

## 4-H FOOD PRESERVATION GUIDELINES

### Canning, and Food Drying

The following are guidelines for providing learning experiences in the food preservation area. These ideas are designed to help youth acquire the life skills that will help them and their families manage and extend their resources in a variety of ways.

#### GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALL MEMBERS

- Learn basic information about nutrition and healthy lifestyles. Learn food preservation skills.
- Learn information on foods of many cultures. Develop skills in food buying. Learn about careers in the food industry.
- Learn tips in safe food handling and kitchen safety.
- Learn skills for safely preserving foods by canning, freezing or drying.
- Learn to use and maintain equipment properly.

No freezing exhibits on display.

For the fair: Please include 3 jars or cans of canned items. Dried items must be in 2-3 appropriate containers or jars of their own.

#### CANNING

To assist in the judging process and to ensure the safety of home canned foods, we recommend following the general guidelines listed below. In addition, the use of the Ball Blue Book or USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning will be beneficial in providing up-to-date information. It may be necessary to open home canned food entries to inspect for judging purposes. Home canned products will not be tasted.

- Label glass container to include member's name, name of product, age, date of preparation, processing method used, and length of processing time.
- Home canned foods to be judged must have been prepared within a one-year period prior to judging date.
- All entries must be heat processed following Ball Corporation or USDA guidelines. The two approved methods are: boiling-water bath canning for high acid foods and steampressure canning for low acid foods. - The length of processing time and pounds of pressure used must follow Ball Corporation or USDA guidelines.
- Bands should be in place for transporting home canned products; however, bands should be removed at arrival at fair.

- An appropriate amount of headspace for the product canned should be allowed. Leave 1/4-inch headspace for jams and jellies, pickles and relishes (except sauerkraut); 1/2-inch headspace for fruits, tomatoes and sauerkraut; 1-inch headspace for vegetables.
- Product pieces should be uniform in size and packed snugly but allow for circulation of liquids. Liquids should cover the product, keeping within the headspace guidelines. Liquids should be clear and free from cloudiness and small particles. The only exception would be for canned meats.
- Air bubbles should be kept to a minimum. Gas bubbles denote spoilage and are identified by movement to the surface of the product while the jar is stationary. Any entry exhibiting spoilage of any type will be disqualified.
- Products should be free from defects or blemishes, strings, stems, seeds, pits and peels. Some recipes may require stems, pits and/or peels to remain; this is acceptable if the recipe is in keeping with approved guidelines.
- The product should retain its natural characteristic color or as nearly that of standard cooked product. It should be free from undue color loss. The texture should be tender but not overcooked. The product should maintain its shape and size appropriate for recipe or preparation method.