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Buffalo County Extension
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Plan for Home Canning

Spring is a good time to check canning equipment and supplies. Proper equipment in good condition is required for safe, high quality home canned food.

Inspect current jars for nicks, cracks, or chips especially around the top sealing rim. These defects may lead to a weak seal. Jars can also weaken with age and use. Inventory the number of canned foods remaining from last year's canning season. Then consider how much of an item to preserve and the jar size for the item being canned – pints or quarts. Also, think about what type of jar rim – regular or wide mouth – works best for each food being preserved.

New flat lids are needed every canning season. Used lids should be thrown away or used for another purpose. The screw bands are re-usable if they are not bent, dented, or rusted.

Before buying new lids and jars from a website really investigate the website. Look to see where the information or product is coming from. Read the reviews, check spelling and grammar, and if prices are too good to be true then they probably are. It is very difficult to keep scam sites off the internet.

All types of canners should have a rack in the bottom to keep jars off the bottom of the canner.

Canners used for boiling water canning need to be deep enough to allow at least one to two inches of water to boil over the tops of the jars.

Dial pressure canners need to have the gauge checked for accuracy each year. Only the gauge or lid is needed for testing. Pressure canners with a weighted gauge do not need to be

tested for accuracy because the weight cannot go out of calibration. For information on testing a dial gauge, call the Extension Office.

Check the rubber gasket if the canner has one. Replace the gasket if it is brittle, cracked, or loose against the sides of the lid. Use a pipe cleaner to clean small pipes or vent ports with openings to make sure they are not blocked. Make sure the washer at the air vent and pressure-release plug is flexible. When replacing canner parts, be sure to know the brand and model number of the equipment being used.

A final must is reliable, up-to-date research-tested recipes. Publications and information are available on Nebraska Extension's food website www.food.unl.edu or on the National Center for Home Food Preservation website www.homefoodpreservation.net. Not all canning recipes have been research-tested for safety.

Planning can save time, money, and frustration with home canning. Make it a happy, successful canning season by being prepared.

For more home canning information contact Nebraska Extension in Buffalo County, 1400 East 34th Street, Kearney 68847, or call (308) 236-1235.