ROUDIN

links Acadiana with France

ABBEVILLE — Acadians continue to preserve and expand upon local traditions, and making boudin is no exception. The French version of French boudin will be brought to the nation via the upcoming segment of "Cooking in America," filmed recently at Hubert's Meat Market.

Hosted by the McIlhenny family of Avery Island, the French "40-minute Gourmet" Chef Pierre Franey of New York and his television crew spent several days filming in Acadiana last week, before heading to New Orleans for more taping of the cooking series. It is scheduled to air early next year on the Public Broadcasting System, and a book describing the tour will be published simultaneously.

Frye, whose column appears in The New York Times and in newspapers throughout the country, visited Hubert's known for its chitterlings (sour pig stomach) and pradaux (creole sausages) to observe how boudin is made here, in comparison with his version of a "bou-

din." Frye said, explaining that the French do not include rice in their mixture and as a result, their boudin has a finer texture. The popular red boudin in France consists of some of the same-seasoning used here, but it is grilled and served with Dijon mustard and mashed potatoes, he explained.

"My boudin 'is a' and Hubert's white boudin includes pork meat, black and..."
red pepper, onion tops, onion, salt, parsley and rice, according to owner/manager Albert Luquette Jr.

"Junior," the son-in-law of the original owner, Clement Hebert, explains that red, or "black" boudin, as the French call it, is made by using pork blood. The hog is slaughtered, shaved where it will be bled, stabbed, and the blood is drained through a stainless steel funnel and bucket. He said his employees are only allowed to "save the blood" when meat inspectors are there, twice a week.

Franey observed the process at Hebert's and said he hopes to pick up some cooking "tips" from his visit to "Tabasco Country."

He commented that during his trips to this area over the years, he has been impressed by Louisianians and the way culture is preserved in this region, especially evidenced through the cooking.

For example, the way Cajuns make a roux traces back 300 years in France, he says. The heavy flour and oil mixture, as we know it, is no longer used in French recipes. "I'm amazed at how (Louisianians) have kept the French heritage," he said.

Today, "(The French) are conscious of fat content, and cook lighter," using less fat than in years past, he said. Though he doesn't use roux, Franey enjoys a quick sauce made with white wine and just a touch of butter. But he says that fats like butter and cream should be used in moderation, and recommends trimming calories whenever possible.

Through his syndicated column, he continues to revise old recipes, making them healthier without losing their traditional flavor. He prefers serving crisp vegetables, for example, as opposed to those smothered in fat.

Though Louisianians often do not spare calories when cooking, the chef said he has a special respect for the people here and their rich food.

"Part of the charm here is the people - they love the food and they love to share recipes."

Throughout the morning at Hebert's, workers shared with him the Cajun recipe for making boudin. From preparing the meat to stuffing the finished mixture in natural casing, which is actually well-cleaned animal intestine, Luquette led the chef through his daily routine at the market.

Some of Franey's crew of seven, who say they've been eating well since they arrived in Acadiana, enjoyed a taste of the final product with coffee before packing up for lunch at Hub City Diner, and dinner at Prudhomme's Cajun Cafe later that evening.

With northern California, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Disneyworld and Louisiana under their belts, Franey and his crew are headed for the Midwest, the Southwest, the Pacific Northwest, Alaska and Maine before wrapping up their tour in August.