

The story sounds fishy? Marketing prof can help

A marketing professor is busy shooting down fishy theories about fish products.

Dr. Samuel M. Gillespie dismisses as "old wives' tales" contentions, for example, that oysters should only be eaten in months that have "R" in their names and that scavenger fish are inedible because of their diet.

The "R" month theory went out with the introduction of widespread refrigeration, Gillespie says. "R" months simply coincide with the cooler periods of the year, when oysters — or any other food — are less likely to be spoiled by heat.

As for the slur regarding scavenger fish, the Texas A&M professor asks: "Have you ever observed hogs or chickens, to see what they eat?"

Gillespie maintains that education at all levels is the key to eliminating the misconceptions about fish food products.

Misconceptions, however, are just one of several problems involved in gaining greater public acceptance of fish, adds the marketing specialist.

He is currently supervising two graduate students in fish marketing projects supported by the university's Sea Grant Program. The graduate students are Steve Loomis of Freeport and Layne Gregory of Eastland.

One project consists of actual marketing procedures in a supermarket chain. The other project involves interviews with fresh food wholesalers to determine what species are sold to what types of customers and in what geographical areas.

The interviews also provide insight into the various services provided by "middlemen" and whether the mark-up for these services is too high or low.

"One major factor, which is glaring by its omission," Gillespie says, "is the lack of organizational effort at the trade or institutional level to actively promote the fish product."

"There's just no excitement about it," he contends. "Here's the fish, there's the price — take it or leave it."

Gillespie says he doesn't know the solution. He suggests government help as a possible answer and draws an analogy between the fishing industry and the agricultural industry.

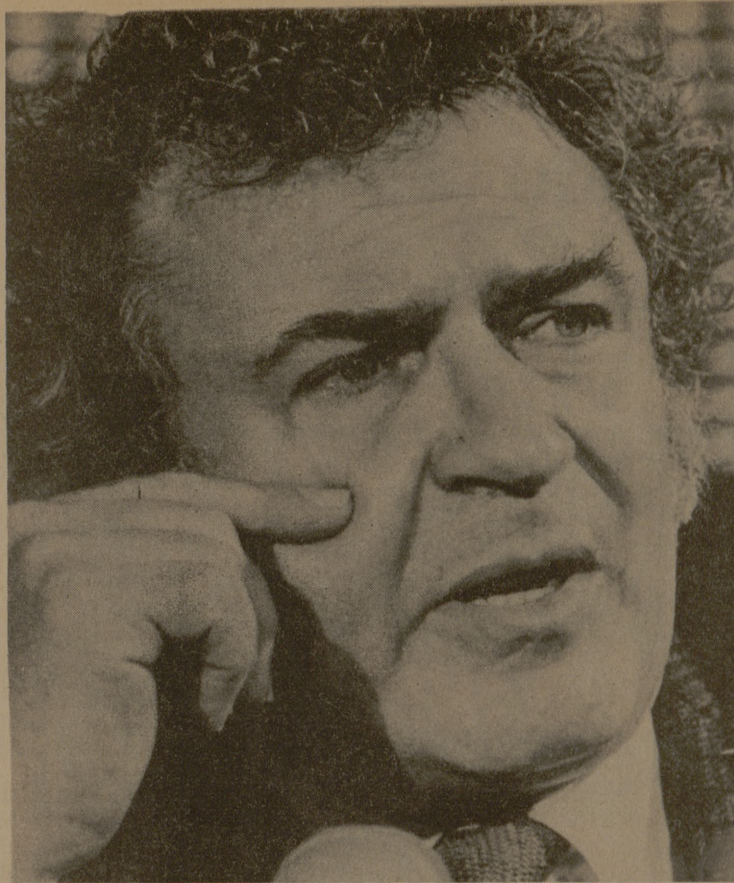
"If the help had started back in the 1800s, like it did with the agricultural industry, maybe fish consumption would approach that of agricultural meat," he observed.

"A significant problem in the marketing of fish stems from the fact that Americans demonstrate little variety in its preparation," the professor contends. "All too often the cook simply fries the fish."

The exception is the military wife who has been overseas and has sampled fish cooked in numerous different ways.

Gillespie says the Japanese, for example, eat large quantities of fish because they know how to fix it. He points out that more than 3,000 tons of fresh fish merchandise are sold daily in Tokyo.

He believes education and improved marketing and promotional techniques will stimulate public acceptance of fish products in the U. S. and hopes at least a few of the answers can be determined by the Sea Grant studies.



AUTHOR NORMAN MAILER said Friday in San Francisco that Americans are about as interested in the Apollo 14 moon-shot "as a border war in Bolivia" and it's a shame. The Pulitzer Prize winner blamed NASA for using the space program as a "political football" instead of a means of bringing the nation together. (AP Wirephoto)

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Basement sponsors Mance Lipscomb for performance

Basement Coffee House entertainment during February and March will bring a National Coffee House Circuit regular and vocalist Mance Lipscomb.

The Memorial Student Center committee also will provide special open house entertainment today during the MSC Open House, announced chairman Gary Reid of Stanton.

Music will be furnished by several local groups, including "Spring."

"Students and other patrons will be admitted free of charge to the Basement after they have visited the other 15 MSC committee booths or exhibits," explained Sam Walster, Basement publicity chairman of Chilli-cothe.

He added that Alan Ramsey of the national circuit has been booked for the Basement March 18-20. Another NCHC act will be contracted for April.

Walster said that Lipscomb, a guitarist-vocalist who composes many of his numbers, is a professional performer who has appeared at the Coffee Loft in College Station.

Individuals interested in joining the Basement Committee should inquire Thursday during the MSC Open House. The Basement, which is regularly open on Friday and Saturday nights, is currently operated by 15 active student members.

Fields films this weekend

Nostalgia in the "No, No, Nanette" tradition that is returning to the U. S. flickers onto the Aggie Cinema screen Saturday.

Three films featuring the comedian of the 1920s and 1930s, W. C. Fields, will be presented by the Memorial Student Center committee at 8 p.m. in the ballroom.

A full-length W. C. Fields movie, "Never Give A Sucker an Even Break," and two shorts will be shown, said Cinema chairman Larry Brown of San Antonio. The shorts are Fields' "The Fatal Glass of Beer" and "The Great Chase."

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