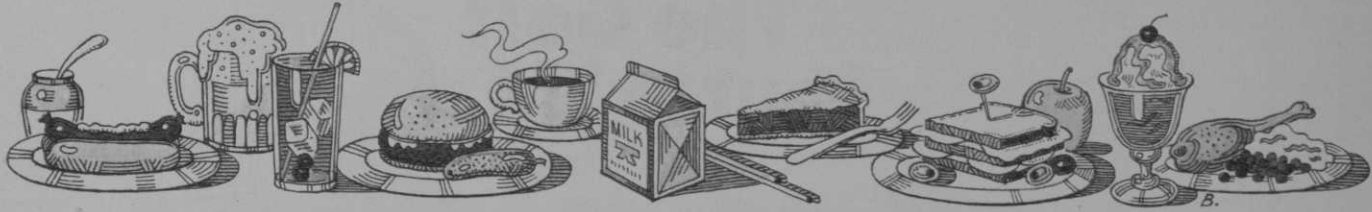


# The High Cost of Eating: A THORN IN THE MANAGER'S BUDGET



Hopes that Phase 4 would end or slow down rising produce costs will not be realized. Managers will be forced to pass on to their member-customers these increases, even if managers plan less expensive menu dishes. Unexpectedly, costs of menu paper and uniforms also will rise

by WILLIAM LOOMIS

No matter how you look at it, there seems to be nothing but headaches ahead in most of 1974 for golf and country clubs with dining facilities, however modest such enterprises may be.

Regardless of the complex reasoning and high purposes of President Nixon's Phase 4 economic program—the nitty gritty is this:

The costs of almost everything connected with food service is going to go up. That's the outlook based on talks with both Government agricultural experts and members of the food industry.

Included in price hikes will be not only beef, pork, poultry and other meats, fruits and vegetables, but probably wages, the paper menus are printed on and the uniforms waiters, waitresses and other restaurant employees wear.

Most economists agree that this leads to one basic fact: Customers are going to pay more for the goods they order.

How much more depends mostly on what dishes menus offer. Keeping food costs and tabs down without turning off customers, because of the small variety of foods offered, will place heavy burdens on menu planners.

Some restaurant experts offer this word of caution: Shoppers who grumble about higher food prices in their local markets will be horrified when they open up a menu and find out what's happened to restaurant food prices.

Restaurant managers are encouraged to have some explanations ready when complaints come pouring in.

Here's what Government agricultural experts list as reasons behind the problems menu planners face in the coming months:

Beef prices, from the choicest steaks and roasts to minimum grade hamburgers, may go on rising indefinitely after Phase 4 controls are lifted this month.

It takes 18 months to two years for newly-born cattle to reach the slaughterhouse. The number of cattle going into feed lots for slaughter late this year was down 12 to 14 per cent from a year ago. This means that cattle raisers

will not be able to increase supply fast enough during 1974 to meet demands. Pressures for purchase of beef will force prices up.

In addition, the cost of feeding cattle is rocketing. In the first half of 1973, soybeans, used as cattle feed, went up in price from around \$3 a bushel to \$12. This is bound to add to beef prices as will the cost of other feeds.

Veal will fare not better. If cattle are raised primarily to meet growing beef demand, few will be killed off for veal, adding sharply to the cost of this prime meat, which is much in demand in restaurants specializing in elaborate cuisine.

The prices of pork products of all sorts, which were easier to cope with until mid-1973, are perhaps under even more pressure than beef. It takes about a year to ready a pig for market.

In the middle of 1973, Government officials reported that farmers were killing off young pigs instead of preparing them for market at the highest rate in 20 years. Included in this slaughter were pregnant sows, adding to the expected shortage of pork.

Young pigs and sows were killed because under the Phase 3 wage and price freeze, slaughterers could not raise pork product prices. But farmers could raise the price of their live pigs going to market. Because slaughterhouses could not pass on to their customers the higher prices they had to pay farmers, they stopped buying pigs and the farmers had to kill them.

Even if farmers started raising hogs at a faster rate this fall, it will be a year before increased supplies will reach the market.

Poultry production is much the same story as pork. Under Phase 3, farmers killed off large numbers of baby chicks, because the cost of raising them went up, but poultry houses couldn't pass on to customers the price they paid for chickens they kill. A revival in poultry supplies could come faster than one in pig production. It takes only about three months to bring a chicken to

*continued on page 56*

## WINE *continued*

From ALMADEN, Gewurztraminer and Johannisberg Riesling.

From BEAULIEU, Cabernet Sauvignon 1969 and Johannisberg Riesling.

From BUENA VISTA, Gewurz Traminer and Pinot Chardonnay.

From CHRISTIAN BROTHERS, Gamay Noir, Pinot Noir and Pinot Chardonnay.

From INGLENOOK, Charbono 1969.

From CHARLES KRUG, Chenin Blanc and Gamay.

From LOUIS M. MARTINI, Pinot Noir.

From MIRASSOU, Chenin Blanc 1971, Monterey Riesling and Cabernet Sauvignon 1969.

From PAUL MASSON, Sylvaner.

From ROBERT MONDAVI, Chenin Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon 1969 and Johannisberg Riesling 1971.

From WENTE BROS., Pinot Blanc and Le Blanc de Blancs.

From WINDSOR, Chardonnay.

## OVER \$5

From ALMADEN, Blanc de Blancs  
*\*All prices quoted are wholesale*

(Champagne).

From BEAULIEU, Cabernet Sauvignon Georges de Latour Private Reserve 1968.

From CHAPPELLET, Chenin Blanc 1970.

From CHARLES KRUG, Cabernet Sauvignon 1966.

From FREEMARK ABBEY, Pinot Noir 1968 and Pinot Chardonnay 1968.

## IMPORTED WINES

With the aid of Dominique Rickard, wine program director of *Vintage Magazine*, GOLFDOM has compiled a list of notable imported wines, all of which we feel are appropriate to country club dining room requirements and provide exceptional values.

## \$2 TO \$5 RED

From BON-VIN, Inc., Chateau Milon Pauillac 1970 (France) and

Chateau Bourseau Lalande-de-Pomerol 1970 (France).

From BROWNE VINTNERS, Chateau de Pizay Morgon 1970 (France).

From CRISPIN WINES, Cotes du Rhone St. Didier N.V. (France).

From EXCELSIOR, Chateau Gaudin 1970 (France).

From INTERNATIONAL VINTAGE WINES, Hajosi Cabernet 1969 (Hungary).

From KOBRAND CORP., Ginestet Cabernet Sauvignon 1970 (France).

From WILDMAN & SONS, Barolo Giri 1966 (Italy); Chateau Jonqueyres Bordeaux Superieur 1970 (France) and Chateau La Tour du Pas St. Georges St. Emilion 1969 (France).

## WHITE/ROSÉ

From BRIONES, Rikat Spatlese 1968 (Bulgaria).

From CRISPIN WINES, Pradel Cotes de Provence Rosé (France).

From KOBRAND CORP., Jadot Beaujolais Blanc 1970 (France) and Madrigal Bernkasteler Riesling 1971 (Germany).

From WILDMAN & SONS, Louis La-tour Auxey-Duresses 1970 (France).

## EATING *from page 51*

market. Egg prices also will reflect the killing of chicks. Turkey production is off because of higher production costs, and it will be some months before supplies can be replenished. The same goes for other poultry, especially ducks.

Milk production was off 2 per cent in the first half of 1973 and was expected to be off again as much in the last half of the year. Many milk cows were sent to slaughter to take advantage of high beef prices and to avoid paying higher prices for feed.

The fresh fruit and vegetable market is much more cyclical and, of course, more sensitive to weather conditions. The disastrous lettuce crop on the West Coast in 1973 may not be repeated in 1974, if the weather is good. The summer of 1973 saw many producers holding back fresh fruits and vegetables from commercial markets because of price controls. Next year, this may not be a problem and supplies are likely to be adequate. Meanwhile, experts say it may be necessary simply to hold down use of those varieties of fresh

fruits and vegetables hardest to obtain locally.

Canned goods pose another problem. Canning costs in the last year or two have risen sharply. During the past summer, some canners held back on purchases of fruits and vegetables because they could not pass costs on to consumers. Other canners went ahead with purchases, gambling that when food cost controls were lifted, they could sell them at higher prices. All told, this means that some varieties of fruits and vegetables in some markets may be short while others are plentiful.

There seems to be no letup in soaring wine prices. French and German wines, especially those of highest quality, cost more for two reasons: Customer demand around the world is growing much faster than supply, and in the United States foreign wines cost more because the devalued dollar does not buy as much of foreign products as a few years ago. This higher cost of foreign wines can be passed on to customers and normally is.

In addition, wine grape prices in

the United States are rising rapidly, and experts doubt they will slow down in the next year or so despite vast new plantings of wine grapes.

The costs of menus also are on the rise, because paper costs have gone up. Efforts by managers to keep from printing any more than a minimum number of menus and changing them as seldom as possible probably will pay off.

Another hidden worry is the soaring wool and cotton prices. Apparel costs are apt to rise substantially in the coming year. If you supply uniforms for your employees, you probably will see the changes soon. If you rent, prepare for higher costs passed on by these supply firms.

It all adds up to one simple, disastrous fact. The cost of everything seems to be going up some more during 1974. About all the experts can advise is to keep an eye out for occasional bargains, but rely mostly on balancing menus between some customers demands for luxury at any cost and the limited budgets of those suffering from their own excessive food bills at home. □