

**Letters & Opinions****Regarding food as preciously as fuel****FOR YOU TO CONSIDER**

By J.T. SMITH

**O**H, he won't eat leftovers," a mother told me.

She wasn't referring to a finicky cat or pampered pup. This was a child. (And I had thought that reheating "leftovers" was one of the main purposes of the microwave.)

I guess it was being reared on Mule Creek, but I still think homemade stew tastes better on the second or third day, especially in winter.

Maybe I'm weird — just don't belong in this "modern" world — but there's something unsettling about a family stopping in a fast-food chain and then dumping half the food they ordered into the garbage.

Or, they pile food on their plates at an all-you-can-eat buffet — and leave most of it on the table, including untouched rolls.

In a fancy office building, I once asked a stocking man of a vending machine why he was throwing away sandwiches. He acknowledged the sandwiches were good, perfectly safe under refrigeration for many more days, but they were required to "toss them." Couldn't even give them to charities.

Food is plentiful in this blessed country — and still cheap compared with the rest of the world.

**Farms are foreign to many**

People now often are removed three or four generations from the farm. So what went into "producing" food (that they're discarding) is foreign to them.

When the U.S. Constitution was written, some 90 of every 100 Americans were farmers. Of 55 delegates to the Constitutional Convention, 22 received at least half their income from agriculture.

Today, less than two in 100 live on a farm.

In 1787, it took about 373 hours of labor for a farmer to produce just 100 bushels of wheat, or 344 hours for the same amount of corn.

Just getting 1 bale of cotton required 600 hours.

Thomas Jefferson did not attend the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, but later on, as the third president of the United States in 1801-09, he made his agrarian thoughts clear.

"I think our governments will remain virtuous for many centuries, as long as they are agricultural," Jefferson said. "When they get piled upon one another in large cities, as in Europe, they will become as corrupt as in Europe."

Roll forward to the 32nd U.S. president, Franklin D. Roosevelt. In 1933, he created the New Deal, which included farm programs to "stabilize" agriculture.

Only a few old-timers remaining remember the USDA agency known as the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (from the Agricultural Adjustment Act), which led to farmers calling their local

county facilities their "Triple A" office.

And so *very* briefly it was named the Agricultural Stabilization Service until someone figured out what the acronym for that would say.

For most of my career, it was the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, or the ASCS office.

In 1994, that also was changed to Farm Service Agency, which administers farm programs today.

In the ASCS name, "Stabilization" was pretty accurate.

From the start, that stabilization has focused on ensuring American consumers have a stable supply of food at a reasonable cost while also helping farmers.

I can remember 19-cent-per-gallon gasoline, and now it's close to \$3 everywhere at this writing. And it's pumped into cars that cost outrageous prices — more than a nice home cost just a

few years ago.

So not only does a big chunk of the USDA budget include the Food Stamp, School Lunch, and Women, Infants and Children programs, but every farm bill also has had consumers in mind by trying to keep food prices stable.

So food must remain reasonable. But if not, I wonder what luxury Americans would give up, and if they would refuse to eat "leftovers" or dump perfectly good food in the garbage can.

**We're driven to deliver high sorghum yields.**

The road to harvest isn't always smooth. That's why sorghum growers should start the journey with Pioneer® brand sorghum hybrids. They contain a package of agronomic traits designed to overcome roadblocks, including drought, heat, pests and disease. Our hybrids also make the journey worthwhile by delivering industry-leading yields. Ask your local Pioneer sales professional about which hybrids are best for your fields.

**Act NOW**  
for Maximum Rewards  
See your sales rep for details.

**Technology That Yields®**

Select Pioneer® brand sorghum hybrids are available with Cruiser® insecticide seed treatment.

© Cruiser is a registered trademark of a Syngenta Group Company.  
® and ® Trademarks and service marks of Pioneer Hi-Bred. All purchases are subject to the terms of labeling and purchase documents. © 2007 PHIL SORGM006899P150FVA-18



**PIONEER**  
A DUPONT COMPANY