



## 2015 JUDGING GUIDELINES

### **APPOINTING JUDGES**

1. It is advisable to impanel a minimum of three judges including one person with food preservation training, Extension Agent or Master Food Preserver.
2. Judges may not enter as a contestant in the Ball® Fresh Preserving Award program for which they are an acting judge.
3. The following publications are recognized as authorities in safe food preservation. Judges may use them to validate quality criteria of entries. Information in these references may differ slightly; each book is correct and safe.
  - "Ball Blue Book® Guide to Preserving," copyright 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015
  - "Ball® Complete Book of Home Preserving," copyright 2006, 2012
  - "USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning," Bulletin No. 539, reprint 2009

### **ENTRANT ELIGIBILITY**

1. Eligible entries must be preserved in the same brand of jar and lid: Ball® Jar (including Heritage Collection) sealed with a Ball® Lid & Band, or Ball® Collection Elite® Jar sealed with a Collection Elite® Lid & Band, or Kerr® Jar sealed with a Kerr® Lid & Band.
2. Entries in the Soft Spread category must be prepared using Ball® Pectin: Classic, Low or No-Sugar Needed, or Liquid.
3. Entries must be labeled with product name, date of preparation, processing method, and processing time.
4. All preserved foods must be prepared within a one-year (1) period prior to the judging date.

### **QUALITY CRITERIA**

*\* Safety is of utmost importance. Any entry not in compliance with judging guidelines or exhibiting spoilage must be disqualified. Quality criteria are based on visual judging only. Refrain from tasting preserved food as part of the Ball® Fresh Preserving Award program.\**

#### 1. FILLED JAR

- **Headspace** must correspond to instructions from the reference guides listed. The top of the finished recipe or liquid covering produce must provide adequate headspace as stated in approved guidelines.
- **Air bubbles** must be kept to a minimum. (Gas bubbles denote spoilage and can be identified by movement of bubbles to the surface of the product while the jar is stationary. Products indicating presence of gas bubbles must be disqualified.)
- **Band** should remain in place to transport preserved food. Remove band carefully to determine if the headspace is correct. Replace band for product display.

#### 2. HEAT PROCESS

- **Method** used to heat process food must comply with current preserving guidelines as stated in the approved reference guides. The boiling-water process for high-acid food and pressure process for low-acid food are the only recommended methods to preserve food in jars for shelf storage.
- **Time** for correctly heat processing food varies depending on each specific recipe or food type. Processing time must be in agreement with the approved reference guides.

#### 3. PRODUCT APPEARANCE

- **Produce** should be free from blemishes, disease, and spoilage. Recipes prepared with stems, pits and peels intact are acceptable if the recipe is in keeping with all preserving guidelines.
- **Liquid** must be clear and free from cloudiness and small particles unless recipe ingredients have a natural effect on product clarity.
- **Color** of the finished product should be as close as possible to its natural characteristics or that for cooked product.
- **Texture** is affected by heat processing; however, the finished product should not easily break down or appear over-cooked.
- **Ingredients** should retain their shape and size based on the type and preparation method. Cut pieces of uniform size should be packed evenly in the jar yet allow adequate room for liquid to circulate throughout the jar.