

Access to Produce is Safely  
Extended Through Extension

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

 University of  
**Kentucky**  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment



County agents check seals and test pressure gauges on canning equipment.

## Extension Conducts Hands-on Food Preservation Programs to Ensure Food Safety

*Extension classes enable residents to improve their diet and access fruits and vegetables throughout the year by properly preserving food.*

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*It starts with us*



*A Lawrence County youth carefully pours jam and ensures correct headspace before sealing jars.*

Food preservation classes conducted by county Extension offices increased attendance over the past five years with men and women, adults and youth participating. Participants shared their desire to save money, reduce food waste, limit sugar and salt, create a better tasting product, and follow family tradition using safe research-based methods. The classes vary by county from general information to three-day hands-on workshops using a variety of techniques including hot water canning, pressure canning, drying and freezing food.

As a result, participants differentiate between low acid and high acid foods and select the proper canning techniques. Their confidence level

increased as they gained experience using food preservation equipment and research based recipes. Canning requires a financial investment in equipment and food products, so participants care if the final product will be safe and appealing to their family.

During 2017, Extension agents taught food preservation to over 2,500 people in 67 counties. Of those who responded to a follow-up survey, they reported preserving over 8,100 pints of food using hot water canning (i.e. jam, jellies, pickles); 9,200 pints of vegetables, meats, and soups by pressure canning; 6,100 pints of fruits and vegetables by freezing; and 1,200 pints of fruits and vegetables by drying

Food preservation offers people the chance to completely control the quality of ingredients put in their foods. Home canning is a reliable method of preserving your own food for long-term storage and gives you access to food year round. Participants can have family recipes reviewed to insure food safety. County agents provide equipment testing of pressure gauges and gaskets of pressure canners. People gain a sense of pride and accomplishment. The classes have inspired some to become food entrepreneurs.

**During 2017, Extension interacted with over 3,000 people who supplement their diets with healthy foods that they preserved, utilizing community or backyard gardens, fishing, hunting, and farmers markets.**