

## Master Food Preservers Expand South in UCCE Central Sierra!

On May 1, 2012, the inaugural class of Master Food Preservers for Amador and Calaveras counties completed their UCCE research based training. The University of California Cooperative Extension in Central Sierra is very excited to announce this new program to educate our community on the safe practices of food preservation and food safety in two more of our four counties.

The Master Food Preservers will offer the following services during the first year of the Amador and Calaveras Master Food Preservers:

- Free classes on core food preservation techniques: basic water bath canning, pressure canning, dehydrating, freezing, pickling, and making jams & jellies
- Free pressure canner testing
- Information booths at various local farmers' markets
- Articles in local newspapers

Our first public event was at the Calaveras County Fair from May 17-20. We received a wonderful welcome from the community; there is a lot of interest in food preservation classes. Our first class in Calaveras County will be on July 7.

Look for us next at the Amador County Fair starting on July 26. Our first class in Amador will be on August 18. See page 8 for more information.



*MFP Dale at the Calaveras County Fair*

As a new volunteer program, we are starting from scratch. We have some supplies, but could use additional material to effectively conduct our free classes and participate in farmers' markets in both counties. If you would like to donate any of the following items, please call your nearest UCCE office to arrange a time to drop off your item. In Amador County call the main office at 209-223-6482. In Calaveras County call our Nutrition Advisor, Dorothy Smith, at 209-754-6476.

Wish list items:

- |                     |                          |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Jar funnel          | Portable electric burner |
| Magnetic lid lifter | Pressure canner          |
| Candy thermometer   | 6' plastic folding table |
| Digital timer       | 10' x 10' canopy tent    |

We appreciate your support!

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### Got a Food Preservation Question?

**Amador/Calaveras County:**  
 209-223-6857  
 acmfp@ucdavis.edu

**El Dorado County**  
 530-621-5506  
 edmfp@ucdavis.edu

**UCCE Central Sierra MFP Webste:**  
<http://ucanr.org/csmfp>

## The Grapest Show on Earth!



The El Dorado County Fair runs from June 14 through June 17. Along with the usual fried fair food, you will be able to see some of the creations of the food preservers in the county. Take some time to explore the fruits, herbs and vegetables which have been carefully preserved for inclusion in this year's fair. Watch the judging on Saturday, June 9, starting at 9am in the Marshall Building.

If you have never entered a product in the fair, this may be the inspiration for you to get started! Take a look at the article on page 7 for information on our public classes and plan to take advantage of first-rate instructions on preserving foods for home and fair.

### E. Coli Happens: Cook Burgers to 165° F, Whatever Ruminant it Came From

The following post is from Professor Doug Powell of Kansas State University, and was posted in his blog at <http://barfblog.foodsafety.ksu.edu>:

*Seventeen years ago, Gregg Jesperson ate a burger that was still pink at a mom-and-pop restaurant in northern Alberta (that's in Canada), where he and his family were living at the time. The medication he'll have to take for life is one reason why he's not going to forget what happened anytime soon.*

*Jesperson, now a teacher at Booth Memorial in St. John's, ate the burger on a Thursday.*

*By Sunday, it was determined Jesperson had developed hemolytic uremic syndrome, or hamburger disease.*

*Jesperson was hospitalized almost four weeks, undergoing dialysis and being hooked up to a machine that withdraws plasma and replaces it.*

*After his release, it took him almost a year to regain his physical strength.*

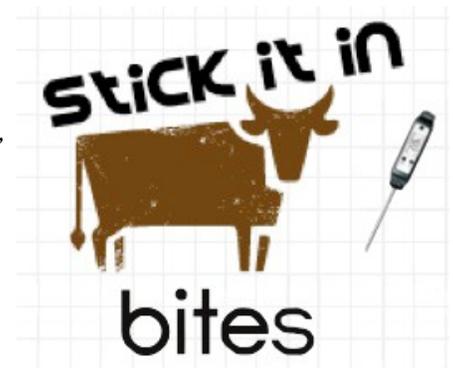
*Jesperson, who always enjoyed a rare steak, says he wasn't aware of the dangers of uncooked hamburger meat before that.*

*"I'm a big fella, fairly hardy and that, and it really knocked the piss right out of me," he says.*

*These days, Jesperson gets nervous when he sees people served burgers that are a little pink. If he grills one himself, he "cooks the bejeezus out of it." His advice is to do the same, and not to be afraid to send undercooked burgers back at a restaurant.*

Better advice would be to use a tip-sensitive digital thermometer because color is a lousy indicator of safety.

But this story is a lot better than the misguided letter-writer to a New Brunswick newspaper (also in Canada) who insisted dangerous E. coli like O157 only "grows inside of dairy and beef cattle that are fed a high proportion of grain." Way to recycle a 15-year-old myth.



## The Curious Canner



**Question:** I found a great deal on some powdered and liquid pectin. How and how long can I store it?

**Answer:** Pectin should be stored in a cool, dry place so that it will keep its jell strength. It should not be held over from year to year, so only buy what you anticipate using.

**Question:** I was recently told I should lower my salt intake so I'm wondering if it is okay to make pickles without salt.

**Answer:** Fresh pack or quick pickles can be made with reduced or no salt. However, fermented pickles, such as brined dill pickles or sauerkraut, cannot be made without salt. In fermented/brined pickles and sauerkraut, successful fermentation depends on the presence of the correct amount of salt along with other ingredients.



Research at Colorado State University has shown that salt content can be reduced in some pickle recipes by as much as 67 to 100% without affecting the acceptability of the pickles. The following low-salt recipe from the USDA "Complete Guide to Home Canning" can be made without salt.

### Reduced-Sodium Sliced Dill Pickles

**Yield:** About 8 pints

- 4 lbs (3- to 5-inch) pickling cucumbers
- 6 cups vinegar (5 percent)
- 6 cups sugar
- 2 tbsp canning or pickling salt
- 1-½ tsp celery seed
- 1-½ tsp mustard seed
- 2 large onions, thinly sliced
- 8 heads fresh dill



Wash cucumbers. Cut 1/16-inch slice off blossom end and discard. Cut cucumbers in ¼-inch slices.

Combine vinegar, sugar, salt, celery, and mustard seeds in large saucepan. Bring mixture to boiling.

Place 2 slices of onion and ½ dill head on bottom of each pint jar. Fill jars with cucumber slices, leaving ½-inch headspace.

Add 1 slice of onion and ½ dill head on top. Pour hot pickling solution over cucumbers, leaving ¼-inch headspace.

Adjust lids and process according to the recommendations below.

		Process Time at Altitudes of		
Style of Pack	Jar Size	0 - 1,000 ft	1,001 - 6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Raw	Pints	15 min	20 min	25 min

## CDC's Veggie of the Month: Okra

Okra, a common food in the southern states, does not seem to have caught on with the same enthusiasm in California. However, with the proliferation of restaurants featuring unusual meals from around the world, more of us may become familiar with this low-calorie, fat-free vegetable. Here are some excerpts from the CDC website:

Okra grows is an elongated, lantern shape vegetable. It is a fuzzy, green colored, and ribbed pod that is approximately 2-7 inches in length. This vegetable is more famously known by its rows of tiny seeds and slimy or sticky texture when cut open. Okra is also known as bamia, bindi, bhindi, lady's finger, and gumbo, and is a member of the cotton (Mallow) family.



Okra was discovered around Ethiopia during the 12th century B.C. and was cultivated by the ancient Egyptians. This vegetable soon flourished throughout North Africa and the Middle East where the seed pods were consumed cooked and the seeds toasted, ground, and served as a coffee substitute. With the advent of the slave trade, it eventually came to North America and is now commonly grown in the southern United States. You'll now see okra in African, Middle Eastern, Greek, Turkish, Indian, Caribbean, and South American cuisines.

Okra is commonly associated in Southern, Creole, and Cajun cooking since it was initially introduced into the United States in its southern region. It grows well in the southern United States where there is little frost.

Okra is a powerhouse of valuable nutrients. It is a good source of vitamin C. It is low in calories and is fat-free.

### Availability, Selection, and Storage

Okra is available year-round, with a peak season during the summer months. It is available either frozen or fresh. When buying fresh okra, make sure that you select dry, firm, okra. They should be medium to dark green in color and blemish-free. Fresh okra should be used the same day that it was purchased or stored (in a) paper bag in the warmest part of the refrigerator for 2-3 days. Severe cold temperatures will speed up okra decay. Do not wash the okra pod until ready to use, or it will become slimy.

### Preparation

When preparing, remember that the more it is cut, the slimier it will become. Its various uses allow for okra to be added to many different recipes. Okra is commonly used as a thickening agent in soups and stews because of its sticky core. However, okra may also be steamed, boiled, pickled, sautéed, or stir-fried whole. Okra is a sensitive vegetable and should not be cooked in pans made of iron, copper or brass since the chemical properties turn okra black.

### How do I reduce okra slime?

Most people who have eaten or have cooked okra, know about the okra slime. Some recipes call for the whole okra, but how do you deal with the okra slime?

There are a few ways to minimize the slime:

- Simply trim off the ends and avoid puncturing the okra capsule.
- You can also minimize the slime factor by avoiding the tendency to overcook okra.

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Veggie of the Month: Okra *(Continued from page 4)*

### Okra and Green Beans

Makes 6 servings

Source: University of Illinois Extension

#### Ingredients

1 lb okra, uncut  
1 Tbsp olive oil  
1 medium onion, diced  
1 lb fresh green beans  
2 large garlic cloves, crushed then chopped  
1 cup water  
½ tsp salt  
½ tsp ground pepper  
1 6-ounce can tomato paste



Wash okra pods, trim stems, do not remove caps. Rinse well and drain. Wash beans and cut into 3 inch lengths. Combine water, tomato paste, olive oil, onion, garlic, salt and pepper in a sauce pan and mix well. Heat, stirring frequently, until mixture comes to boil. Add okra and beans and additional water if necessary to almost cover vegetables. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer gently until vegetables are crisp-tender, 20 to 30 minutes. Serve it warm or cold.

\*This dish can also be oven-baked. Instead of simmering, lightly cover with aluminum foil and bake for 30 minutes at 350°F.

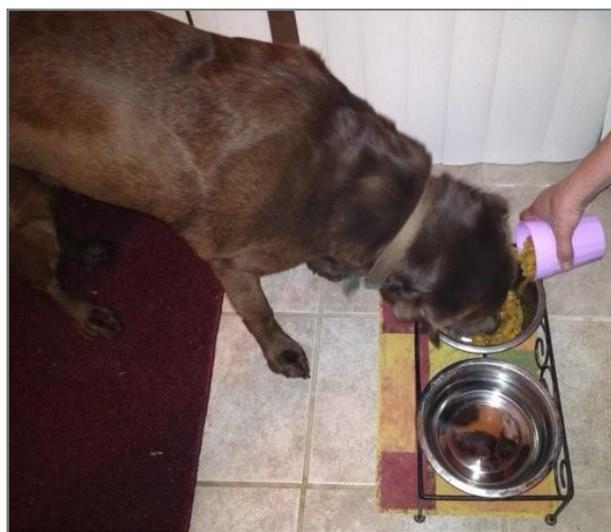
*Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 106, Protein 5g, Fat 3g, Calories From Fat 19%, Cholesterol 0mg, Carbohydrates 19g, Fiber 7g, Sodium 187mg.*

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## Salmonella Infantis and Dry Dog Food

The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) announced on May 3 that it was cooperating with the FDA and other state and agricultural officials in a multi-state investigation into an outbreak of human *Salmonella* Infantis that appears to have originated with dry dog food. The relatively rare strain of *Salmonella* Infantis in this case seems to be infesting dog food from one particular manufacturing facility, owned by Diamond Pet Foods, which is cooperating fully with the investigation.

Although no cases have been reported in California, people must be aware of the dangers of food-borne illnesses, and must realize that any food can carry the disease. Be absolutely sure to wash your hands after preparing any food, even food destined for the family pets. Wash well again before eating, observe safe food handling guidelines and choose fresh food carefully to guard against infectious illness.



## Add Acid to Tomatoes When Canning: Here's Why!

Many of us will be canning tomato products this summer and, despite the old belief about tomatoes being acidic, it is crucial to add acid to tomatoes when canning. The University of Wisconsin Madison published the following excerpts in a tip sheet in May of 2011, but the advice still stands:

No matter whether you say tomato (toh-may-toh ) or tomato (*tuh-may-toh*), tomatoes are the most popular home-canned item. A national survey in 2005 indicated that 59% of home-canners added tomatoes to their pantry shelves that season. And not only are they a popular home-canned item, but home canning of tomatoes has been a staple of home food preservers for as long as anyone can remember.



Whether you have been home-canning for one year, or fifty, it's important to follow up-to-date, research tested recipes. One of the biggest changes in home canning occurred in 1994 with the new recommendation to **add acid to all home-canned tomato products**. And here's why.

Tomatoes can be preserved by canning, drying, freezing, or pickling. They can also be used in creating fruit spreads like jams, jellies and marmalades. When foods are placed in a sealed glass jars and processed (home canned), the safety depends primarily on the amount of acid in the product. The amount of acid in a food is recorded as the **pH value**.

Foods with a pH value of 1 to 4.6 are considered 'high acid,' those with a pH value between 4.6 and 7.0 are considered 'low acid' foods. The pH of 4.6 is important in determining whether the *Clostridium botulinum* bacteria will grow in canned food and produce a deadly neurotoxin. At pH 4.6 or below (high acid foods), *Clostridium botulinum* will not grow and produce the deadly toxin, so these foods can be given a relatively mild canning treatment using a boiling water canner. At pH above 4.6, *Clostridium botulinum* is able to grow and produce toxin unless the food is heated to high temperatures in a pressure canner. Foods that are naturally high in acid, like oranges, apples and most fruits, can be safely canned in a boiling water canner. Foods that are low in acid, like meats and vegetables, must be pressure canned.

Tomatoes for many years were considered high acid. However, tomatoes are fruits and, as such, the amount of acid in tomatoes varies dramatically over the growing season. The amount of acid in tomatoes is highest in unripe (green) fruit and reaches the lowest point as the fruit reaches maturity. The amount of acid, and other components like sugars, also varies in fruits based on the climate (the amount of heat/sun/rain), the soil, the variety, and other factors.

Researchers now know that **tomatoes are not consistently high in acid and current canning recommendations require that acid be added to all canned tomato products: add 2 tablespoons of bottled lemon juice or ½ teaspoon of citric acid per quart of tomatoes. For pints, use 1 tablespoon of bottled lemon juice or ¼ teaspoon of citric acid.** Acid can be added directly to the jars before filling the jars with product. Add sugar to offset acid taste, if desired. Four tablespoons of 5% -acidity vinegar per quart may be used instead of lemon juice or citric acid. However, vinegar may cause undesirable flavor changes. Acid is added to tomato products even if the tomatoes are pressure canned. Tested recipes have **not been** developed for canning tomatoes where the pH is above 4.6.



### When canning tomatoes add acid to all jars ...

- Quart jars: 2 tablespoons of bottled lemon juice  
or ½ teaspoon of citric acid quart of tomatoes
- Pint jars: 1 tablespoon of bottled lemon juice  
or ¼ teaspoon of citric acid

**Note, use bottled lemon juice, never fresh.**

## El Dorado Master Food Preservers Present Weekly Free Public Classes



This is just a reminder about the free public education classes offered by the Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County. The classes will begin on July 7 with Food Safety and Basic Water Bath Canning and continue through October. Here is the list of classes, which will be held at the El Dorado County UC Cooperative Extension Building at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville, unless otherwise noted on the schedule. The Christmas in July class draws quite a bit of attention, with presentations of food gifts to be made now to be ready for Christmas. Sample tastes of most recipes will be available, along with instructions and volunteers ready to answer any questions about each item.

Please note that we have changed the day and time of our weekday classes. We are still finalizing the location of the weekday classes, so check our website for the most current class schedule. Saturday classes are at the UCCE office.

### July

7, Sat, 10am - noon	Food Safety & Basic Water Bath Canning	<i>Location: UCCE office</i>
12, Thu, 6:30 - 8:30pm	Food Safety & Basic Water Bath Canning	<i>Location: UCCE office</i>
14, Sat, 10am - noon	Jams & Jellies	<i>Location: UCCE office</i>
19, Thu, 6:30 - 8:30pm	Jams & Jellies	<i>Location: UCCE office</i>
21, Sat, 10am - noon	Dehydrating & Freezing	<i>Location: UCCE office</i>
24, Tue, 10am - noon	Christmas in July: Gifts from the Kitchen	<i>Location: Marshall Bldg, El Dorado County Fairgrounds</i>
28, Sat, 10am - noon	Pickles, Relishes & Sauerkraut	<i>Location: UCCE office</i>

### August

2, Thu, 6:30 - 8:30pm	Pickles, Relishes & Sauerkraut	<i>Location: UCCE office</i>
4, Sat, 10am - noon	Tomatoes, Basic & Fancy	<i>Location: UCCE office</i>
8, Wed, 10am - noon	Tomatoes, Basic & Fancy	<i>Location: TBA</i>
11, Sat, 10am - noon	Pressure Canning	<i>Location: UCCE office</i>
15, Wed, 10am - noon	Pressure Canning	<i>Location: TBA</i>
18, Sat, 10am - noon	Low Sugar	<i>Location: UCCE office</i>
22, Wed, 10am - noon	Dehydrating & Freezing	<i>Location: TBA</i>
25, Sat, 10am - noon	Cheese Making	<i>Location: UCCE office</i>
29, Wed, 10am - noon	Low Sugar	<i>Location: TBA</i>

### September

5, Wed, 10am - noon	Cheese Making	<i>Location: TBA</i>
8, Sat, 10am - noon	Meat Preserving – Sausages	<i>Location: UCCE office</i>
12, Wed, 10am - noon	Meat Preserving – Deli Meats	<i>Location: TBA</i>
15, Sat, 10am - noon	Vinegars, Condiments & Chutneys	<i>Location: UCCE office</i>
19, Wed, 10am - noon	Vinegars, Condiments & Chutneys	<i>Location: TBA</i>
22, Sat, 10am - noon	Conserves, Butters & Marmalade	<i>Location: UCCE office</i>
26, Wed, 10am - noon	Conserves, Butters & Marmalade	<i>Location: TBA</i>

### October

3, Wed, 10am - noon	Apples, Pears & More	<i>Location: TBA</i>
10, Wed, 10am - noon	Cranberries, Winter Squash & Turkey	<i>Location: TBA</i>
17, Wed, 10am - noon	Olives	<i>Location: TBA</i>
24, Wed, 10am - noon	Persimmons, Kiwi & Nuts	<i>Location: TBA</i>

## Jams & Jellies Classes in Amador & Calaveras Counties

You're invited!

You are invited to attend the first food preservation classes presented by Master Food Preserver in Calaveras and Amador counties!

The first class in each county demonstrates the basic principles of safe water bath canning while teaching how to make jams and jellies. Master Food Preservers will explain why each step of the process is important to ensure that your home preserved foods are not only delicious, but safe. If you learn the *why* behind each step in the process you'll know how to properly adjust recipes you may find on the internet and in magazines.

### July 7, 10am-Noon

*Location: Calaveras County Senior Center, 956 Mountain Ranch Road, San Andreas*

### August 18, 9-11am

*Location: GSA Building, 12200-B Airport Road, Jackson*

The classes are free and reservations are **not** needed. Please join us!



### Master Food Preserver Services

- Free public classes
- Food preservation hotline
- Free pressure canner testing
- Speakers for custom training for your organization
- Weekly articles in the Mt. Democrat newspaper

To get information about our program, visit our website at: [http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.org/Master\\_Food\\_Preservers/](http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.org/Master_Food_Preservers/).

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*Know someone who would like to receive our newsletters and notifications on classes and events?*

Sign up at <http://ucanr.org/mfpenews>.

### June MG Classes & Events



Join our fellow educators at Master Gardener classes and events. [Click here](#) for full class descriptions and directions.

#### El Dorado County

- 2:** From Garden to Vase
- 9:** Hanging Baskets
- 23:** Pets-Pesticides & Poisonous Plants
- 30:** Attracting Beneficial Insects

#### Amador County

- 9:** Good Bugs, Bad Bugs

#### Calaveras County

- 23:** Open Garden and Plant Sale

#### Tuolumne County

- 24:** Annual Garden Tour



**UC  
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AND CENTRAL SIERRA COUNTIES COOPERATING