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THIS 'N THAT

Williams County Extension Homemakers & Friends Newsletter
Family & Community Education



DECEMBER 2011

TIDBITS



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Happy Holiday Season,

You probably noticed that you didn't get a newsletter in November. I was in Omaha, NE the last week of October for a national 4-H Extension conference and then in Fargo the first week of November for our annual NDSU Extension fall conference. After two weeks out of the office and throw in a long holiday weekend, as you can guess I was behind!

November was a busy month with weekly "Dining with Diabetes" classes. This was the first time we offered this series in Williston. Although the group was small, the attendees said that it was beneficial. We tasted some great new recipes for a diabetic diet that everyone agreed would fit into anyone's diet. Several people served one or more for Thanksgiving. I plan to offer this again in the spring. I will try for an evening class so more people can fit it into their schedules.

We have one more Farm and Ranch Transition class this week. This series of three classes is designed to help with the transition of the family farm/ranch to the next generation, and help with estate planning.

Many end of the year things to finish up at work and home. The Wheat Show is just around the corner and I have to get letters out to the schools and sponsors this week.

Our part time office assistant, Marian Moran, is retiring at the end of the year. We will miss her and wish her happy leisure time! We are pleased to announce that Mindy Sigvaldsen will be joining us in January as a full-time administrative assistant. Welcome Mindy!

Merry Christmas and Happy 2012 to all! *Mary*



COMING UP

- 11/30–12/12 JC Penney "Pennies from Heaven". Roundup you purchase a Williston JC Penney Store and the money is donated to Williams County 4-H .
- Dec 9 4:00–8:30pm Holiday Downtown Stroll Entertainment downtown. Door prizes & refreshments at many businesses
- Dec 15 Christmas Drive at Spring Lake Park . \$5/vehicle. United Way is at the gate 12/15 and we will have hot chocolate & bars available for a free will offering. Wagon rides also available this evening!
- Dec 18 Luminary Sunday
- Jan 17–Feb 17 James Memorial display of 20 chairs decorated by local artist with a food theme. For sale by silent auction.
- Feb 17 Silent auction of chairs ends!

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CHOW LINE: SPREAD CHEER, NOT ILLNESS, FOR HOLIDAYS

No matter what time of year, it's important to keep food safety at top of mind. In fact, the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** estimate that 1 in 6 Americans gets sick each year because of foodborne diseases; an estimated 128,000 are hospitalized and 3,000 die.

Food safety researchers say the most important precaution you can take is to wash your hands thoroughly, properly and often, especially when preparing and serving food. To do so, first wet your hands. Then apply soap, and rub both sides of your hands for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse thoroughly and dry with a clean towel or a paper towel. It's essential to wash your hands before handling food and after touching animals, touching your nose or face, going to the bathroom, or changing a diaper. And if you're sick, don't handle food that others will eat.

Washing your hands often offers a double bonus. Not only will it help prevent food-borne illness, it will also help prevent the spread of germs and viruses that cause flu and other diseases. Some other things to keep in mind:

- Take special care when handling raw meat. For example, experts say don't bother rinsing off the raw Thanksgiving turkey before cooking it. Thorough cooking kills any problematic bacteria or other pathogens; rinsing the large bird is likely to splash and spread bacteria around the sink and nearby countertops. Whenever you handle raw meat, be sure to wash your hands thoroughly afterward, and clean and sanitize all surfaces the raw meat touched.
- Temperature is important. Most foodborne bacteria grow rapidly between 40 and 140 degrees F – that's called the Danger Zone. If you're serving hot food on a buffet, for example, be sure it's kept above 140 degrees (use a food thermometer). Never leave food at room temperature – or anywhere in the Danger Zone – for more than two hours. When using slow cookers to serve hot food, be sure the food is hot when placed in the cooker; don't use the cooker to try to reheat cold food. Cold food, such as shrimp cocktail, should be kept on ice when being served.

For more safety tips, see Ohio State University's Food Safety website at <http://foodsafety.osu.edu>

Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu.



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HOW LONG CAN I KEEP LEFTOVERS IN THE REFRIGERATOR?

Bottom line: No more than five days, depending on the food.

The fridge doesn't get rid of bacteria; it just slows it down. If stored food already has something growing in it, the cool temperatures will slow the rate of bacteria growth, but the longer foods are kept, the more opportunity bacteria have to grow.

This is not a one-size-fits-all rule, however; different foods spoil at different times, since some foods provide more suitable breeding grounds than others.

In general, bacteria love foods rich in protein, making meats and poultry more likely to be contaminated than bread or fruit.

Fridge Time for Leftovers

Raw Meat—1 to 2 days Lunch meat—3 to 5 days Cooked Meat— 3 to 4 days
Gravy & Broth— 1 to 2 days Leftover Pizza— 3 to 4 days Cooked Fish/shellfish— 3 to 4 days

Store foods that spoil quickly in the back of the fridge; it's coldest there. Never assume that foods stored in the freezer are automatically safe. Freezing stops the growth of bacteria, but it does not kill bacteria already present. So thawed food, especially meat and fish, should be cooked/eaten as quickly as unfrozen food.

Source: USDA



If you have a question about meat, poultry, or egg products, call the USDA Meat & Poultry Hotline toll free at 1-888-674-6854. Open year-round Mon-Fri from 9am-3pm CT or visit www.fsis.usda.gov

THANK A FARMER FOR YOUR HOLIDAY DINNER

Farmer's Share of Retail Food Dollar

Did you know that farmers and ranchers receive only 20 cents of every food dollar that consumers spend on food at home and away from home?

According to USDA, off farm costs including marketing, processing, wholesaling, distribution and retailing account for 80 cents of every food dollar spent in the United States.

Bacon 1 Pound  Retail: \$4.99 Farmer: \$0.63	Top Sirloin Steak 1 Pound  Retail: \$8.49 Farmer: \$1.06	Bread 1 Pound  Retail: \$3.49 Farmer: \$0.18	Fresh Carrots 3 Pounds  Retail: \$2.63 Farmer: \$1.15	Beer 6-Pack Cans  Retail: \$6.29 Farmer: \$0.10
Cereal 18 Ounce Box  Retail: \$3.99 Farmer: \$0.08	Cheddar Cheese 1 Pound  Retail: \$4.69 Farmer: \$1.12*	Eggs 1 Dozen  Retail: \$2.59 Farmer: \$0.90	Flour 5 Pounds  Retail: \$2.59 Farmer: \$0.89	Boneless Ham Price per Pound  Retail: \$3.99 Farmer: \$0.63
Lettuce 1 Head (2 Pounds)  Retail: \$2.79 Farmer: \$0.90	Milk 1 Gallon, Fat Free  Retail: \$4.39 Farmer: \$1.50	Potato Chips Lays Classic, 11oz  Retail: \$3.99 Farmer: \$0.18*	Fresh Potatoes Russet, 10 Pounds  Retail: \$4.99 Farmer: \$0.47*	Soda Two Liter Bottle  Retail: \$1.09 Farmer: \$0.09

Farmer's share derived from USDA, NASS "Agricultural Prices," 2011.
Retail based on Safeway (SE) brand except where noted.
*Reflects January 2011 prices.



... for the abundance of food brought to us by America's farmers and ranchers

Farmers Union published this picture showing how much of our food dollar actually goes to the farmer. According to the USDA figures the farmer's share has decreased by 4% since 2006.

This holiday season as you gather around the table and offer thanks for your holiday meal don't forget to thank a farmer, too. As you can see, he subsidizes our meals every day.

HOLIDAY FIRE SAFETY

MAINTAIN YOUR HOLIDAY LIGHTS

Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear before putting them up. Use only lighting listed by an approved testing laboratory

DO NOT OVERLOAD ELECTRICAL OUTLETS

Do not link more than three light strands, unless the directions indicate it is safe. Connect strings of lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet. Make sure to periodically check the wires – they should not be warm to the touch.

USE ONLY NONFLAMMABLE DECORATIONS

All decorations should be nonflammable or flame-retardant and placed away from heat vents. If you are using a metallic or artificial tree, make sure it is flame retardant.



Never Put Lit Candles on a Tree



MAKE YOUR CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA LAST

With the proper care, poinsettias can last into March and April, and even be planted outside as herbaceous plants for the summer, according to Ron Smith, Horticulturist for North Dakota State University's Extension Service.

"To keep them from looking like they should be relegated to the garbage heap, give them the normal care that you would with any houseplant from the tropics," Smith says. He offers the following tips:

- Avoid drafts. This includes not only cold air, but also direct blasts from forced air heating systems.
- Provide direct light every day. Place the plant by a window facing south or west.
- Allow the poinsettia container to drain. This may mean removing the decorative wrap or simply slicing it. About 20-30 minutes after thoroughly watering the plant, dump out the excess from the saucer beneath the pot. This will help prevent root rot.
- Keep the plant in the coolest room in the house, as long as it stays above 60 degrees. Bring the poinsettia out only when it is time to show it off.
- If you need to transport the plant, protect it from the winter cold. Put a plastic bag over the top of the plant, and place the entire poinsettia in a grocery sack. Move it quickly into a warmed vehicle. It only takes about 20 seconds of direct cold exposure to injure a poinsettia.
- Begin fertilization in January with standard houseplant material, and continue monthly until spring planting. Use the material at about half the recommended rate until new growth is evident. Once outside, fertilize full strength at the time of planting. If foliage begins to yellow, give a second dose.

You may be hesitant to keep a plant in your home or yard that has been rumored poisonous, but Smith says that there is no need to worry. Researchers at Ohio State University proved once and for all in the mid-seventies that poinsettias are not poisonous.

Yet, Smith notes that it is not a bad idea to use caution around these plants, as they do extract milky sap when the leaves or stems are broken that has been known to cause minor skin irritations. Furthermore, holiday plants are often treated with systemic insecticides that can be harmful if ingested.



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KEY INGREDIENTS: AMERICA BY FOOD

I've been telling you this is coming for over a year and the time is approaching quickly for events to begin! It actually kicked off during "Warm Up After Light Up" on November 25th. Hope you were there to sample the goodies and get the recipes.

"Key Ingredients" is part of Museum on Main Street, a unique collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, state humanities councils across the nation and local host institutions. It is being hosted locally by the James Memorial Preservation Society.

There will be a book discussion group meeting in January, February and March. The book topics will be food related. I will let you know the first book and the date of the discussion in the next newsletter.

January 17–February 17th there will be an exhibit of 20 children's chairs all decorated with a food theme by local artists. These chairs will be up for silent auction. The silent auction will close on February 17, 2012.

Do you have any old kitchen gadgets? Do you know what they are and/or how to use them? Would you like to know? How does a stump the expert on kitchen gadgets sound? Let me know if you like the idea!