

Pressure canner a necessity

Increasing interest in gardening is prompting increased interest in home food preservation.

While preserving summer crops can add flavor, color and health-promoting nutrients to winter meals, and often a cost savings, not following food safety guidelines in preserving food can be deadly, said Karen Blakeslee, Kansas State University food scientist.

Blakeslee, who as K-State's Rapid Response Center coordinator has been fielding a lot of questions about canning green beans lately, warns that using a boiling water canner rather than a recommended - and tested - pressure

canner is risky because spores of *Clostridium botulinum* bacteria, which are naturally occurring in soils, are heat resistant.

"The heat in a boiling water canner is not enough to kill the spores that can germinate and grow into active bacterial cells that will produce a deadly human toxin," the food scientist said.

While improperly canned low acid foods, including all vegetables and meats, may lose their color, develop a cloudy appearance or have lids that pop, contamination is not always visible, Blakeslee said.

She does not recommend tasting suspect

food, but does advise using tested recipes and following directions exactly for successful home food preservation.

A pressure canning gauge and seal should be checked annually before use.

Information about checking canning equipment and canning or freezing food is available at local K-State Research and Extension offices and online at: www.ksre.ksu.edu/foodsafety and www.rrc.ksu.edu/.

And, if you're timid about canning, freezing is always an option, Blakeslee said.

Beef Stocker Unit provides research to producers

Current research projects and the history of the Kansas State University Beef Stocker Unit are discussed by Dale Blasi, K-State extension specialist and professor of animal sciences and industry, in an audio slide story.

The story features the arrival

of long-hauled calves from eastern Tennessee to the unit. See the story at www.ksre.ksu.edu/news/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=132.

"Presently, we are conducting research on our native grass pastures, evaluating various formulations for ensuring we deliver

adequate levels of an ionophore, in particular rumensin; and also evaluating the self-delivery of dried distillers grains on grass as we approach the fall grazing season," said Blasi, who is professor in charge of the Beef Stocker Unit.

The unit comprises 1,120 acres acquired by the university in 1948, providing an avenue for backgrounding and stocker cattle research. The goal is to provide stockmen with cost-effective results and the public with a safe product.

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Activities for the week: **Monday:** 10:30 a.m., Skip Bo game. **Tuesday:** 10 a.m., exercise; 10:30 a.m., Rummikub. **Wednesday:** popcorn day. **Thursday:** 10 a.m., exercise; 10:30 a.m., pinocle game. **Friday:** 10 a.m., exercise; 10:30 a.m., Wii games.

Menus for the week: **Monday:** cook's choice entree, hash brown casserole, cheesy broccoli, bread, apricots. **Tuesday:** beef and noodles, green beans, beets, bread, cantaloupe. **Wednesday:** oven-fried chicken, mashed potatoes/

gravy, cucumbers and tomatoes, bread, rosy pears. **Thursday:** ham sandwich, tomato soup, gelatin with fruit, bread, blueberry crisp. **Friday:** meat loaf, scalloped potatoes, pasta salad with vegetables, bread, peaches.

The Thomas County Nutrition Center invites anyone 60 and older and guests to lunch Monday through Friday at the senior center. Home delivery is available, as is pick-up service. A contribution of \$2.75 per meal is suggested for seniors, \$5 for others. For anyone under 60, home delivery is \$5.75. Make reservations at (784) 460-2901 by noon the day before.

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