

FOOD PRESERVATION

Superintendent: Chris Basile

FOOD PRESERVATION RULES

Any processed food, including dried foods, will be evaluated based on appearance and process used. If there is a concern about food safety, the entry may not be tasted. Process must be described.

Criteria for exhibiting home canned foods:

Remember: use only United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) tested and approved recipes. The USDA has researched, tested and approved recipes for home canning. In order to obtain a safe, quality product use only up-to-date (1994 or later) USDA approved recipes.

Approved recipe sources include:

National center for Home Food Preservation at
<http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/>
So Easy to Preserve, University of Georgia
Your local Cornell Cooperative Extension Office
Ball Blue Book

For pickled items use only vinegar that is at least 5% acidity. Recently there has been a change in how vinegar is packaged. If the vinegar is less than 5% acidity there is a significant risk of contamination and spoilage.

The following entries will be disqualified:

- Foods processed and packaged not following current (1994 and later) USDA recommendations
- Paraffin sealed jams and jellies
- Jars with zinc lids
- Foods in colored jars or non-standardized jars
- Jars with more than 2" headspace
- Jars with added color, bleach, sulfite or other preservatives, unless called for in a USDA approved recipe. (For example, baking soda may not be added to green vegetables)
- Jars or food that were made and processed over one year ago.
- Pickled items that use vinegar that is less than 5% acidity or that the exhibitor does not know the acidity percentage.

A canned exhibit consists of two (2) clear-glass jars processed by hot water bath technique, steam or pressure canning methods with two (2) piece lid (metal lid and band). The first jar is to be a standard jelly jar, pint or quart that will be kept and displayed. The second jar may be a smaller jar to be sampled and returned to the exhibitor. The tasting jar must also be either hot water bath, steam or pressure canned.

- a. Jars must be free of cracks, chips, etc.
- b. Each exhibit must be properly sealed by an appropriate method of either hot water bath canning for high acid foods or pressure canning for low acid foods. Please refer to the resources listed above to verify which is the appropriate method to use for your product.
- c. Rings should have been removed after processing and cooling to clean and store the canned good. Rings should be put back on for transport but removed for judging.
- d. Jars must be labeled. Do not put labels on the sides of the jars (this makes it difficult for judges to view the product). If all of the required information will not fit, you may use a label placed on the jar lid. If not, attach a separate card securely to the exhibit.
- e. Recipe Card should include:
 - Recipe
 - Recipe Source
 - Nutritional Information
- f. Label should include the following information if not already included in the recipe:
 - Contents
 - Type of pack (hot or raw)
 - Type of processing (boiling water bath, steam or pressure)
 - Processing time
 - Altitude adjustment if required
 - Headspace
 - Date of processing
- g. Appropriate head space requirements must be followed. In general- Fruit Juices ¼ inch; Vegetables ½ inch; Jams and Jellies 1/8 -1/4 inch; Pickles ½ inch; Tomatoes ½ inch, or according to USDA approved recipes.
- h. Vinegars or Oils- must include the recipe and process for making the product as well as the recipe for the product's use. To be displayed in a clear glass bottle that can be resealed; such as a cork, stopper bottle, or canning jar that has not been processed and sealed.

Dried/Dehydrated exhibit consists of one (1) clear-glass jar. 2 identical jars would be preferred per entry (1 for tasting, 1 for display). Food can be dehydrated using air drying, dehydrator or oven processes.

- a. Dried foods must be displayed in a clear glass ½ pint or larger jar with a tight-fitting lid.
- b. Jars must be free of cracks, chips, etc.
- c. Foods in unapproved containers or more than one year old will be disqualified.
- d. Jars must be labeled. Do not put labels on the sides of the jars (this makes it difficult for judges to view the product). If all of the required information will not fit, you may use a label placed on the jar lid. If not, attach a separate card securely to the exhibit.
- e. The labels should include:
 - Method of Drying (Air, Dehydrator, or Oven)
 - Time and Temperature of drying
 - Pre-treatment method (if used)
- f. Recipe Card should include:
 - Recipe
 - Recipe Source
 - Nutritional Information

AWARDS:

Blue \$2.00 Red \$1.50 White \$1.00

Class # 1-19

1. Canned Fruit – process using hot water bath or steam method
 2. Canned Fruit Sauces/ Butters - process using hot water bath or steam method
 3. Canned Fruit Juice- process using hot water bath or steam method
 4. Canned Vegetable Juice – process using pressure canning method
 5. Canned Pie Filling - process using hot water bath or steam method
 6. Canned Vegetables - process using pressure canning method
 7. Canned Pickles/ Relishes - process using hot water bath or steam method
 8. Canned Salsa/ Picante - process using hot water bath or steam method
 9. Canned Spaghetti or Tomato Sauce - process using hot water bath or steam method
 10. Canned Vegetable Sauce - process using pressure canning method
 11. Canned Soups/ Stews - process using pressure canning method
 12. Canned Meat/ Fish/ Poultry - process using pressure canning method
 13. Vinegars – do not need to be processed
 14. Fermented Products (Sauerkraut, Pickles, etc.) - process using hot water bath or steam method
 15. Jam/ Jelly/ Preserves/ Conserve/ Marmalade - - process using hot water bath or steam method
 16. Dried Vegetables – can be done through air drying, oven method or dehydrator use
 17. Dried Fruits – can be done through air drying, oven method or dehydrator use
 18. Fruit Leathers – can be done through air drying, oven method or dehydrator use
 19. Dried Herbs – can be done through air drying, oven method or dehydrator use
 20. Dried Meat/ Fish/ Poultry - - can be done through air drying, oven method or dehydrator use
 21. Other Preserved Item/ Miscellaneous – process will vary based on the acidity of the product being processed
- Miscellaneous- items that do not fit in categories above. **Please contact 4-H Office or superintendent for clarification.** Guidelines are the same for this as either canned or dehydrated food items.

NOTE: Special Requirement for 4-H exhibitor who will not be talking with the Fair Evaluator

For any 4-H member who is unable to bring his/her exhibits/entries to the 4-H Youth Development Building on Saturday, August 2, 2025, to speak personally with the evaluator, the following Exhibitor Information Statement is required to be completed for each exhibit/entry. The evaluator will be requiring this in order to accept the exhibit/entry. (Cloverbuds should complete this information to the best of their abilities; regular 4-H'ers (ages 8-18 as of January 1st) should complete these statements fully in their own handwriting if possible. Age and experience will be taken into consideration.)

1. What is the Section _____ and Class _____ of your exhibit
2. Describe what you did to complete this project. Provide a list of materials, products and/or equipment used and why they were selected. Briefly explain your methods of construction process and your source of ideas. (3-5 sentences is sufficient)
3. In approximately 3 – 5 sentences, describe your feelings about this project: what you learned, what challenged you, and /or how you would improve your exhibit in the future.
4. Additional information requested in the Section for this class (Be sure to read complete guidelines in the section)
5. Additional information or special needs to be noted by the evaluator.