

Reliable

Reliable. I like and need reliable. Can you think of a time that a vehicle or something else wasn't reliable? I bet you have a story and possibly regrets!

In the food preservation world, experts emphasize the concept of "reliable." This would include recipes and processes that have been tested - repeatedly - to insure reliability. Testing needs to be conducted by experts. These experts have specialized labs, equipment and processes that allow them to prove reliability.

I agree that your friend or relative who annually cans multiple pints or quarts is experienced. They use a favorite recipe and "no one has ever gotten sick." These people, processes and recipes may work most of the time, but they may not be reliable for safety and quality. In addition, food borne illnesses don't always make you sick immediately after the first bite. Thus, many may have gotten sick but it wasn't connected back to the unreliable recipe.

If you do any home food preservation, please review resources from the National Center for Home Food Preservation. They are a reliable source for current research-based recommendations for most methods of home food preservation. The Center was established with funding from the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (CSREES-USDA) to address food safety concerns for those who practice and teach home food preservation and processing methods. K-State Research and Extension utilizes these recommendations to create our publications.

Please be safe in your home canning choices. The research-based processes available may seem very limiting and traditional but there has been little public funding for researching new recommendations in a long time. In addition, there are few labs set up and staffed to do home canning research.

So what is the take away? Although something old may seem reliable, don't use old food preservation recipes or processes. Don't increase or decrease ingredients, processing time or pressure level (thinking more will be better). Don't double recipes and always use quality ingredients. And please, don't consider random social media posts and links as reliable... you may have more than just regrets!

If you have specific canning questions, I can connect you with food preservation experts (who use reliable resources daily). Contact Cowley County Extension at 221-5450 or 441-4565.

Source: National Center for Home Food Preservation website: nchfp.uga.edu

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K-State Research and Extension is a short name for the Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, a program designed to generate and distribute useful knowledge for the well-being of Kansans. Supported by county, state, federal and private funds, the program has county Extension offices, experiment fields, area Extension

offices and regional research centers statewide. Its headquarters is on the K-State campus in Manhattan.