Total personal consumption expenditures for food in the United States were estimated to exceed $100 billion in 1969, an increase of about 50 percent over 1960. The increase was due to such factors as rising population, higher prices, more services and more expensive diets. There was, however, an estimated increase in real per capita consumption of food of nearly 6 percent during the 1960s.

While expenditures on food have been rising, the percentage of personal income spent on food has been declining. In 1960, food expenditures represented 20 percent of the total disposable personal expenditures. The U.S. spent the lowest percentage of income on food of any country in the world.

Significant shifts have been occurring in food expenditures which have forced changes in both production and distribution patterns. Food consumption expenditures away from home have risen from 17.5 percent of the total in 1960 to nearly 20 percent in 1970. Food consumed at home has changed substantially both in terms of form and content. Consumers are demanding more preparation, better packaging and greater uniformity of product. Service and quality, especially in terms of appearance has become increasingly important.

Meat products including fish and poultry, now account for about 25 percent of the food budget and are continuing to increase. Per capita consumption of beef rose from 82.1 pounds in 1957-59 to nearly 114 pounds in 1970. Pork consumption however, remained fairly stable at 60 to 65 pounds, while veal, lamb and mutton declined to less than 4 pounds each. Chicken increased from 27.5 pounds to more than 39 and turkey from 6.0 to more than 8.

Dairy products and animal fats and oils have in general declined in consumer diets. Fluid milk and cream consumption declined from 937

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*Figure 1. Food's Share of Total Expenditures, Selected Countries, 1967*

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*Expenditures for food as a proportion of total consumer expenditures, based on United Nations data.*

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*This estimate, as computed by U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, was developed by combining quantities of food consumed in terms of 1957-59 retail prices.*
Improved. Exceeding $15,000 spent $16.91 per week on food with only 10 percent of the expenditure away from home. Those with incomes between $2,000 and $3,000 spent less than $8.00 per week on food with only 10 percent of the expenditure away from home. For example, individuals from households related to income levels, as was the case with after-tax income between $2,000 and $3,000, spent less than $8.00 per person per week on food with only about 10 percent of the expenditure away from home. Those with incomes exceeding $15,000 spent $16.91 per person on food, nearly 29 percent of which was spent away from home.

Total expenditures were twice as large for the higher income group but amounts spent away from home were several times greater.

Some interesting effects on consumption of individual foods may be observed relative to income levels. Per capita meat consumption per week in families with $2,000 to $3,000 after-tax income was 2.87 pounds, while for those with $15,000 and over it was 5.21 pounds. Most of the additional consumption for the higher income group occurred in higher priced cuts. Lower income groups consumed higher per capita amounts of flour, cereal pastes, sugar, sweets, dried vegetables, beans, cabbage and beets. Higher income groups consumed much more fresh milk, cheese, butter and bakery products. Consumption doubled. Some of the declines in dairy products have been due to concern about fats, both type and amount, in the diet. Much of it is due however, to introduction of lower priced substitutes which continue to be improved. Vegetable oils have obviously been a major contributor to the dairy decline, the consumption of which has risen nearly 50 percent per capita in the last 10 years.

Shifts have occurred in other products as well, although of less significance. For example, per capita consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables has declined in favor of processed products. Fresh potato consumption dropped over 25 percent in the 1960s while processed potato consumption doubled.

Various factors such as family background, culture, religion and type of employment affect food consumption patterns but income levels are most influential. According to a USDA food consumption survey in 1965, per capita expenditures on food were directly related to income levels, as was the amount spent outside the home. For example, individuals from households with after-tax income between $2,000 and $3,000, spent less than $8.00 per person per week on food with only about 10 percent of the expenditure away from home. Those with incomes exceeding $15,000 spent $16.91 per person on food, nearly 29 percent of which was spent away from home.

Figure 2. Per Capita Consumption of Selected Livestock Products

Figure 3. Per Capita Consumption of Selected Crop Products