

# NEW FOODS

## INTRODUCTION

The Great Depression and the dust bowl significantly changed many areas of everyday life in the United States, areas like food systems, agriculture, and nutrition. With the onset of World War II, many of these changes became more permanent and dramatic.

Food began to be grown on larger farms and to be processed in a more industrial manner. The emphasis on food as a product that provides nutrition and energy began as a wartime necessity. To make sure that food products provided essentials, producers began to modify and add to them in a more industrial manner.

In *New Foods*, you will read briefly about nutrition and then compare contemporary information on nutrition to information and meal plans from World War II. The *New Foods* activities will probably take between one and two hours, depending on how in-depth students are allowed to evaluate the responses. You can use the *Real World Science Primary Sources* supplement, or provide your own material. You will also need to distribute an up-to-date food and nutrition guide. You can find a history of food guides here: <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/brief-history-usda-food-guides>.

## STANDARDS

### NGSS 5PS3-1

Use models to describe that energy in animals' food (used for body repair, growth, motion, and to maintain body warmth) was once energy from the sun.

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*This performance expectation includes under it 5 LS1.C, which says "Food provides animals with the materials they need for body repair and growth and the energy they need to maintain body warmth and for motion." Many states also have health standards that cover nutrition in more detail. Students will compare today's standards to the past so that they get a meta-view of the principles. They are comparing nutritional models and therefore are engaging in the practice of Designing and Using Models, and the Crosscutting Concept of Patterns.*

NAME:

DATE:

## NEW FOODS

Nutrition is very important, but like all ideas in science, our understanding of it has changed over time. Everyone needs food to get energy and to get the materials the body needs to grow, repair, and maintain itself.

### **There are four main things that need to be in a person's diet:**

#### + Carbohydrates

These are sugars and starches that your body uses primarily for energy.

#### + Fats

These are used by the body for energy and for making important chemicals for cell membranes and hormones.

#### + Proteins

These are used for making muscles and for all enzymes in the body. The body can also use them for energy.

#### + Vitamins and Minerals

These are things that are needed in a diet, things the body can't make or can't make enough of on its own. They include things like iron (for red blood cells), iodine (for thyroid hormones), and Vitamin D (for bones).

The US government provides recommendations and guidelines for what people should eat and for how much should be eaten. Seventy-five years ago, the United States was in the Great Depression—drought and unemployment had left many people short of money and food. Right after that the United States entered World War II, and food shortages continued. People had rations—limits on things they could buy. These limitations included eggs, meat, and oils.

How did people get enough food? How did they stay healthy?

### **Look at the guidelines from today and compare them to the ones from the WWII meal planning guides.**

#### **Answer these questions:**

**Did the government recommend eating the same foods in the same amounts then and now?**

**Did the menu planners given back then help people meet those old guidelines?**

**Do those menu plans meet today's guidelines?**

**Overall, what do you think of the diet people had in the 1940s?**