**Legumes**

by Michael Halm

Legumes, those pants whose fruit is a seed-bearing pod, are one of mankind's first foods. They have been found among the ruins of ancient Troy and in Stone Age cave dwellings in Hungary.

The second largest family of flowering plants, the peas, includes fourteen thousand species. Besides the many kinds of beans and peas, it also includes alfalfa, clover (both common sources of honey), licorice (from a legume's root), the sweetpea and Siberian pea tree, common to the northern prairie, and even locoweed.

The Panel on Nutrition and Health recommended in 1974 that Americans put more legumes into their diet. They supplement the amino acids that are in cereals, but are higher in protein and because they are not milled they retain the B vitamins.

The most important bean, at least in the world's future, is the soybean, the superbean. It is a complete protein source, containing all but one of the amino acids as well as calcium and vitamins. One cup of soybean concentrate provides the adult daily energy cost of a hamburger.

The soybean can be roasted into soynuts, broken into soygrits, made into soymilk or tofu. It's not what we have become used to but it seems ''the times, they are a-changin'.'' We may soon not be able to afford the luxury of a high animal protein diet.

There are five hundred varieties of kidney beans: the field bean, French bean, navy bean, pinto bean, red bean, snap bean, string bean and wax bean. In Europe the principle bean is the fava bean. In the southern U. S. the black-eyed pea and chickpea are popular. The easily sprouted mung bean is extensively used in Oriental cooking.

Other important legumes are the peanut or goober pea, the lentil, urd bean and yambean. There is certainly enough variety to choosen an alternative diet from.

Some suggestions for using legumes are to boil and refrigerate soygrits and use them as a meat substitute or extender, or to experiment with herbs and spices with your cooking. (Onion, parsley, Tabasco, savory or basil with lima bean; parsley, marjoram, rosemary, tarragon, mint, caraway seed or dill seed with peas; garlic powder, onion, bay leaf, dill, basil or nutmeg with green string beans.)

To freeze green beans first trim ends, cut into short segments. Wash in cold water. Blanch by pouring boiling water over then and then rinsing in cold water to prevent aging. Blanch for a minute and a half. Dry pack, allowing head space and then freeze. Cook frozen without letting them thaw. Similarly with lima beans, blanch for two-to-five minutes having removed them from pods.