

Univ. 3.3
#345

APR 23 '68



*Game
Animals
from
Field to Kitchen*

Verna Mikesh and Thomas Kean

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
LIBRARY
APR 29 1968

This archival publication may not reflect current scientific knowledge or recommendations.
Current information available from University of Minnesota Extension: <http://www.extension.umn.edu>.



Game Animals from Field to Kitchen

Many people enjoy the thrill of the hunt and the flavor of game. For some the economic value is considerable, too. These are some of the reasons people like to hunt game animals.

This publication is intended to help you use and enjoy the game animals you shoot. With proper care in the field and cooking methods to enhance the distinctive flavors, you add good eating to the pleasures of hunting.

Care and preparation of rabbit, squirrel, deer, bear, moose, elk, and antelope are discussed. The same principles can be applied to similar animals not listed.

Check current hunting regulations for information about shipping game and parts to be retained for identification in transit. This also would apply to the possession of game during and after the season closes. Or, contact your local game warden regarding procedures not listed in the booklet given with the license purchase.

The distinctive flavor of meats from wild animals is quite different from off flavors caused by improper handling.

Four basic rules apply to the handling of any game to prevent spoilage and off flavors:

1. Remove entrails as soon as possible after shooting.
2. Allow air to circulate in the body cavity.
3. Cool the carcass quickly and thoroughly.
4. Keep the meat cold until it is cooked.

Small Game

Rabbit

Field Care: Most game animals, including rabbits, are healthy. There may be a few exceptions that the hunter should note. Watch the reaction of the rabbit when he is flushed from cover. If he behaves sluggishly or erratically, avoid shooting for food as he may have rabbit fever (tularemia). This disease may be transmitted to man through breaks in the skin. As you clean the rabbit look for lesions under the skin and on the liver for signs of the disease. Chances are, that the rabbit you bag will be healthy and a safe and delicious food.

Most hunters prefer to dress rabbits immediately after they are shot, removing the entrails and letting the blood drain.

To clean, make an incision down the belly from the anus to the ribs taking care not to pierce the intestinal casing. Grasp the rabbit with one hand on its ears or head and the other at the rump, with the incision directly away from you. Make a quick swing with both arms. The entrails will leave the carcass as a unit; however, you must remove other organs separately. Cut off the head. Wipe out the body cavity with cleansing tissue and put the rabbit in a paper bag before you put it in your hunting pocket to prevent staining your coat. Do not let your dog eat the entrails because rabbits are intermediate hosts to tapeworms in dogs.

Leave the skin on the rabbit until ready for cooking or freezing since it will keep the flesh clean. Rabbit skin removal is quick and easy. Make a two inch cut crosswise through the skin at the middle of the back. Insert the first two fingers of each hand into the cut. Pull firmly with one hand toward the head, the other toward the tail. The rabbit skin will come off in two sections in a matter of seconds. Cut off the feet and adhering skin with kitchen shears. Wipe the carcass with a vinegar soaked cloth to remove the hairs.



Fried Rabbit I

Cut up rabbit into serving pieces and place in a solution of 1 tablespoon salt to a quart of water for 1 hour. Drain and place in a second salt water solution for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour. Wipe and dip each piece of rabbit in a combination of $\frac{1}{3}$ flour and $\frac{2}{3}$ corn meal. Fry in hot fat as you would chicken. Serve with gravy and baking powder biscuits.

Fried Rabbit II

<i>2 rabbits, cut into serving size pieces</i>	<i>lemon</i>
<i>salt and pepper</i>	<i>flour</i>
	<i>oil</i>

Place portions on plate and rub surface with salt; place in refrigerator 12 hours. Wash off salt. Rub lightly with cut lemon. Salt and pepper. Dip in flour and place in hot oil. Brown thoroughly, and turn. When both sides brown, cover and cook until tender. Sprinkle with paprika before serving. Yield 8 servings.

Hasenpfeffer

<i>1 rabbit</i>	<i>3 cloves</i>
<i>vinegar and water</i>	<i>1 bay leaf</i>
<i>1 sliced onion</i>	<i>1 cup sour cream</i>
<i>butter</i>	<i>salt and pepper</i>

Cut up rabbit. Place in a crock or glass dish with enough vinegar and water of equal parts to cover. Add onion, cloves, bay leaf, salt and pepper.

Let meat soak for 2 days (in the refrigerator). Then wipe dry and brown in hot butter turning frequently. Slowly add some of the solution used for soaking the meat to a depth of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. Cover tightly and simmer until tender (about 30 minutes). Do not allow to boil. Just before serving stir sour cream into sauce.

Squirrel

Field dress squirrels as you would rabbits. Rabbits and squirrels can be cooked like chicken. As a safety precaution cook rabbits and squirrels well done.

Broiled Squirrel

*1 young squirrel
1 teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
melted butter for basting
lemon wedges*

Cut squirrel in half, rub with salt and pepper. Brush with butter and broil. Baste and turn frequently until well browned. Total broiling time will be about 45 minutes. Serve with lemon wedges.

Fricaseed Squirrel

*1 squirrel
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
½ cup flour
3 slices bacon
1 tablespoon sliced onion
1½ teaspoons lemon juice
½ cup broth*

Disjoint and cut squirrel into 6 or 7 pieces. Rub pieces with salt and pepper. Roll in flour. Pan fry with chopped bacon for 30 minutes. Add onion, lemon juice, broth and cover tightly. Cook slowly for 2 hours. Variation: Add 1 tablespoon paprika, ¼ teaspoon cayenne, 1 sliced sour apple, and 2 cups broth instead of bacon and lemon juice called for in foregoing recipe.

Roast Squirrel

*1 squirrel
1½ teaspoons salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
1½ tablespoons lemon juice or
tarragon vinegar
1 cup bread crumbs
¼ cup cream
1 cup mushrooms
1 teaspoon onion juice
1 tablespoon melted fat
2 cups brown meat broth*

Clean squirrel. Rub cleaned squirrel with a mixture of 1 teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper, then with lemon juice or tarragon vinegar. Soak bread crumbs in the cream to moisten them. Add mushrooms (chopped), remainder of salt and pepper, and onion juice. Stuff squirrel with this mixture, sew and truss as for a

fowl. Brush with melted fat and place in a dripping pan. Partly cover with the broth diluted with a cup of boiling water. Roast, uncovered, 1½ hours in a moderate oven (350° F.). When the squirrel is well-done, remove from pan. A gravy may be made from the liquid in the pan.

Big Game

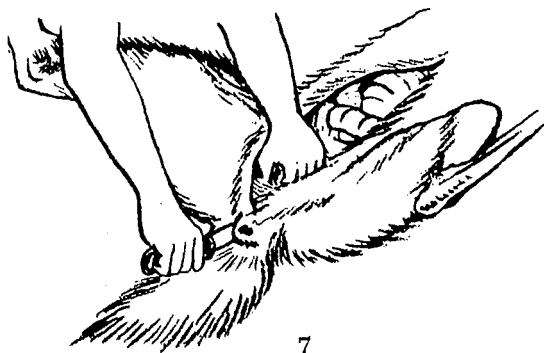
Deer

Field Care: The quality of the venison you bring home depends upon your preparation before leaving for the field. In addition to a sharp sturdy hunting knife with a thin blade, you need about 12 feet of heavy clothesline or similar rope, 2 or 3 large plastic bags, a light woven meat sack or a bolt of cheese cloth, and a can of black pepper. The latter two are essential if the weather is warm. A belt hatchet is also handy for chopping through the pelvic or aitch bone between the rear legs. A luggage rack is convenient for hauling the deer home. Never drape the deer over the hood of the car, because the heat from the engine can hasten spoilage.

Field Dressing: First make sure the deer is dead. If there is any doubt, shoot the deer again in the neck where there is a minimum amount of edible meat. The deer should be dressed out as soon as possible after it is killed to insure rapid loss of body heat. It is usually unnecessary to stick and bleed a deer, since blood does not drain adequately from a dead carcass. Much of the blood will be removed from the deer during the dressing out process.

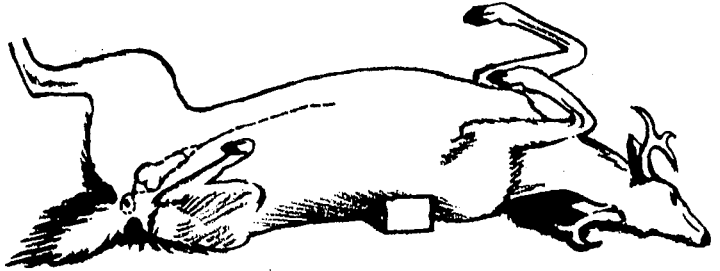
The dressing can be accomplished with greatest ease if the deer is hanging by his head or lying on his back on sloping ground with the rump downhill. The light rope you brought will aid in positioning the deer for dressing.

Avoid contaminating the meat with contents of the digestive tract. This causes off flavors that are almost impossible to remove.

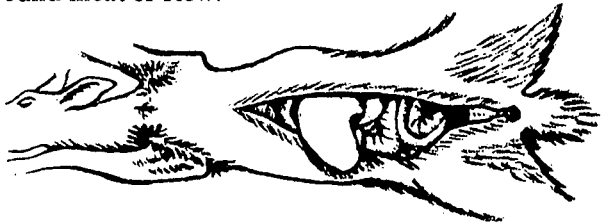


To start the cut for removing the entrails take a pinch of skin just above the breast bone and make a cut. Cut through the muscle wall being careful not to puncture any of the internal organs. Start cutting and cut through the skin and muscle layer only.

Reach inside the carcass between the hip bones, free the large intestines and tie off the large intestine near the anus. Cut the esophagus off at the diaphragm and roll the contents down and out of the body cavity. Then reach up as high as possible in the neck and cut off the remainder of the esophagus. Hold the hind legs apart and make a deep cut through the skin around the anus and remove it.



Remove the liver and save. Remove the heart, lungs, and tubes above the diaphragm. Save the heart. Remove the tongue and save. Put these into plastic bags and cool. Torn and blood-shot meat should be separated from the rest of the carcass and saved. It can be soaked for about 10 hours in cold water and used for ground meat or stew.



Most hunters prefer to wipe out the cavity with a clean rag, cleansing tissue, or clean grass. If you made a gut shot or cut into the intestine or bladder you'll need to clean out the cavity as soon and as well as you can. Water tends to soften the meat making it spoil faster, but sometimes you have no choice. Do not use water or snow to clean out the body cavity, except as a last resort.

To cool the carcass rapidly get it off the ground. Hang the deer by the head. Split it between the breast and hip bones if you haven't done so already and insert sticks to open the body

cavity as wide as it will go. A big incision is nothing to be ashamed of. The deer hide is an excellent insulating layer and unless cool air can flow freely to the open cavity the cooling may take hours. The dry surface also discourages flies and bacterial growth.

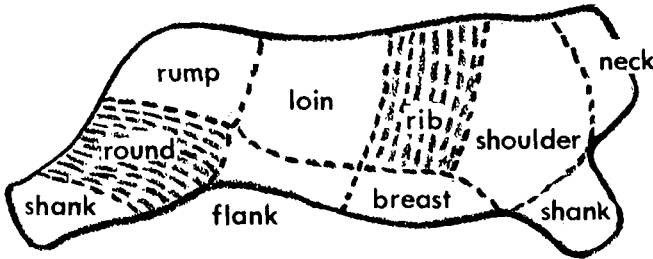
Because of the insulating character of the hide you may have difficulty in cooling the carcass if the weather turns warm. In this case skin the deer, smear well with black pepper, and wrap the meat in the cheesecloth you brought along. Warm weather means flies, so use the pepper generously as a repellent. Cut the meat in quarters and transport it in the trunk with the door partly open.

In most instances one should leave the skin on to keep the meat clean. You may prefer to have your locker man skin, hang, cut, wrap, and freeze your deer. If you plan to process it yourself be sure you have a cool place to hang it for a week to tenderize it. Some people prefer to skin the deer in the field, which is alright if the carcass can be kept clean.

See diagram to get an idea about how a carcass is cut.

How cuts may be used:

Neck:	<i>Stew, sausage, deerburger</i>
Shanks:	<i>Stew, sausage, deerburger</i>
Shoulder:	<i>Pot roast</i>
Rib:	<i>Oven roast, chops to be broiled or pan fried</i>
Loin:	<i>Oven roast, steaks to be broiled or pan fried</i>
Rump:	<i>Pot roast, stew</i>
Round:	<i>Pot roast, Swiss steak</i>
Breast and flank:	<i>Stew, sausage, deerburger</i>
Liver:	<i>Fried</i>
Heart, tongue:	<i>Cooked in water</i>



Freezing and thawing: Venison is dry. Choose the best wrapping material available to keep it from drying out in storage. Heavy duty aluminum foil with a butcher paper overwrap is good. Trim off as much fat as you can because it tends to change

flavor during storage. Hairs produce off flavors so use a vinegar soaked cloth to remove them. Venison in good wrapping material will keep as long as 9 months stored at 0 degrees F. But use the stew meat and ground meat within 4 months. Thaw meat in its wrapper in the refrigerator to hold in the moisture.

Canning venison and other game: Do not attempt to can game or any other meat unless you use a steam pressure canner for processing.

Cut fresh, clean meat across the grain into convenient sized chunks to pack into sound, clean canning jars.

Put meat into a shallow pan. Add just enough water to prevent sticking. Cover pan and precook meat slowly until medium done. Stir occasionally so meat heats evenly.

Pack into jars loosely. Leave 1 inch of headspace at top of jars. Add salt if desired: ½ teaspoon to pints, 1 teaspoon to quarts. Cover meat with boiling meat juice, add boiling water if needed. Leave 1 inch space at top of jars. Adjust covers according to directions on the box. Be sure to wipe jar rims clean before putting on lids. Process at 10 pounds pressure (240° F.).

Pint jars	75 minutes
Quart jars	90 minutes

Cooking Venison: Cook venison as you would lean beef of similar age. You can tell an old deer by the worn down teeth and spread hooves. All the meat from an old deer should be ground, stewed or cooked with moist heat. In case of an old deer, you'll make Swiss steaks and pot roasts from cuts that you could broil or oven roast from a younger animal.

Most venison needs added fat to keep it from drying out when cooking. Removing natural fat makes it less gamey and is essential for freezer storage. In its place use bacon either as it is or par-boiled, beef suet, and larding strips. Or smear the entire surface of a roast with lard. Venison, like lamb, should be served hot.

Broiled Venison

Preheat broiler. Place loin steaks or rib chops from young animal on a greased rack about 3 inches from the flame. Broil one one side until nicely browned (5 to 7 minutes) and turn to brown other side. Venison should be cooked rare but well browned on the surface. Serve at once with salt, pepper or parsley butter.

Parsley Butter

Cream ½ cup butter. Add ½ teaspoon salt, dash of pepper, 2 tablespoons chopped parsley and finally 2 teaspoons lemon juice added very slowly.

Venison Oven Roast

Place rib or loin from a young animal on rack in open pan. Season with salt and pepper if desired. Lay on strips of bacon or suet. Do not cover or add water. Roast at 300 to 325° F., allowing 20 to 25 minutes to the pound.

Venison Pot Roast

(shoulder, rump, round)

*4 to 5 pounds venison
flour, salt, pepper
herbs if desired
1 onion
2 carrots
2 stalks celery
¼ cup water or vegetable juice*

Dredge meat in seasoned flour. Brown in hot fat in a Dutch oven or heavy skillet. Add water. Cover and simmer about 3 hours or until fork tender. Add vegetables cut in pieces about ½ hour before meat is done.

Venison Meat Loaf

(neck, flank, shank, breast)

*1 pound ground venison
1/3 pound ground pork
1 egg
½ cup dry bread crumbs
1 cup milk
1½ teaspoons salt
½ tablespoon chopped onion*

Mix meats thoroughly. Add rest of the ingredients and mix with the meat. Place in greased pan and bake at 350° F. for 1½ hours.

Venison Swiss Steak

(tough steaks)

*1½ pounds round steak
3 large onions
1 medium stalk celery
1 cup tomatoes
2 tablespoons Worcestershire
sauce
salt and pepper*

Steak should be about 1½ inches thick. Dredge with flour and season with salt and pepper, then brown in fat. When brown on both sides, add the other ingredients. Cover tightly and cook in medium oven (350° F.) or over low flame on top of the range until tender (about 1½ hours). Remove meat to platter and make a gravy from drippings in the pan. Serve with baked potatoes.

Mincemeat

(any ground venison)

2 pounds cooked venison, chopped in food grinder	$\frac{3}{4}$ pound chopped suet
4 pounds chopped apple	$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cloves
2 pounds raisins	1 teaspoon mace
4 cups either brown or white sugar	$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon nutmeg
	2 teaspoons salt
	$1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons cinnamon

Add cider to cover mixture. If cider is not available, use fruit juices or water with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vinegar. Sweet fruit juices reduce the amount of sugar required. Cook very slowly until the fruits are tender (about 1 hour). Seal in fruit jars. Process 10 minutes in boiling waterbath to insure seal.

Deerburgers

Two pounds ground lean venison, $\frac{1}{4}$ pound beef suet, a handful of moist bread, sliced onion and seasoning—well mixed and fried like hamburgers and you have venison at its best.

Meat Pie

(shoulder, flank, shank, neck)

Use equal parts of diced vegetables and cooked meat. Add seasonings and cover with left-over gravy which has been thinned with water. Bake in a covered casserole in medium oven (375° F.) for 1 hour. Just before serving time remove lid and cover with a crust of mashed potatoes, pastry or baking powder biscuit. If there is not enough gravy, a boullion cube may be dissolved in water and thickened to make a gravy. The vegetables may be cooked on the surface burner and the liquid in which they were cooked may be used in the gravy. When vegetables and the meat are cooked add the topping at once and brown in a hot (400° F.) oven. Here is the dish for your favorite seasoning—thyme, bay leaf, savory—according to your taste.

Venison in Sour Cream

(stew meat)

2 pounds venison	1 cup diced carrots
1 clove garlic	1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons fat	2 tablespoons flour
1 cup diced celery	1 cup sour cream
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup minced onion	

Brown the venison and cut garlic clove in hot fat. Remove garlic. Put the meat into a casserole. Brown the vegetables in remaining fat. Pour over meat, season and bake in a slow oven (300° F.) until meat is tender. Dip out the juices and thicken with the flour. Add 1 cup sour cream to gravy and pour over the meat. Serve with buttered noodles.

Deer Sausage

<i>10 pounds clean sound venison</i>	<i>6 tablespoons salt</i>
<i>from trimmings and tough cuts</i>	<i>1 ounce pepper (2 tablespoons)</i>
<i>10 pounds pork</i>	<i>pinch of sage</i>

Grind meats and seasonings together thoroughly. Stuff into casings and smoke 8 to 10 hours at 110° F. Or make into patties and can. If you plan to freeze it, hold seasoned sausage no longer than a month. For longer storage omit the seasonings and use before 3 months.

Corned Venison

Boned shoulders cut into 3 or 4 pound pieces. Make a brine of:

<i>1½ pounds salt</i>	<i>1 gallon of hot water</i>
<i>½ pound white or brown sugar</i>	<i>1 ounce cream of tartar</i>
<i>1 ounce baking soda</i>	<i>1 ounce pickling spices</i>

Cool brine. Pour over meat placed in a stone crock. Make enough pickle to cover the meat and weight it down with a clean board and rock. Tie a cheesecloth over the top. Keep in a cool place but do not allow to freeze. Cure for several weeks.

Dried Venison

Separate the muscles of the round into inside, outside and round tip. Rub them with a mixture of 3 parts salt and 1 part granulated sugar for three consecutive times at 4 to 5 day intervals. Place the meat in a cool, dry place during the curing process. At the end of three weeks brush off any remaining salt and hang the meat to smoke for 3 days. Hang in a dry place for a month or more. Cover loosely with a cheesecloth bag while drying. Slice thin and use as you would dried beef.

Antelope

Field dress and cook antelope the same as deer.

An especially appropriate recipe for antelope is saddle (loin) of antelope.

Saddle of Antelope

Lard a saddle of antelope (see note). Sprinkle with salt and pepper and rub well with flour. Place on rack in pan, roast at 450° F. for ½ hour and reduce heat to 300° F. and cook for 1½ to 2 hours longer. Do not add water to the pan. If fat covering is very thin put several strips of bacon on top for basting. Serve with currant jelly sauce.

Currant Jelly Sauce

2 tablespoons butter or bacon fat	1 cup water or stock
3 tablespoons flour	¼ teaspoon salt
¼ cup currant jelly	pepper
	2 tablespoons sherry wine

Mix seasonings with flour and then brown the butter and flour together. Add stock gradually and bring to boiling point for a few minutes. Melt currant jelly in the sauce and add wine.

NOTE: Larding is accomplished by inserting thin strips of fat such as pork fat back or beef suet into the meat. This is a recommended procedure for any lean, large game. Antelope, because of its dryness requires larding.

Elk

Field dress and cook the same as deer and moose.

In larger big game forms such as moose and elk with deep flesh and thick heavy skin, it is almost always desirable to skin and quarter the carcass to assure rapid and proper cooling. This action is especially important in mild weather.

Moose

The methods for dressing and cutting up a moose are the same as for deer but their size presents greater problems.

A moose hunter should add a stout rope, a small light weight saw, and a portable winch or multiple ratio pulley to his gear. You'll need the stout rope for raising the animal for dressing and cooling. Use your small saw for splitting the carcass, rather than hacking away with the axe and mangling valuable meat.

As with deer, dress out immediately. Don't delay cooling and be sure to cool thoroughly. Salvage the liver for eating at camp. Cool the tongue overnight. Let the rest of the meat hang at least 24 hours before being used. For finest flavor allow to hang in a cooler 10 to 14 days at 38° F.

A large moose may weigh up to 1,400 pounds or approximately 1,000 pounds field dressed. Before you leave home make preparations to carry out a large, heavy, and valuable load. Smaller moose may be quartered for carrying, but in some in-

stances the load might be lightened by cutting out the larger bones and discarding them.

Consult the game warden or officer for information about packing and shipping moose.

Cook moose the same as you would deer or other big game.

Moose Steak

<i>2 pounds moose round steak</i>	<i>1 cup chopped mushrooms</i>
<i>½ cup onions chopped fine</i>	<i>½ cup sweet or sour cream</i>
<i>2 tablespoons butter</i>	<i>2 tablespoons flour</i>

Saute onions in butter. Brown steak on both sides in butter and browned onions. Cover and let simmer for 1 hour or more depending on age of animal. When almost tender add mushrooms and flour stirred into the cream. Cover and let simmer for 20 minutes.

Bear

The same recommendations for handling deer can be applied to bear. Let it hang in a cooler at least a week to tenderize it. Note the age of the bear. One beyond 2 years of age will be tough. A young one will have unworn claws and teeth. Note the stomach contents for dietary clues. A fish diet will result in fishy tasting flesh that certainly requires marinating before preparation.

The loin or saddle of bear is most often oven roasted. Remove all fat unless the bear is freshly killed. Sprinkle the carcass with salt, pepper and rub well with flour. Roast in a slow oven 300° F. for two or three hours. If bear is lean put several strips of bacon over it for basting—Serve with currant jelly sauce.

Tough bear meat may be tenderized by cooking in a pressure sauce pan for 2 hours at 10 pounds pressure. Check the tenderness and finish the dish with cut up vegetables such as carrots, onions, celery or turnips, and continue cooking for 20 minutes.

Marinade

Tough meats benefit by a long soaking in a marinade prior to cooking.

<i>2 cups vinegar or wine vinegar</i>	<i>12 whole cloves</i>
<i>2 cups water</i>	<i>1 teaspoon mustard seed</i>
<i>2 tablespoons sugar</i>	<i>2 teaspoons salt</i>
<i>6 peppercorns</i>	<i>2 sliced carrots</i>
<i>4 bay leaves</i>	<i>3 sliced onions</i>

Mix. Pour over meat in a glass dish or crock. Let soak for 48 to 72 hours in the refrigerator. Proceed as for regular pot roast or oven roast.

Acknowledgements

There are many variations of the methods outlined in this bulletin. If you follow one of these and have enjoyed your game, continue to do so. Many resources were used in compiling the information and recipes. Among them are

Cooperative Extension Service—Michigan State University

Extension Service—University of Nebraska

Remington Arms Company—Bridgeport Connecticut

Minnesota State Department of Conservation—St. Paul, Minn.

Issued in furtherance of cooperative extension work in agriculture and home economics, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Roland H. Abraham, Acting Director of Agricultural Extension Service, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101