Black-Eye Peas Mean Good Luck, Good Eating

by Mrs. Ray B. Theaux, Home Demonstration Agent

It may be just folklore, but the people in this part of the country take it seriously. Every year they take out Good Luck Insurance on New Year's Day for the coming 12 months by eating black-eye peas. Experts on this matter claim that the black-eye peas must be cooked with hog jowl and eaten with corn pone to be truly effective. Many old-timers can cite example after example of how black-eye peas brought good luck during the year. There is the story of General Sam Houston, who ate a potful of black-eye peas and hog jowl just before he won the Battle of San Jacinto. During the Civil War, many southern families made it through the winter on black-eye peas and a little pork. At that time, some folks thought they would surely earn a dollar for every pea they ate on New Year's Day. With a generous serving running around 500 to 1,000 peas, a man would have been rich in that day with an income of $500 to $1,000. Early settlers put away their winter's supply of black-eye peas by drying them on the vine and then shelling them. Later, they learned how to can the fresh shelled peas and snapped pods. Then came the frozen black-eye peas. You'll be able to find sufficient supplies of dried, canned, or frozen black-eye peas at local markets for New Year's Day to assure you of good luck for 1966, says the Agricultural Marketing Service. Of course, they rate high, nutritionally, any day of the year. There's a lot of good eating in black-eye peas — if not good luck.