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FOOD CONSUMPTION OF CORN, OAT, AND
BARLEY PRODUCTS

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FOOD CONSUMPTION OF CORN, OAT, AND BARLEY PRODUCTS 1/

Per capita consumption of food products made from corn and oats has trended upward since 1954, following a long downtrend. In 1965 about 32 pounds of corn food products (product weight) and 3.7 pounds of oat food products were consumed per capita; both were about a sixth more than in 1954 (table 11). The use of barley in food products, excluding beer, has been relatively stable at around 1 pound per capita. Only about 5 percent of all corn and oats and less than 2 percent of total barley goes directly into food products; the major use of these 3 grains is for livestock feed.

Corn Products

Consumption of all corn food products declined from about 85 pounds (grain equivalent) per capita in 1909 to 45 pounds in 1954, but since then has increased to 56 pounds. Increased use of corn in recent years has been due largely to increasing consumption of corn sugar (dextrose) and sirup, although consumption of prepared cereals and hominy and grits also has increased. Consumption of cornmeal has declined, mostly because of a decline in use of corn for food in farm households. Per capita consumption of corn sirup exceeded cornmeal consumption for the first time in 1955, and by 1965 was double that of cornmeal. Corn sugar consumption also has been increasing in recent years. Per capita consumption of cornstarch as food, which is relatively less important, has remained stable.

In 1965, a total of 116 million bushels of corn went into the production of wet-process products--corn sugar, starch, and sirup--for civilian food use, about 60 percent of the total food use of corn. 2/ About 70 to 80 million bushels of corn have gone into production of dry-process products for food consumption in recent years. The quantity of corn going into dry-process corn food products--cornmeal, prepared cereals, and hominy and grits--also has been increasing in recent years, according to recently revised data from the Census of Manufactures. 3/ However, the overall increase in consumption of these products has been much less than for wet-process products.

Although consumption of cornmeal and flour has declined, consumption of hominy and grits has increased substantially. The combined consumption of these 2 products has been fairly stable over the last 10 years at around 10 to 12 pounds per capita. Consumption of prepared cereals has been trending steadily upward in recent years. Based on Census of Manufactures data, it rose from about 1.7 pounds per capita in 1955 to 2.1 in 1965.

1/ By Malcolm Clough, Commodity Analysis Branch, Economic Research Service.

2/ Data on the shipment of wet-process products from processing plants are furnished currently by Dun and Bradstreet.

3/ Consumption of dry-process products is estimated on the basis of data from the Census of Manufactures adjusted for imports, exports, military consumption, and uses other than food.

Table 11.--Civilian food consumption of corn, oats, and barley,
United States, 1950-65 ^{1/}

Oat Products

Oatmeal and prepared cereals are the principal food products that contain oats. Although the quantity of oatmeal consumed has remained fairly stable in recent years, there has been a substantial increase in the quantity of oats going into ready-to-eat cereals. The total grain equivalent of oats going into food products rose from about 34 million bushels in 1955 to 47 million bushels in 1965. Based on Census data, about 65 percent of the food use of oats is for making oatmeal and about 35 percent for ready-to-eat cereal products and infant foods.

Barley Products

Food products made from barley principally include malt for food and pearl barley. Barley meal, once an important food product, has been insignificant in recent years. The Bureau of the Census does not report data on the food use of barley malt or pearl barley. Estimates of barley consumption as food are based on information from the industry and available information on the production of malt with adjustment for imports, exports, and alcoholic beverages. The major food uses of malt are for malt drinks, malt extracts, prepared infant foods, and breakfast cereals. It is estimated that about 5 or 6 million bushels of barley go for food uses; this is about 1.5 percent of total barley consumption.

