

UNITED STATES ARMY INFANTRY SCHOOL  
Fort Benning, Georgia 31905

25 June 1972

THE QUALITY AND VARIETY OF FOODS  
AVAILABLE AT MILITARY RETAIL OUTLETS  
(RESEARCH)

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THE QUALITY AND VARIETY OF FOOD  
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(RESEARCH)

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Overview. The quality and variety of foods available at military retail outlets has always been an object of conversation among military personnel.

B. Scope. I shall evaluate the quality and variety of foods available at military retail outlets.

C. Objectives. I shall examine the quality and variety of foods available at military retail outlets and determine the adequacy/inadequacy of each.

D. Method of Development. I shall conduct this study in the following method: variety of food available, and quality of food available in each of the departments (grocery, produce, and meat) within the military retail outlets.

II. BODY

A. Objectives of Military Retail Outlets.

1. Stock the minimum number of authorized items to meet the requirements and demands of the personnel utilizing the military retail outlets (2:1).

2. Insure customer satisfaction by doing the following:

a. Insuring adequate personnel are available to assist the military retail outlet patrons (2:1).

b. Insuring adequate items are available for stockage in order to meet the demands/needs of the patrons (2:1).

c. Insuring that the quality of the items available meet the expectations of the patrons and the standards set forth by Army regulations (2:1).

B. Grocery Market Operations.

1. Items that are authorized to be carried as grocery items are as follows:

Nonperishable foods, vendor-packed frozen meats and seafoods, frozen vegetables, frozen fruits, frozen juices, brand-name frozen poultry, eggs, dairy foods (except cut and packaged cheese), bakery and pastry products, household supplies, pet foods, tobacco products, and health and beauty aids.

(2:11-121)

2. Items authorized for stockage are listed in Army Regulation (AR) 31-100 (which covers brand-name and blind made products) brought in to military retail outlets or listed in Federal Supply Catalog (FSC) C8900-SL (2:3-11).

NOTE: The current trend in the military retail outlets is to allow the purchase of items, authorized or not authorized, as long as there is an adequate demand for the item (reference conversation with Mr. Perry, store manager of the Fort Benning Retail Food Outlet).

3. The retail food outlets do not have any quality control over the items listed in paragraph II, B-1, provided there has not been a breakdown in equipment (in cases involving dairy or frozen foods). They must assume that the companies who have packed the items have met the standards set by the federal government. If there has been an equipment failure, their only recourse is to inspect each item stored (within the inoperative equipment), insure it has not thawed or spoiled, and either return the item to stock or destroy the item.

#### C. Produce Market Operations.

NOTE: The major portion of items authorized for sale are seasonal items. The availability of the item will vary from season to season.

1. Items authorized for stockage are contained in Army Regulation 31-100 (2:11-162).

2. The variety of items available will vary with the seasons (2:11).

3. The quality of the items being sold within the produce department will depend on the following factors:

a. The handling practices within the produce department (rough handling will bruise or destroy certain items such as apples, grapes, or oranges) (2:11-169).

b. The condition of the item when it reaches the military retail outlet.

(1) If the item has been bought on a local purchase and does not meet specifications or the standards of the federal government, it is returned to the place of purchase (2:11).

(2) If the item has been bought by a commissary agent and has been sent to the military retail outlet for resale, the produce market manager must inspect the item and either destroy it or trim, clean, and repack the item.

(3) Either of the actions taken in paragraph II-C-3b-(1) or II-C-3b-(1) are subject to approval of the installation veterinary officer or installation surgeon (2:11-168).

D. Meat Market Operations.

1. Items authorized of stockage within a military retail outlet are as follows:

- a. Meat items requiring weighing, cutting, or pricing.
- b. Wheel cheese requiring cutting and weighing.
- c. Smoked meats.
- d. Poultry (fresh or frozen).
- e. Brand-name prepackaged meats (for example, canned hams, lunch meats, and turkeys (2:11-132)).

2. The variety of meats is dependent on the cuts of meat and there is no variance on bulk beef, pork, lamb, or veal. (Appendixes A, B, C, and D)

3. The variety of the remaining items varies only with the season (as with certain types of fish), the brand-names authorization list, and the demands of the military retail outlet's patrons.

NOTE: The military retail outlets are authorized to carry only government-inspected choice or prime bulk beef. All other bulk meat products have been inspected by government inspectors to insure it meets government standards.

4. The quality of prepackaged meats (some examples are lunch meats, canned hams, and brand-name items) must be assumed. The packers of these items are required to meet federal standards (at the packing location) and the meat market manager has no reason to doubt it unless he notices a deficiency in the item.

5. To assist in the inspection for quality, the installation veterinarian or a representative from the installation surgeon's office will be on hand (2:11-138).

E. Overall Variety and Quality Control Measures.

1. In all market operations, the quality of the item is dependent on stocks being properly rotated and proper handling techniques. In the areas which hold or store dairy, meat, produce, and frozen foods, quality control is dependent on keeping the products at the same temperature.

2. Variety is dependent on shelf space available in the military retail outlet. If there is not sufficient shelf space or if the military retail outlet is doing a volume not in proportion to its sales area, the variety of items must be cut down.

### III. ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

A. The overall military retail outlet is run in the same basic manner as any other retail food outlet, the only exception being that most retail outlets have a dairy department/market. The majority of retail outlets like the military retail outlets receive their supplies from load purchase and a centralized warehouse.

#### B. Grocery Market Operations.

1. Unless there is a breakdown of major equipment, the grocery market has very little to do with quality control. The military retail outlet must assume the products have met federal specifications when packed.

2. The dairy items/frozen foods should not be included within the grocery market operations for the following reasons:

a. Items such as milk, cottage cheese, and frozen foods have to stay under refrigeration to prevent spoilage. The personnel who deal with these items must be knowledgeable in manufacture code dates and insure stock rotation to insure the quality of the product is maintained.

b. With the current trends toward prepackaged, quick frozen foods, it will take a large number of adequate personnel to handle this department.

3. The variety of foodstuffs sold is equal to if not greater than the normal retail market. The majority of retail markets will normally offer two name brands plus their own brand to the public. The military retail outlet offers two or three name brands plus, in some cases, a blind product (unlabeled and packed for the government) to its patrons.

4. If the shelf space is not in proportion to the sales volume, the variety of items must be decreased (example, the Fort Benning Retail Food Outlet is currently doing a gross volume of \$1,700,000.00 per month. The sales area is large enough to support a sales volume of approximately \$9,000,000.00 to \$1,000,000.00 per month).

5. Two factors which cause military retail outlet patrons to think there is a lack of variety in the grocery market are as follows:

a. Certain brands are advertised in different locations throughout the country. These brands in many cases

are not national brand but are local brands put out by local manufacturers, with heavy advertising campaigns. The consumer becomes so accustomed to the brand that they do not realize when they relocate the items are not available through local purchase in that area.

b. Many brands are advertised before the product is available to the military/civilian retail market. The preadvertising is done to create a demand for the item causing such a demand on the retail markets. They are trying to acquire the item through local purchase before it is available, and of course the manufacturer will have a ready market for the item when he desires to release it to the public.

#### C. Produce Market Operations.

1. The availability, variety, and quality of produce items will vary from season to season and be dependent on the crop growth for that season.

2. The produce market operation closely parallels the civilian retail market as they have a direct distributor (in the form of a government agent) and are able to purchase items from the local market. The only exception to this is that the military retail outlet does not have the capability of rejecting items or adjusting prices due to the lack of a quality product.

3. The military retail market does have a veterinary officer or installation surgeon to call in when there is a question dealing with quality and edibility of a product. The civilian markets do not have their capability and have to depend on their own judgement (which in some cases may cause a definite health problem to the consumer).

#### D. Meat Market Operations.

1. The basic meat market operations, within the military retail outlets, greatly parallel the civilian meat markets.

2. The military retail markets, meat operations, as well as the civilian market are authorized to purchase locally. Both market operations receive their bulk meats from a warehouse.

3. The retail market is dependent on the knowledge of their personnel to insure their products meet the prescribed standards of their organization. The military retail outlet's personnel have highly skilled personnel available to assist them.

4. The variety capability of a meat market is very dependent on the sales area available to display the items. If the volume of sales does not equal the available shelf space, the variety of meat available to the patrons.

5. The cutting, selling, and pricing of bulk cheeses should not be handled by the meat department for the following reasons:

a. Cheese cutting is not a highly skilled job. It is really easy and can be done by any grocery clerk in 15 minutes. The personnel generally utilized within a meat market are highly skilled/paid, and the task of cutting cheese will take away from their primary skill of cutting meat.

b. Cheese cutting/wrapping requires a great deal of time and cleaning. Everything in the cutting area must be cleaned before any type of meat products may be cut or handled in the cutting area.

c. Even though the cutting and wrapping are done in different areas, the weighing equipment within the meat market could be used for pricing.

#### IV. EFFECTS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I believe the military retail outlets are run in the same basic manner as the civilian markets. There are some differences in their operations, but the methods used to control the quality and variety of stocks are basically the same.


By proper utilization of the methods outlined in AR 31-200 and the selections which are available in AR 31-100 (for name brands) plus the ability to purchase through local distributors, the military retail outlets are offering not only a higher quality product but a great variety of products to the patron.

These are my recommendations:

1. That the dairy department concept should be implemented within the military retail outlet system.

2. That the produce markets be allowed to reject or cut the price of items sent from government warehouses which are not of the highest possible quality.

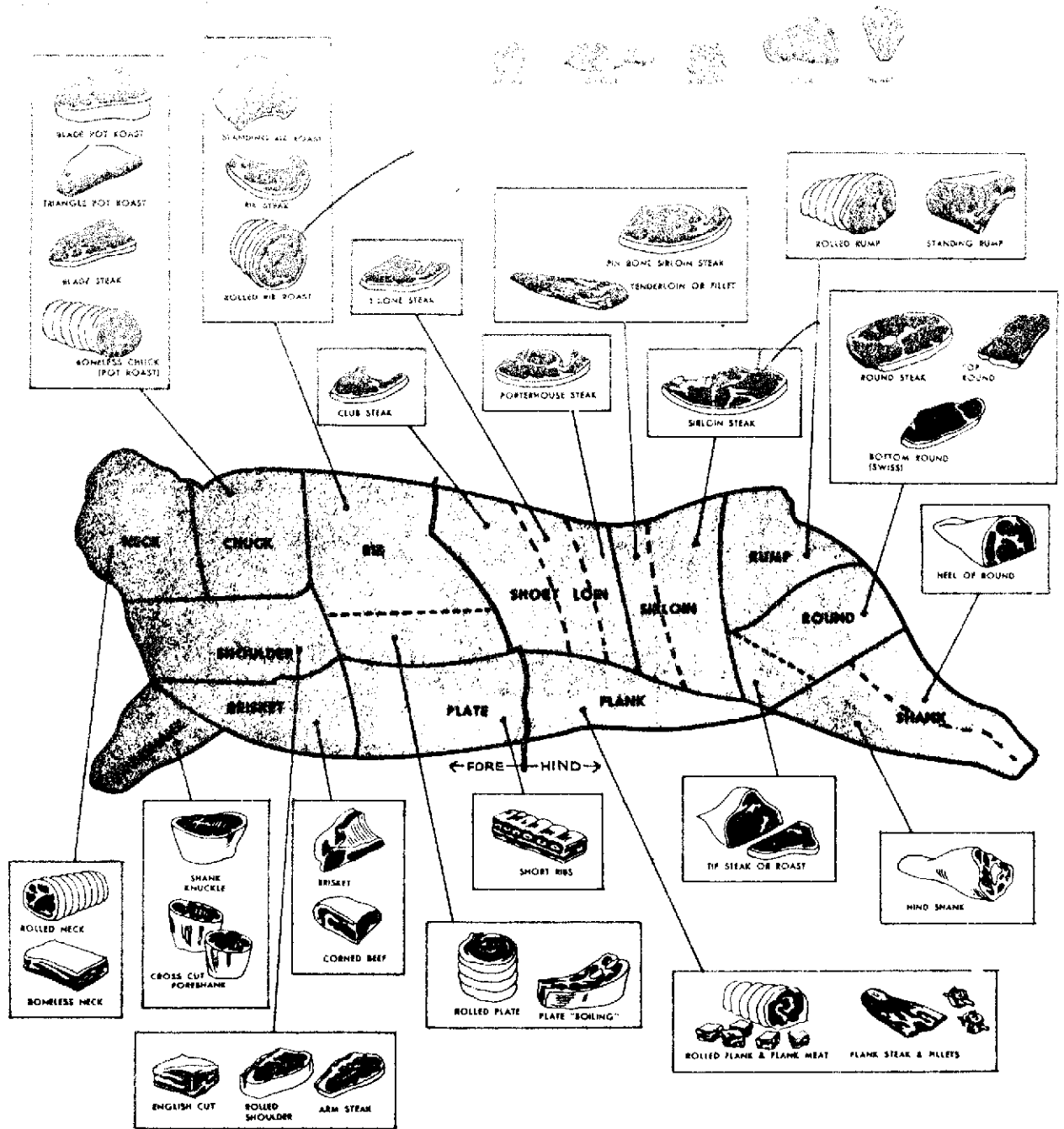
3. Other than 1 and 2 above, no major change be incorporated into the military retail outlet system.

  
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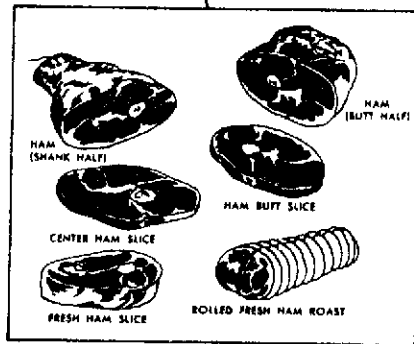
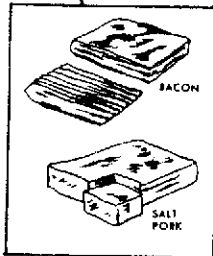
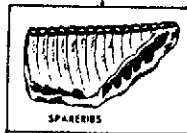
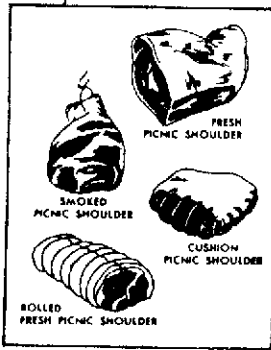
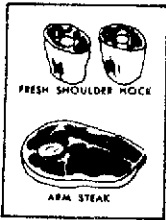
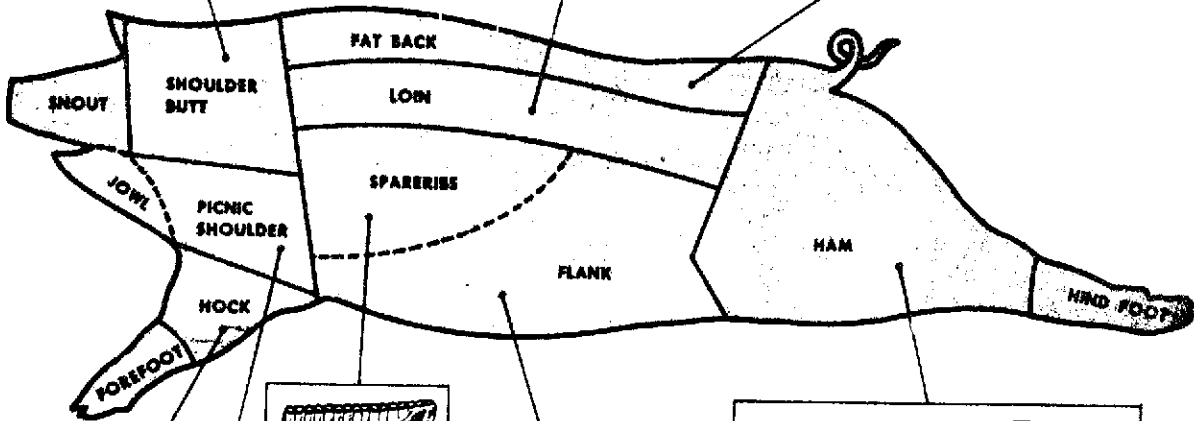
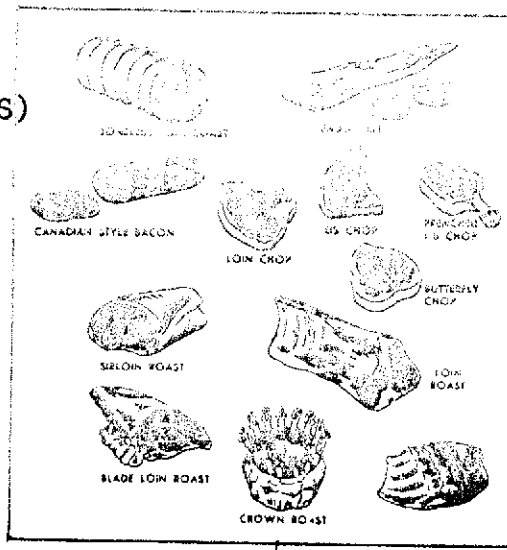


APPENDIXES

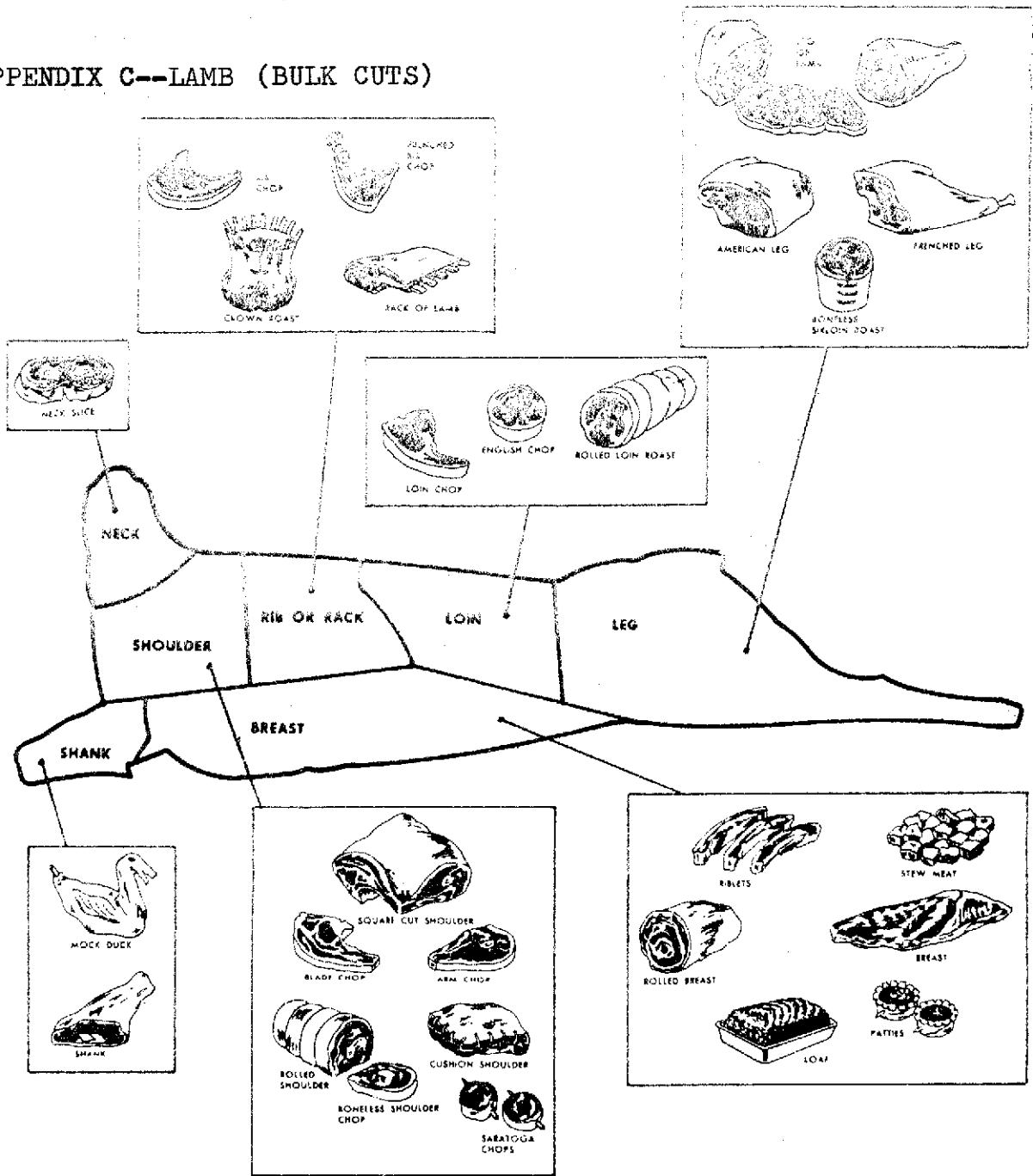
# APPENDIX A--BEEF (BULK CUTS)



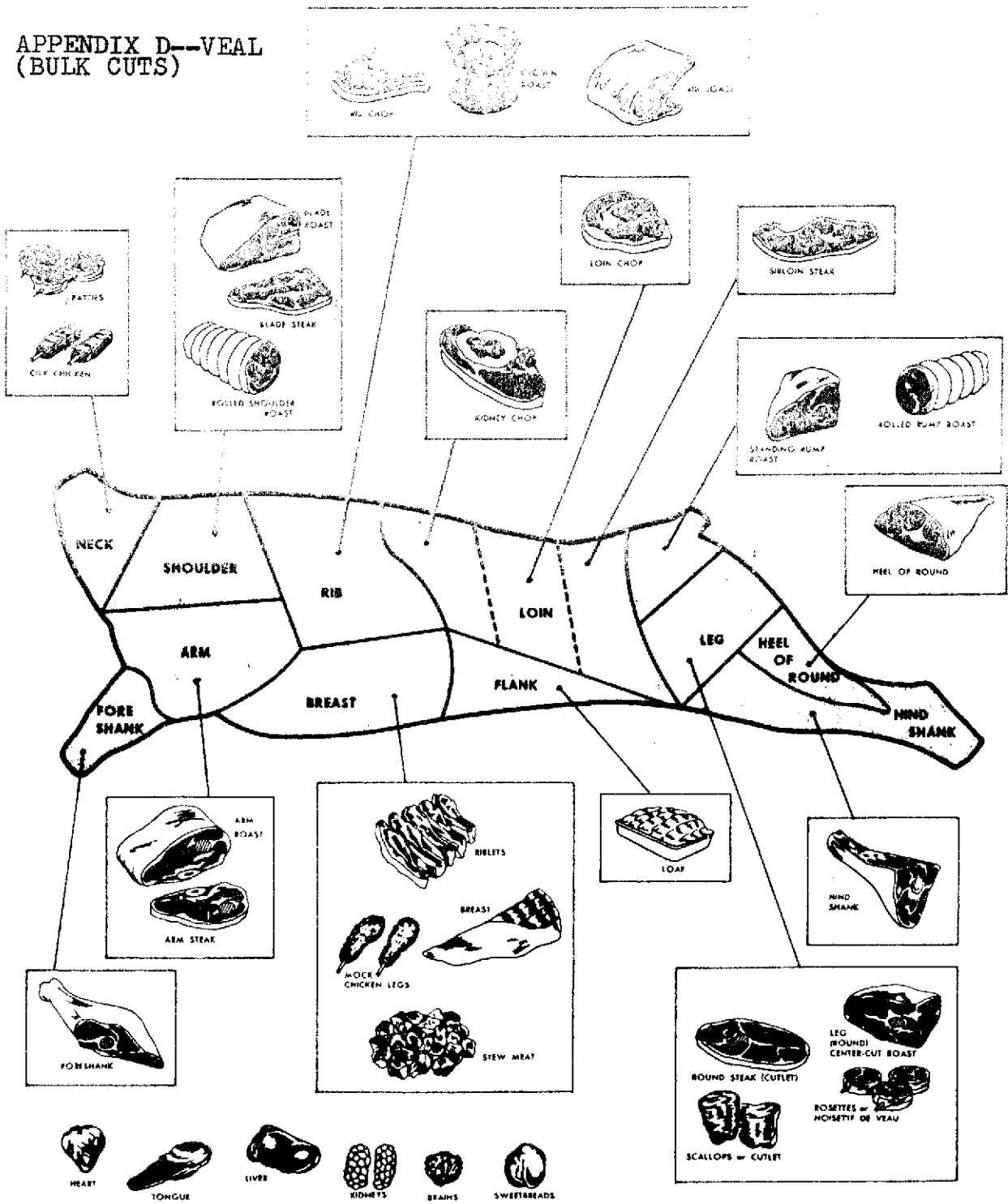
APPENDIX B--  
PORK (BULK CUTS)



APPENDIX C--LAMB (BULK CUTS)



APPENDIX D--VEAL  
(BULK CUTS)



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2. Army Regulation (AR) 31-200, Army Commissary Operating Procedures, with changes, Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1968.