Kitchen managers cope with diverse tastes

When it's lunchtime in Farmington

When it's bunchtime in Farmington area schools some students cast longing thoughts toward the protect of their next home-cooked message the their next home-cooked message different look at the situation, rowing that they really edgo the food in their school cafeteria.

Students can plop down 50 cents for meals which include a main dish. vegetable and milk. Teachers pay \$1 for the meal and a la carte terms are slightly higher. The hot lunch program, which is featured in the high schools and the junior rights will be extended to the elementary schools in Farmington, in September 1978, according to District Budpess Mgr. William Prisk.

And it'll be up to Food Coordinator

And it'll be up to Food Coordinator Marie Ritchie to make sure that the Farmington School District's food

lockers are kept filled to accommodate the additional demand.

A member of the Farmington school's kitchen staff for 20 years.
Mrs. Ritchie started out as a kitchen helper.

"I love baking. I miss that." she said

"I love baking. I miss that." she said NOW, AS THE HEAD OF the district's kitcheas, she works with bettier the she works with bettier the she works with the she with the she

Students are served a combination of convenience foods and items made

from scratch in the school kitchens. Some commodities are received from the federal government's school lunch program. "We make things from bread to beef stew We bake bread and rolls," Mrs. Ritchie said Menus include hot roast beef sandwiches. macaroni and cheese, fish sandwiches and paphetti. Hot dogs and hamburgers are available at every lunch. Most students are partial to the pizza dishes, which are served aspart of the regular hot meal or a la carte.

Although it has a lot of variety, the program breaks even financially.

IN 1975, the school lunch program took in \$467,000 That year, expendi-tures amounted to \$445,000, according to Prisk Last year, the program re-ceived \$508,000 and spent \$504,000 "It pays for itself." said Prisk But he has doubts about the dis-trict's lunch program breaking even after the elementary schools rejoin

after the elementary schools rejoin the program. The elementary school hot lunch program was discontinued five years ago because most of the children eat at home or brown bag it, according to Prisk. "A lot of the mothers want to see their children at lunch time." Prisk

their children at lunch time. Prisk explained "And it's also a question of economics I know that a sandwich can be built cheaper at home," he said Extending the hot lunch program to the elementary schools is required by a state law. Complying with the ruling will involve replacing a few items in

the elementary school kitchens and the hiring of about 53 additional employes, according to Prisk. Most of the kitchen equipment from the previous program is still in storage. Few of the items were discarded because they were worn. Others have been used throughout the years to replace worn items for the high school kitchens and the k...enss that serve Parmington Training Center and the Cloverale Center

EACH ELEMENTARY school has its own kitchen which will be pulled out of retirement. Some kitchens have seen a second life as storage areas

art workshops and science rooms.

When the program goes into effect,
the elementary kitchens will be oper-

ated in a slightly different manner than the others.

High school and junior high kitchens are in the same building as the classrooms. Each has its own food storage and freezeras well as stoves and other kitchen equipment. The food is prepared in the individual kitchens. In the elementary program, the food will be prepared at a central kitchen in Larkshire Elementary School Food will be reheated in the different elementary schools' sattelite kitchens.

Any food that is prepared for a large number of dimers in satelite kitchens or on the scene are bound to run into some criticism.

"I heard much criticism but you have to take into account that the capibilities are limited." Prisk said "I've eater at least one of everything on the menu that was prepared in the satellite kitchens. I've eaten a lot of institutional food, so maybe I've dadpted But I had no complaints except for one meal And I've forgotten what it was "BUT IT WAS BAD," he said.

what it was

"BUT IT WAS BAD," he said.
Kitchen managers echo Prisk's judgment of the food they serve. They and
the school principals are staunch
spokesmen and defendants of the
kitchen's products.

"School food isn't going to taste like
it does at home." admitted East Junior High's Kitchen Manager Marion
Bush.
"We start preparation of the food at
8.30 a.m. Some of the dishes are prepared the day before and stored. We
have to do that since our labor was
cut.

cut.
"I don't hear any complaints about the food. I think it's very good," s'he

said
"I happen to know that East serves
excellent hamburgers We hold them
in their juice, so they don't get dry,"
she said.

ne said. East Principal Gil Henderson is firm in the belief that the school's chili is better than that found in a res-

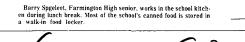
"I'm not a picky eater. I was a cook for three years in college and I've prepared and eaten everything," be said

See related story on Pg. 12A

hudsons



Terry Hall (left) and Jane Mather enjoy eating their lunches at the Farmington High School cafe-



Students rate hot lunch

School cafeteria fare has a long way to go before it replaces home cooking, but some institutional kitchesa are managing to close the culinary gap. Farmington student favorites such as pizza, hamburgers and hot dogs are set out to tempt the tempermental taste buds of teens. These attempts at keeping up with the McDonalds have achieved varying stages of success. Some have fallen flat while others are kindly received by students.

flat while others are kindly received by students. Hot dogs and hamburgers are daily items on school menus, but some students pull thumbs down on the effort. "The hamburgers took like hockey pucks." Said East Junor High eight grader Jackie Roberts.

"The junk food is good but the stiff that's good for you is never hot." added Barb. Edeen, an eighth grade Michael Said Commanders in the high stiff of the stiff that with the said of the

student at East.

Kitchen managers in the high schools are aware that students who complain about the food are liable to take advantage of the high school's open campus and indulge in some fast

SOME OF THE SCHOOLS HAVE countered the move to take out lunches by making the carterial less institutional. Harrison High School has painted as lunchroom orange red and yellow. Farmington High's Student council has come up with a new gimmek for relieving lunch time blabs. The view and roll at moal time. In the midst of the noise of students gathering and the masse blaning two farmington students squarely enjoying their lunch. "I like to eathers, The foods good I like the mararious and cheese and the vegetables and the cile saw I like the spaghetit lunches. The ladies in the kitchen are so mee; sand dane Mather, a semior "I think the food's good here," said fare Mather, a pricky care, "I said faire Mather, a pricky cater," he said forball teams. "I'm not a picky cater," he said "The variety here is good. You know, they make their own spaghetti sauce here."





High School students devour lanch in the school's cafeteria.
(Staff photos by Harry Mauthe)