

Begin Preparations

Are you prepared? At this moment, my cell phone is fully charged, I have extra medications in my bag, and I have this week's menu planned. I might be ready for day to day activities, but I'm not prepared for what I'm going to do if I have an abundance of garden produce.

Last year, canning supply products like jar flats were difficult to find. The good news is that these supplies are coming back. Manufacturers have increased production, added more production shifts, and streamlined production to manufacture more jars and lids. Consumers should practice patience and resist panic-buying to allow everyone to get their supplies.

Canning, freezing, and dehydration are methods of food preservation, but not all techniques work best for all foods. K-State Research and Extension provides research-based resources to help with home food preservation. A variety of produce specific information sheets are available from our office to help you determine quantity of supplies, equipment and steps for success.

Using untested recipes (or that idea you saw on social media) is not recommended for canning. Remember, the process of canning is like a science experiment and you don't want crazy bacteria growing in the food. Thus, the K-State food preservation information sheets include tested recipes with step by step instructions.

If you learned how to use a pressure cooker from your Grandma in Colorado, you are likely doing it wrong. Why? The time for processing is based on elevation. In Cowley County, our elevation is just over 1,000 feet which will affect how long the jars are in a water bath canner or pressure canner for processing.

Maybe your Grandma used a water bath canner for all items. This method may also be incorrect since the pH value of the food sometimes dictates the use of a pressure canner for proper processing.

If you utilize a pressure canner with a dial gauge, be sure to have it tested for accuracy. This free service is available at the Cowley County Extension office and only takes a few minutes. However, please call to make an appointment.

For access to fact sheets, visit www.cowley.k-state.edu. The office is located in the Cowley County Courthouse at 311 E 9th in Winfield. The office is open weekdays 8-11:30 a.m. and 12:30- 5 p.m. and can be reached at 620-221-5450.

Source: You Asked It, Karen Blakeslee, Rapid Response Coordinator, Kansas State University

Upcoming K-State Research and Extension Events

call 620-221-5450 for more information or to register

May 22 - Celebrate Ag Day, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Free, Winfield Fairgrounds

May 28 - Sitter Solutions, the beginning babysitting class for ages 11-14, \$10, Winfield

June 4 - Sitter Solutions, the beginning babysitting class for ages 11-14, \$10, Arkansas City

