

## One Up on the Competition

- Follow exactly the fair book rules for each category.
- Enter items only in established categories. Don't bring an entry for which no category exists.
- Do not bring an exhibit that has been previously entered in the same event.
- Make sure jars are clean and dry. Sticky or dusty jars and jars with signs of old labels will be quickly eliminated.
- After washing jars, bring jars to the fair with new screw bands attached. Make sure bands are not wet or rusty. (Jars should not be stored with bands at home.)
- Use standard clear, non-colored canning jars with two piece lids in standard sizes. No reusable lids.
- Avoid decorative jars, padded lids, or fabric covers.
- Use appropriate headspace called for in your recipe directions.
- Check that there is no foreign matter such as stems, seeds, skins in the jar.
- Liquid should cover the solids in the jar.



## Resources

Use research tested recipes to be sure your canned goods are top quality. The following have been scientifically tested for safety and quality:

**CSU Extension Fact Sheets**, Two to four page publications that cover food preservation. These are available free from the Larimer County Extension Office and online.

**So Easy to Preserve**, 6th edition. c. 2014.  
University of Georgia Extension

**Ball Blue Book of Preserving**. Do not use process times in Ball Blue Books published prior to 1994.

**Complete Guide to Home Canning**, U.S.  
Department of Agriculture, 1994 edition or later.

**Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving**,  
c. 2006. Jarden Corporation.

**CSU Extension**:  
[www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/foodnut/pubfood.html](http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/foodnut/pubfood.html)

**National Center for Home Food  
Preservation**: [www.uga.edu/nchfp](http://www.uga.edu/nchfp)

**Check with the Larimer County Extension Office prior to canning for Extension endorsed recipes and instructions and adjustments needed for high altitude. CSU Larimer County Extension Agents and Master Food Safety Advisor volunteers are available to answer food safety and food preservation questions.**

**Colorado State University  
Larimer County Extension  
1525 Blue Spruce Drive  
Fort Collins, CO 80524  
(970) 498-6000**

# Preserving Foods for County Fair

***SAFE FOOD PRESERVATION  
METHODS AND TIPS  
FOR SUCCESSFUL  
OPEN CLASS ENTRIES***



**Colorado State University**  
**Extension**

**Larimer County**

**2017**

## Entering Competition?

Are you thinking about entering canned or dried goods in competition? Entering your home preserved food in competition adds excitement as you prepare the foods. Selecting the “best” jar in anticipation of a blue ribbon makes the process fun.

While you cannot predict the quality of your competition or the unique criteria of each judge, there are some steps you can take to increase the chances of earning a blue ribbon. First is to appreciate standards of safety and quality.

## Safety is the Primary Consideration

You want to use safe preserving procedures so that no one becomes ill. Improper processing methods or times can cause the growth of harmful bacteria that can cause serious illness or even death. Not only would this be a problem for fair judges, it could also make your family ill as they consume other jars you have canned. The judge may open jars of jellies, preserves and pickled products and may taste. Canned vegetables and fruits may be opened in determining the pressure seal of the product. Many judges will open jars to better examine the contents inside the jars — especially when differences among entries are very small.



## Make it Safe

- Follow research tested recipes exactly for processing methods and processing times. Appropriate altitude adjustments must be made.
- Use the pressure canner to can any low acid food—that includes meats, soups, and all vegetables except acidified tomatoes and pickled vegetables.
- Acidify tomatoes with bottled lemon juice or citric acid before processing either in a boiling water bath or pressure canner.
- Process high acid foods in a boiling water bath canner.
- Processes that are unacceptable and unsafe include: open kettle processing, oven canning, inversion sealing, steam canning, paraffin sealing, and meat jerky dried from unsafe meats.
- CSU recommendations must be used for jerky to ensure safety.
- Use two piece lids. Remove the screw band for storage, but put a clean screw band on the jar to bring it to the fair.
- Always use standard brand name clear, non-colored canning jars in good condition. No reusable lids.
- Recipes are required for all canned and dried products. The recipe must be affixed to the jar or container and must include ingredients, preparation instructions, method, time, temperature and source of recipe.

## Label it Smart

A complete label provides the judge with information as to how you canned or dried the food. The label must include:

Name and variety of food

Method of preparation

(canned: type syrup, style of pack;  
dried: pretreatment used, if any)

Method of processing

(canned: water bath, pressure canner—indicate weighted or dial gauge; dried: oven or dehydrator)

Processing time, altitude and pounds of pressure (p.s.i.)

Date canned or dried

### Sample Labels

Sliced Peaches in Light Syrup  
August 30, 2016  
Raw Pack  
Boiling Water Canner  
40 minutes at 5,000 ft.

Green Beans—Hot Pack  
Pressure Canned—Dial Gauge  
25 minutes at  
12 1/2 lbs at 5,000 feet  
June 20, 2017

Apricots  
Ascorbic Acid Dipped  
Dehydrator Dried, 8 hours  
July 15, 2017