.9 pounds per capita, the highest on record. Consumption has increased 63 percent in the past 10 years from 11 to 17.9 pounds per person. Consumption of the following cheeses increased in 1979: American cheese, 3 percent; Swiss cheese, 7 percent; cream cheese, 11 percent; soft Italian cheese, 6 percent; and miscellaneous varieties by 10 percent. Cheese is being used more frequently as a main-dish substitute and source of protein.

Total per capita consumption of fluid milk and cream declined in 1979 from 285.9 pounds to 284.2 pounds per person, down 0.6 percent. Consumption varied for the components of fluid milk

and cream as follows: fluid whole milk down 3.8 percent, from 180.0 to 173.0 pounds; fluid cream down 1.8 percent, from 5.7 to 5.6 pounds; and fluid low-fat milk up 5.4 percent, from 100.2 to 105.6 pounds per person. Consumption changes within this group indicate a change in dietary patterns.

Drinking More Low-fat Milk

Consumption of fluid whole milk decreased steadily over the past decade. Since 1969 it has declined from 241 to 173 pounds per person, down 28 percent. Fluid cream consumption remained steady with an average consumption of 5.7 pounds per capita in the past 10 years. Low-fat milks that include

buttermilk and all low-fat fluid items used in flavored drinks steadily increased over the same 10 years, from 53.9 to 105.6 pounds per person, a 96-percent increase.

Ice cream and other frozen dessert consumption declined 3 percent in 1979 from 27.8 to 27 pounds per person. Ice cream consumption remained around 17.5 to 18 pounds per capita in the beginning of the 1970's. In 1975, ice cream consumption peaked at 18.7 pounds and has been declining since.

Butter consumption remained the same in 1979 at 4.5 pounds per person. Since 1969, consumption has declined from 5.4 to 4.5 pounds per person. Consumption has been steady at 4.4 to 4.5 pounds per person in the past 4 years.

Total per capita consumption of fats and oils has increased 2.7 percent in 1979. Increased margarine and shortening consumption have caused this increase.

Fruit and Juice

Per capita fresh fruit consumption declined from 83.9 to 83.2 pounds per person in 1979. Fresh citrus fruit consumption, which declined 6.0 percent from 26.5 to 24.9 pounds per capita, caused the overall decline. Fewer oranges were available for sale on the fresh market, due to the December 1978-January 1979 freeze in California and Texas. Most oranges which were harvested from these States went to processing plants, thus increasing the frozen concentrated citrus juice supplies. More Florida citrus fruits than usual were sold on the fresh market where prices were higher.

Per capita consumption of frozen concentrated orange juice increased 10 percent in 1979, following a 1978 decline, and chilled citrus juice consumption increased 3 percent. Fresh

1968-1978: More Fish, More Poultry, Less Red Meat

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citrus consumption has declined 12.3 percent since 1969, while frozen citrus juice consumption has increased 62 percent during the same time period.

Apple consumption increased from 17 to 17.2 pounds per person while other non-citrus fruit increased 1.7 percent from 40.4 to 41.1 pounds per capita in 1979. Bananas and peaches were among the fruits contributing to the increase. Apple consumption increased in the past decade until it peaked in 1976 and has been stable for the past 3 years. Other non-citrus fruit consumption has been steadily increasing since 1969 from 36.2 to 41.1 pounds per capita.

Canned fruit consumption increased from 19.0 to 19.2 pounds per capita in 1979. This 1-percent increase follows a series of steady declines from 24.2 pounds per capita in 1969 to 19.0 pounds per capita in 1978. Canned fruit juice consumption repeated the record high of 17.4 pounds per capita, which was reached in 1978 and maintained in 1979.

Flour and Cereal

Per capita consumption of wheat flour, including the amounts used by commercial bakeries, decreased 3 percent from 115 to 112 pounds. Rice consumption increased 71 percent from 5.8 pounds per capita, a record low, to 9.9 pounds per capita, a record high. Corn, oats, and barley consumption remained stable at 94.4 pounds, 7.0 pounds, and 1.9 pounds, respectively.

Coffee, Tea, or Cocoa

Per capita coffee consumption increased 9.5 percent in 1979, from 10.5 to 11.5 pounds (green-bean equivalent). Tea consumption remained at 0.74 pounds per person and cocoa consumption declined slightly from 3.4 to 3.2 pounds per person. ■

U.S. food consumption patterns have shifted significantly during the past decade due to increases in overall and relative food prices and supplies, new information on nutrition and food safety, and technological advances in food processing.

One of the most notable changes is the substantial increase in fish and poultry consumption over red meats. Between 1968 and 1978, per capita consumption of red meats increased only 0.3 percent. A 9-percent rise in beef consumption during this period was offset by decreases in the quantity consumed of pork, veal, lamb, and mutton. However, per capita consumption of poultry and fish rose 28.0 and 17.3 percent, respectively.

This same trend held true for poultry products in the preceding decade (1958-1968), when per capita consumption increased approximately 31 percent. In that period, consumption of beef rose 32 percent, pork 10 percent, and total red meats 17 percent, while per capita consumption of fish increased less than 4 percent.

Total domestic consumption grew

dramatically for poultry and fish, with poultry consumption increasing 40 percent between 1968 and 1978, and fish consumption more than 25 percent.

The shift from red meats during the past decade occurred simultaneously with price increases. Rising consumer incomes, however, have helped maintain a demand for all red meats. But this increased spending power, coupled with recent reduced beef supplies, has resulted in a 105-percent rise in beef prices since 1968. Similarly, retail pork prices have increased 115 percent from an average of 67 cents per pound in 1968 to \$1.44 per pound in 1978. When deflated by the change in the Consumer Price Index, these two price increases become "real" increases of 17.5 percent for beef and 27.5 percent for pork.

Poultry has become a relatively greater bargain. Retail chicken prices rose 67 percent between 1968 and 1978 (20 percent less than the rise in the general food price level), and turkey prices rose 76 percent (more than 11 percent less than general food prices). In 1978, retail prices for chicken and turkey averaged 68 and 82 cents per pound, res-

Percentage Change in Per Capita Consumption of Beef, Pork, Fish, and Poultry 1968-78

Food Item	1968	1978	Percentage	Percentage
			Change (1958-68)	Change (1968-78)
			Pounds	
Red Meats	148.9	149.3	17.2	0.3
Beef	81.2	88.9	31.8	9.5
Pork	61.4	56.5	9.6	-8.0
Veal	3.0	2.5	-48.3	-16.7
Lamb & Mutton	3.3	1.4	-10.8	-57.6
Poultry (Chicken & Turkey)	44.6	57.1	31.2	28.0
Fish	11.0	12.9	3.8	17.3