

IMPACT

University of Idaho
Extension

Cassia County, 208.878.9461, Fax: 208.878.7862
1013 West 16th Street, Burley, ID 83318

Home food preservation workshops increase consumer knowledge

The Situation

It has been stated by many food insiders that home canning was the top trend in 2011. The resurgence of home canning can be attributed to people wanting to live a healthier lifestyle, cut grocery costs and to eat foods that are locally grown. Jarden Home Brands, makers of Ball® Home Canning Products indicate that sales have risen nearly 35 percent over the past three years. The increased interest in home canning has triggered the need to make sure people are focusing on the methodology of canning and not just the act.

There are very few organizations that provide training for individuals to learn the methodology of canning at home. These classes are generally localized to large cities through the "Canning Across America" group. They are generally a demonstration with vital information included. Many consumers need the education along with the opportunity to have hands-on experience using the techniques learned. The hands-on experience provides them with the security to preserve food at home properly.

The goal of University of Idaho Extension is to provide research-based information to clientele in the communities where they live. With many community members coming to Extension for information on canning, a food preservation workshop that provided individuals with information and a hands-on experience to provide healthy, safe foods at home was needed.

Our Response

To provide the education necessary for home canning safely, UI Extension Educators in the Magic Valley put together a "Home Food Preservation" workshop. The workshop was based on the current Master Food



Participants from the Home Food Preservation Hands-on Canning Lab.

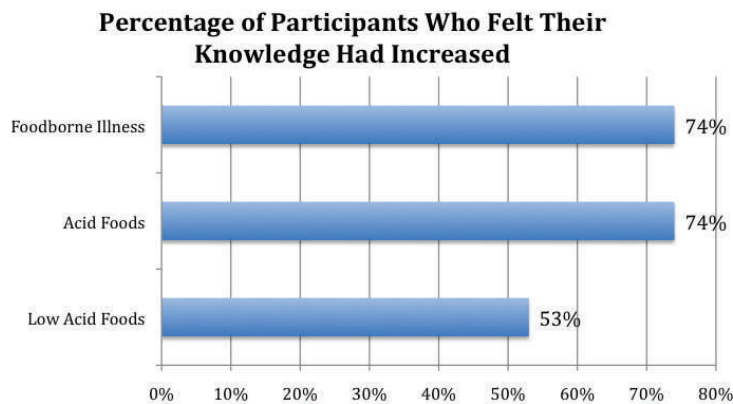
Safety Advisor Training Program. The Home Food Preservation Workshop is four sessions, two hours each, with an all day hands-on canning lab to finish the course.

Over the four sessions, participants receive information on foodborne illness, basics of food spoilage and preservation, canning basics, canning acid foods, canning low-acid foods, preparation and canning of pickled and fermented foods, making and preserving fruit spreads, freezing food, storage of frozen and refrigerated foods and drying foods.

During the hands-on canning lab, participants prepare canning recipes in a boiling water as well as a pressure canner. With the class size being limited to around fifteen participants, it allows everyone to participate in the canning processes for each procedure.

Program Outcomes

The Home Food Preservation Workshop has been conducted nine times over the last three years with 119 participants. Thirty-seven completed surveys that measured, on a scale of one to five, the knowledge they gained on different aspects of food preservation. The graph below indicates the percentage of participants who felt their knowledge had increased in the areas of foodborne illness, canning acid foods and canning low acid foods.



Through the workshops, the Magic Valley Master Food Safety Advisor program, which is essential in teaching safe home food preservation practices, has also grown. At the end of each workshop participants are allowed to take the Master Food Safety Advisor exam. The number of trained volunteers has increased from eighteen to thirty-two, adding fourteen new volunteers to the advisor program.

UI Extension continues to be a significant source of safe home food preservation information in the Magic Valley. Ninety-seven percent of participants indicated they are very likely to try boiling water canning, and seventy percent indicated they are very likely to try pressure canning after taking the workshop.

Home canning has the potential to help consumers reduce spending at the grocery store. The average household spends approximately \$228 on processed fruits and vegetables each year. Home canning of fruits and vegetables for a year would cost approximately \$100, having a potential yearly savings of \$128 off their grocery bill. Learning how to properly and safely can foods at home offers individuals an opportunity to economically provide a sense of food security for their families.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Grace Wittman, Extension Educator-FCS
University of Idaho Extension, Cassia County
1013 West 16th Street
Burley, ID 83318
Phone: 208.878.9461
Fax: 208.878.7862
E-mail: gwittman@uidaho.edu

Rhea Lanting, Extension Educator-FCS
University of Idaho Extension, Twin Falls County
246 Third Avenue East
Twin Falls, ID 83301
Phone: 208.734.9590
Fax: 208.733.9645
E-mail: rhlantin@uidaho.edu

Donna R. Gillespie, Extension Educator-4-H
University of Idaho Extension, Minidoka County
85 East Baseline Road
Rupert, ID 83350
Phone: 208.436.7184
Fax: 208.436.6889
E-mail: donna@uidaho.edu

16-12gwittman-preservation.pub
10/12