



NORTH CENTRAL REGION FOOD SAFETY



Impact Report

THE ISSUE

Home food preservation education has been implemented through the Extension system for more than 100 years. Extension uses research-tested recipes and information to convey safe food practices. Following United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved home food preservation practices, including canning, freezing and drying, can help ensure safe, high-quality preserved foods. Consumers who use untested or outdated home food preservation techniques or recipes put the health of families at risk.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION EXTENSION ACTION

A multistate team created survey tools in 2017 that were used to evaluate home food preservation programs covering a variety of topics and delivered in different formats. The tools were revised in 2018 based on feedback from 2017. In 2018, six North Central Region states (Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, Michigan, North Dakota, South Dakota) participated in data collection. A total of 3,381 participants, ranging in age from 18 to 70-plus, enrolled in home food preservation classes that used the common survey tools from 2017 to 2018.

Topics covered at the 2018 workshops included boiling-water canning (46 percent of respondents); pressure canning (19 percent); sweet spreads (19 percent); pickling (16 percent); and numerous other topics. Most (89 percent) of the workshops were 1-3 hours in length, with some (6 percent) more than 3 hours and 5 percent less than 1 hour. Many respondents (21 percent) have been preserving food at home for more than 10 years, while 45 percent have been preserving food for less than one year. About 40 percent reported being completely new to home food preservation.

THE IMPACT

Home food preservation workshops are effective group-setting programs for participants to achieve significant knowledge gain in safe food handling and preservation techniques. Almost all (99 percent) workshop participants in 2018 would recommend the educational program in which they participated to others. Most participants significantly increased their confidence in food preservation abilities, their understanding of the importance of following research-tested recipes, and their ability to identify and share with others trustworthy sources of information. About 80 percent planned to use the resources provided, 74 percent planned to preserve food more often at home, 66 percent planned to share what they learned with other people, and 59 percent planned to check if the food preservation resources they had at home were up-to-date.

This project showed successful use of common survey tools across several states. The research protocol and survey tool allowed the regional team to show the impact of a variety of Extension food preservation programs across several states. See www.ag.ndsu.edu/ncrfoodsafety for more information.

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