

Leavenworth County Fair 2026

4-H Food Preservation

Superintendent: Cathy Forge

Exhibit Judging: Tuesday, July 21st; 4:00pm; 4-H Brown Building (consultation)

In this project, you will learn the techniques used to preserve food by slowing or preventing spoilage. These practices help maintain the food's quality, safety, and nutritional value over time. You'll gain hands-on experience with several preservation methods, including pressure canning, water bath canning, and dehydrating, focusing on safely preserving fruits, vegetables, and meats.

RULES

1. Read General Rules. Violation of any of the following rules may result in disqualification. All decisions will be made by a county agent and their decision is final.
2. Members may bring up to 5 exhibits. Any combination within classes is okay, except an exhibitor cannot have two jars of the same product; (i.e., an exhibitor cannot have two jars of grape jelly.) For the State Fair, a member may enter up to two exhibits, but may only make one entry per class. One jar constitutes an entry.
3. Exhibits must have been preserved since the member's previous year's county fair, and not been exhibited at the previous State Fair.
4. Each exhibit must have the complete recipe and instructions attached with the entry card, or it will be disqualified. Recipe must include exhibitors name, recipe source, date of publication, and elevation, where food was processed. If using Mrs. Wage's or Ball mixes, indicate the date the mix was purchased.
5. Recipes and processing methods from the sources below are **REQUIRED**. Recipes must be current, tested resources from the list below and **MUST BE ADJUSTED FOR ELEVATION** based on your processing location, or it will be disqualified. Processing methods that will be disqualified include: open kettle-canning, oven canning, sun canning and using electric multi-cookers. Homemade recipes or other untested recipes will be disqualified for food safety reasons.

Tested Recipe Resources include:

- K-State Research and Extension Food Preservation publications
- Other University Extension Food Preservation publications
- USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning, @2015

- So Easy to Preserve, 6th edition, The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service
 - Ball® Blue Book Guide to Preserving, Edition 38
 - Ball® Complete Book of Home Preserving @2024
 - Canning mixes (i.e. Mrs. Wage's, Ball®)
 - Pectin manufacturers (i.e. SureJell, Ball®)
 - [KSRE Rapid Response Center Preservation Recipes](#)
 - [National Center of Home Food Preservation](#)
 - [Ball®](#)
6. Exhibits must be heat processed in clean, clear standard canning jars with NEW matching brand (ex. use Ball lids on Ball jars) two-piece lids. This includes fermented foods. Do not use colored jars. Do not add fancy padded lids, fabric over wraps or cozies as they interfere with the judging process. Do not reuse jars from commercial food products (ex: spaghetti sauce jars). No fancy packs unless recipe states to do so (ex: pickled asparagus). Jars must be sealed when entered. For food safety reasons, the size of jars used must not be larger than the jar size stated in the recipe (ex. Salsa is canned in pint jars only, no quarts). Note: There are 12-ounce, 24-ounce and 28-ounce canning jars available and may be used. Use pint jar process recommendations for 12-ounce jars. Use quart jar process recommendations for 24 ounce and 28-ounce jars.
7. Each jar exhibited must be labeled. The label must not cover brand name of jar. The label must give: Class Number, Product, Elevation where processed, Canning Method (water bath, weighted gauge or dial gauge pressure method), Process Time, Pressure (psi), date processed including month and year, Name, and County. Templates to make adhesive labels can be found at: https://www.kansas4-h.org/events-activities/fairs/kansas-state-fair/docs/foods-and-nutrition/Foods_Label.pdf
8. Dried food item must include one kind of dried food product exhibited in a small canning jar. If dried food product is not in a canning jar, it will be lowered one ribbon placing. Suggested amount: 1/3 to 1/2 cup, or three to four pieces per exhibit. Dried products must include the recipe, preparation steps and heating instructions. **No freeze-dried foods.**
9. ALL Meat jerky must be heated to an internal temperature of 160 degrees F before or after drying. This is not the drying temperature! Dried products must include the recipe, preparation steps and heating instructions. Jerky not heated to an internal temperature of 160 degrees F will be disqualified and not be judged. Heating information can be found in "Dry Meat Safely at Home" www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/pubs/MF3173.pdf

10. It is advisable to have an extra jar to be used in case of breakage. This jar should be labeled "extra."
11. Frozen foods will not be judged. No freeze-dried foods.
12. There are no safe recommendations to can white peaches or elderberries.
13. Exhibit will be judged on quality of canned products and choice of foods.
14. Alcohol is not allowed as an ingredient in food preservation entries. Entries with alcohol will be disqualified and not judged.

Scoresheets, Forms, and Contest Study Materials:

- [Judging Fruits](#)
- [Judging Herbs](#)
- [Judging Vegetables](#)
- [Judging Meat and Poultry](#)
- [Judging Dried Vegetables](#)
- [Judging Dried Fruits & Leather](#)
- [Judging Pickles](#)
- [Judging Preserves](#)
- [Judging Dried Meat Jerky](#)
- [Judging Tomatoes and Tomato Product](#)

Classes

- 4350 Sweet Spreads (Fruit and/or Vegetables), Syrups; One jar
- 4351 Fruits, Juices, Fruit mixtures (Salsa, Pie Filling, etc.); One jar
- 4352 Low Acid Vegetables (green beans, corn, etc or vegetable mixtures.); One jar
- 4353 Pickles (Fruit or Vegetable), Fermented Foods, Relishes and Chutney; One jar
- 4354 Tomato/Tomato Products, Tomato Juice and Tomato Salsas; (Salsa in pints only, no quarts); One jar
- 4355 Canned Meats; One jar
- 4356 Any Dried Food: One small jar (Does NOT include Freeze Dried)

Resources

- [Project Area – Foods and Nutrition](#)
- [Food Preservation Labels Small 1 x 2.58-Updated 2018 pdf](#)
- [Food Preservation Labels Large 2 x 4-Updated 2018 pdf](#)
- [Foods Preservation Training](#)
- [Food Preservation Judging Criteria](#)
- [Food Safety Recommendations for Food Preservation Exhibits](#)
- [What's Your Elevation?](#)
- [How-to Guide to Pressure Canning](#)
- [How-to Guide to Water Bath Canning and Steam Canning](#)
- [10 Tips for Safe Home-Canned Food](#)
- [Sassy Safe Salsa at Home](#)
- [Boiling Water Canning Project Manual](#)
- [Freezing Project Manual](#)
- [Drying Project Manual](#)
- [Dry Meat Safely at Home](#)