

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Washington, D.C.

PROBABLE NECESSITY FOR RATIONING ESSENTIAL CIVILIAN GOODS

Food rationing should be expanded as rapidly as possible. All essential food items for which the demand will exceed the supply for an extended period should be included. Although farm production has been running at record levels for several years and 1942 production was 15 percent higher than a year ago and by far the largest in history, the demand will exceed supply for a number of farm commodities because:

1. Imports are reduced for such commodities as sugar, coffee and vegetable oils.
2. Government purchases are extremely heavy, as is shown by the following table:

Commodity	1943 Military and Lend-Lease require- ments in percent of 1942 production
Meat	31
Milk and products in terms of milk	15
Eggs	28
Canned vegetables	36
Canned fruit and juices	43
Dried fruits	53
Dry beans	32
Dry peas	41
Lard	38
Soybean and Peanut Oil	14

3. Civilian purchasing power is highest on record.
4. There is need for accumulation of reserves against increased demand in the future.

Therefore, rationing is necessary because:

1. It results in equitable distribution between individuals.
2. It results in equitable distribution of supplies throughout the year.
3. It prevents waste and hoarding.
4. It will enable us to obtain more benefit from our food supply since it will tend to balance the need for the scarce protective foods with the foods in greater supply. For example, fluid milk could be given in greater quantities to children and mothers than to others who could obtain their dietary needs from other sources.

It is recognized that rationing involves many administrative difficulties yet a single comprehensive rationing program perhaps will present less total difficulties than will result from a piecemeal approach involving postponement until hoarding and scarcities occur.

Until such time as a comprehensive rationing program can be put into effect, it seems desirable to acquaint the public with reasons for rationing. It should be described as a means of preventing hardships rather than causing hardships. Pending establishment of the total rationing program, limitation and reservation orders of one kind or another should undoubtedly be put into operation.

Also to prevent hoarding the public should be told that it will have to deduct household stocks from ration allotments, and in flagrant cases of hoarding a penalty should be assessed.

/s/ CLAUDE R. WICKARD

Secretary