

Embracing food preservation

Food preservation seems to be a trend of the future as we see more and more young homemakers wanting to learn about food preservation and veteran homemakers returning to a skill which hasn't been practiced for a few years. To be safe in your home preservation practices, review these recommended practices:

High acid foods, such as fruits, fruit products, jams, jellies, pickles and tomatoes should be processed in a boiling water bath (212 degrees F), which requires a large kettle equipped with a rack to position the jars off the bottom of the pan. If jars are not placed in a rack and come in direct contact with the bottom of a kettle during the canning process, jars may crack and compromise food safety and quality. The jar and the intended preserved product will need to be discarded.

Either way, after following the recipe exactly, freshly canned products should be lifted from the canner with a wire jar lifter, and placed on a wire rack to cool.

Lids will "ping" during the cooling process to signal the jar has sealed.

Consumers also are advised to choose a jar suited for their intended food preservation method.

Canning jars with straight sides can typically be used for canning and freezing, and canning jars that have shoulder are not freezer safe.

Home ed Tranda Watts, Extension specialist



New lids should be purchased each year; canning jars with smooth rims (free from nicks and chips) and screw-on rings free of rust can be re-used from year to year.

While jars remain a dependable kitchen staple, be reminded that former and sometimes faddish home canning methods increase food safety risks and are not recommended. Examples include:

* Open-kettle canning, in which foods are cooked and then spooned into sterilized jars but not processed with a hot water bath, cannot ensure food safety.

* Oven canning, either in a conventional or microwave oven, is dangerous. Jars are not made for dry heat and can crack. Oven temperature varies. Oven heat is a dry heat that is slow in penetrating into jars of food.

* Sun canning, in which foods are placed in sterilized jars in sunlight in varying temperatures, but not processed at temperatures high enough to kill potentially harmful food-borne microorganisms can increase food safety risks.

* Processing canned foods in

a dishwasher, in which water temperature is not high enough to kill potentially harmful food-borne microorganisms, also can increase food safety risks.

Washing and sterilizing canning jars in the dishwasher prior to use, however, can be effective and convenient.

Label and date home preserved foods and use them within one year.

Be sure to check the local altitude as well as this can affect the pressure at which foods are preserved. While many will think Kansas is flat, the state's altitude rises from just under 1,000 feet in the east to about 4,000 feet in the west. As the altitude goes up, the boiling point goes down, and that means that foods processed in a pressure canner need processing at a higher pressure. The processing time (for pressure canning) will remain the same as the recommended times for lower altitudes. For water bath processing, the processing time is increased for higher altitudes. Altitude is typically listed on maps. Follow directions for adjustments for higher altitudes in recipe directions.

If you have questions about food preservation, please feel free to contact your local K-State Research and Extension Office or you may contact Tranda Watts, Multi-County Extension Specialist - Food, Nutrition, Health and Safety at twatts@ksu.edu or phone 785-443-3663.

Prison employees recognized



Employees of the 2nd Quarter 2013

Uniformed:

Sandra Olson

Sandra began her career with Norton Correctional Facility in December 2000 as a Corrections Officer. She was promoted to Corrections Officer II in September 2003. Sandra has worked many different posts and is currently assigned to work as C Unit OIC.

Sandra is noted to be very knowledgeable, detail oriented, and a team player. She serves

as a staff mentor and is always willing to assist others. She is consistent in dealing with offenders and uses progressive discipline. She gives her best in all of her work and is respected by staff and offenders. She arrives early to work on a regular basis and her uniform is always clean and neatly pressed. Sandra is a very pleasant person to work with and projects a positive image of KDOC and NCF with her professional appearance and the way she carries herself.



Scott Farr

Scott began his career with Norton Correctional Facility in

July 1992 as a Corrections Officer. He was promoted to Corrections Officer II in July 1994, Corrections Specialist I in July 2006, Corrections Specialist II in November 2008, and to Corrections Specialist III in February 2013.

It is noted that Scott has been an excellent employee in his many positions at NCF over the past 21 years. He is a war veteran and has used his experience in the military to teach and model discipline and attention to detail. He has recently taken on the responsibility of Assistant SORT Commander in charge of Logistics and hit the ground running. Through his leadership and organizational skills the team now has a new

command vehicle which is fully equipped and Scott continues to lead a team who is showing great improvement, organization, and a great asset to emergency operations. Scott has worked directly with communication vendors, conducted a great deal of research on equipment, made recommendations for purchasing, and obtained the necessary equipment to support SORT in all its specialists, the facility, and other agencies as necessary. Scott has been an important part of the SORT planning team for training and drills and recently attended a school targeted toward conducting and evaluating drills. His leadership is appreciated



Non-Uniformed:

Robert (Bob) Husted

Bob previously worked at the Norton State TB Hospital and remained on staff when it was converted to Norton Correctional Facility. He held numerous positions in the security ranks with the most recent as Key Control Specialist. He was promoted to Facility Maintenance Supervisor in December 2012.

Bob is noted to be invaluable in keeping the unit he is assigned to running smoothly.

He does what he can to maintain the building as well as to improve whenever possible the current operation. He works well alongside security staff to communicate items he sees that need to be added to the repair list. He has great time management skills, getting to repairs quickly, has excellent follow up, and the turnaround time on repairs is very minimal. Bob has established both a professional and positive link in the chain of the unit's operation.

Employees and community connected

By Ron Wilson

Huck Boyd Institute

Welcome to the company. Let's meet the owner. But if you're expecting to walk into one big office with a fancy desk and chair, think again. This is a company where every one of the certified employees is also an owner. Such an innovative ownership model has been part of the success of this remarkable communications company. It's today's Kansas Profile.

Gary Shorman is President and CEO of Eagle Communications in Hays. Last week we learned about how this company grew from its beginnings as a single radio station in 1948. Its company slogan is "Our Community...Connected."

Gary has rural roots, having grown up on a family farm south of Clay Center. He went to a one-room country school and then went to middle school at the rural community of Wakefield, population 841 people. Now, that's rural. Gary graduated from Clay Center, went to KU and began a career in broadcasting.

First he came back to his hometown of Clay Center and helped start a local radio station. His career then took him to KTOP and KDVV in Topeka.

In 1985, Gary was hired by Bob Schmidt, CEO of Eagle Communications, to run a group of radio stations in North Platte, Neb. In 1988 Gary moved to Hays and became head of the radio division. The company changed its name to Eagle Communications in 1992.

In 1998, Bob Schmidt retired as President and CEO. The person selected to replace him was Gary Shorman.

Eagle Communications has now grown to become a broadband services and media company operating 28 radio stations in Kansas, Nebraska and Missouri as well as cable TV and broadband Internet systems in 30 Kansas and Colorado communities.

The company serves thousands of rural customers including two who are especially significant: namely, Gary Shorman's mom and dad. "My parents still live on the family farm," Gary said. "They only had a slow dial-up connection until we came in with 3 meg wireless Internet service."

The wireless service to rural customers has been a significant benefit. The company's transmitters are often located on top of community grain elevators so they can reach a long distance. In June 2013, Eagle Communications' rural internet service was highlighted at the national cable show in Washington DC.

"Our services allow our customers to connect beyond their local circle of families and friends," Gary said. "We strive to provide the best connections in the communities we serve. Our goal is to make our communities and the lives of our listeners and customers better every day."

"Gary Shorman literally grew up in Kansas broadcasting and has always understood the importance of localism in community media," said Steve Smethers, associate director of the A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications at K-State.

"The motto of Eagle Communications is 'Our communities connected.' That's a value that

Gary has stood for throughout his career."

In 1998, when Bob Schmidt retired as CEO, the company also adopted an Employee Stock Ownership Plan or ESOP. Under the ESOP, employees become owners and receive stock in the company as it grows and prospers.

The ownership transition began in 1998. On October 1, 2002, the ESOP purchased majority ownership from founder Bob Schmidt. Now the company has a celebration each year on October 1. In 2012, the ESOP purchased the remaining shares of stock so the company is 100 percent employee-owned.

The company takes many steps to engage its employee-owners, from special events to the Eagle challenge coin, which bears the company and ESOP logos. The company has a "100/0" goal, meaning that employee-owners must take 100 percent of the responsibility for the company's success and there are 0 excuses for not providing the best products and customer service. In 2013, the company was named the Heart of America ESOP Company of the Year.

For more information, go to www.eaglecom.net.

Welcome to the company. Let's meet the owner. No, not one big owner, but 271 employee-owners. We commend Gary Shorman, Bob Schmidt, and all those involved with Eagle Communications for making a difference with rural service, advanced technology, and employee ownership. That's a lot to own up to.

Cantaloupe is the dessert of the garden

Kay Melia

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Before we head out to the cantaloupe patch, I want to sincerely thank all of you who reacted to last week's column about the possibilities of Gardening 101. Literally dozens of you sent your stamp of approval for the creation of some kind of gardening instruction to our young high school students, and several of you forwarded the column to teachers, other school officials, and School Board members. Thank you! Most of us enjoy a good cantaloupe, whether it comes from the store or our garden. Naturally, it tastes so much better from the garden because cantaloupe has a tendency to lose some of its flavor when shipped long distances. But growing our own cantaloupe isn't the easiest crop to produce in our garden and as a result, less than 25 percent of all backyard gardeners mess around with it.

In the first place, a cantaloupe seed is sometimes difficult to coax into the sprouting mode.

You plant five seeds in a hill, and maybe only one emerges. There are two reasons for that. Number one, you planted the seed too deep. Never pile more than a half-inch of soil on a cantaloupe seed, and be sure the soil is moist. Number two, cantaloupe seeds will not germinate in cool soils. The soil temperature should be a minimum of 65 degrees before you plant. Therefore, cantaloupe should be the last thing you plant in your High Plains garden, which also means that cantaloupe will probably be one of the last things you harvest, just before the watermelon. It generally takes from 75 to 80 days for melons to ripen.

And then there's the added problem of knowing when to harvest them, and that's important because a cantaloupe will not continue the ripening process after it has been picked, like your tomatoes do as they sit there on your kitchen counter. So, you should utilize the "slip" method of harvesting a melon at the time of it's greatest flavor. If you think the cantaloupe is ripe,

carefully pick it up and give it a very slight tug. If it's ready, it will "slip" from the vine. If not, just lay it back down and try again tomorrow. Just because the color of the cantaloupe seems to indicate it is ready to harvest, be advised that different melon varieties show different color at maturity. Some will still have a few green streaks in the nice tan color when it's fully ripe. So try the "slip" method several times when the melon is ripening.

I have always considered the cantaloupe as the dessert of the gardening season. The sweet, musky flavor can also be described as earthy, floral, spicy, or berry-ish. A good cantaloupe is truly ambrosial. Years ago, I heard the story from a gardener that when cantaloupe are ripe and the aroma begins to drift over the neighborhood, the possibility of theft is extremely high. A famous plant breeder agreed with that assessment. He said "when a cantaloupe is ripe, there is a huge increase in 'finger blight'...and there is no known cure."

Kansas cattle on feed down two percent

Kansas feedlots, with capacities of 1,000 or more head, contained 2.01 million cattle on feed on July 1, according to the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. This inventory was down two percent from last year.

Placements during June to-

taled 355,000 head, down nine percent from 2012.

Fed cattle marketings for the month of June totaled 395,000 head, down five percent from last year. This is the lowest June marketings since the series began in 1994.

Other disappearance during

June totaled 10,000 head, down 5,000 from a year ago.

The June 2013 milk production in Kansas totaled 245 million pounds, up 9.4 percent from last year.

Find agricultural statistics for your county, state and the nation at www.nass.usda.gov.

For help with your advertising needs please give Dana a call 877-3361 email: dpaxton@nwkansas.com



Come One! Come All! Come Early Stay Late

MAKE PLANS NOW TO ATTEND

St. Joseph's Parish Annual

New Almelo Bazaar

Saturday, August 10, 2013

Featuring at 5:00 p.m. Cajun Pork, Smoked Beef and Pork Buffet Supper with all the Trimmings

- Bake Sale
- Fancy Work
- Bingo
- Hamburger Stand
- Games for Young and Old

QUILT AUCTION AT 8:00 P.M. WITH HANDMADE QUILTS

Music to Dance by a DJ Starting at 9:00 p.m.

Rural letter member carrier of the year named

Kansas Rural Letter Member Carrier of the year for 2013 is Ella Maloney. Ella is the daughter of Alberta Crayton who lives in Almena. Ella delivers mail in Chapman and is active in local and district meetings, and was on the state board for three years.

Ella and her husband, Jim, farm southeast of Junction City. They are the parents of 10 children and 23 grandchildren. Ella is active in the community, with JC Little Theater, Senior Olympics and St. Xavier Catholic Church, where she has taught religious education for 16 years,

and also served Euchrist and Lectors.

She is honored to have received this award and looks forward to representing Kansas at the national convention in St. Louis, Mo., in August.