

## *Food Preservation Relevance*

Since the 2020 Pandemic, there has been an increase in individuals and families preserving foods at home. Families are searching for ways to stretch their food dollars and increase food shelf life.

Gardening is also making a comeback, as families search for ways to lessen the burden of high food prices. Thus, finding a way to preserve foods from these gardens has become critical. Food preservation practices such as dehydration, canning, and freezing are skills individuals are interested in learning and putting into immediate practice.

According to the Wall Street Journal, since the pandemic of 2020, there has been:

- 39% increase in sales of food preservation supplies
- 60% increase in sales of canning jars
- 64% increase in the production of pressure canners

Additionally, a USDA study found most people turn to family or friends for food preservation education. Only 10% of those surveyed considered Extension an educational resource option, indicating a significant need for Extension to promote this programming.

**South Plains District Food Preservation Committee:** Felice Acker, Shawnte Clawson, Cory Edwards, Courtney Lowe, Ann Millican, Sierra Stephens & Ronda White



## Education Extends the Life of Foods & Stretches Food Dollars

In 2022, the South Plains District Food Preservation Committee focused on conducting in-person trainings. The hands-on workshops included the following education and activities:



Overview of all methods of food preservation



Water bath canning basics including safety information for jams/jellies, pickles, and salsas



Pressure canning basics including safety information for preserving vegetables

### Workshops held:

- May 2022--AgriLife Extension agents, 16 participants
- July 2022--Hale County-Plainview TX, 5 participants
- July 2022--Lubbock County-Lubbock, TX, 9 participants
- August 2022--Scurry County-Snyder, TX, 7 participants
- September 2022 - Hale County - Plainview TX, 13 participants

*(4-H age youth and parents attending the Sept. event & were not surveyed)*

# Results

Pre- and Post-Surveys, as well as a 60 day follow-up survey, were conducted for the Preserving Your Harvest Workshop.

## KNOWLEDGE GAINED

38%

of participants had used open kettle practices to process food in the last year. This unsafe method is not recommended for any type of food preservation. 100% indicated they would not use this practice in the future.

### Before Series

8%

participants surveyed had experience using a pressure canner

### After Series

92%

felt confident they could use a pressure canner after the workshop

91%

surveyed rated their knowledge and skills as good to excellent after the series

98%

indicated they would only seek safe and tested recipes for future food preservation



50

Attendees for the five Preserving your Harvest workshops



210

Jars canned safely by participants



54

Pressure canner gauges in the district tested for safety

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

68%

participants indicated food preservation will have an economic impact on their household

72%

surveyed planned to update their equipment or purchase new for safety measures

## SUMMARY

Preserving foods through canning, freezing, dehydration, or fermenting allows families to enjoy their favorite foods without spoilage all year. The key to safe home canning starts with tested recipes and safe practices. Extension education is key to this process.



"Fun, interactive class that helped me feel confident to preserve food at home" - Lubbock Co. participant



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