

## Responding to Food Preservation Questions - 2019

Extension has historically responded to consumer home food preservation questions, but few county offices still have this capacity. Please consider these recommendations and tips on answering questions in this area.

**Decide if your office will answer consumer questions in this area. Please consider.....**

- a. **How would these efforts fit** with educator plans of work? While not all efforts are defined in a plan of work, acquiring the **scientific knowledge base** to effectively answer food preservation question might be out of scope. [NOTE: Food preservation questions from the general public should **not be directed to Food Wise educators**; responding to such questions or teaching food preservation is outside their scope of work and area of expertise.]
- b. **How comfortable are you** fielding these types of questions? See resources below to help you.
- c. **Are there colleagues in your Area** able to help? Please ask before sending questions their way!
- d. **Are colleagues in a neighboring Area** able to help? Please be sure to check with **both Area Directors**.

**So.... if you are trained** and comfortable answering consumer food preservation questions and have the **interest** and **capacity** to do so, that's great! Your efforts are important. Let Barb know how she can support you.

**Realize, though, that it's OK to say no!** Extension has lost substantial capacity in our ability to support consumers in home food preservation. If your office can not support consumers by answering their questions and you don't have an Area colleague to help, it's OK to let consumers know this. Institute and Area Directors are aware of our diminishing capacity in this area; contact AEDs or Amber Canto (Health & Well Being Institute) if you have questions.

**Whether you are answering questions or not, consider using websites and social media to direct consumers to up-to-date research-tested recipes.** Sharing safe food preservation information via websites, Facebook, etc is a great idea! Encourage consumers to use these resources:

- **National Center for Home Food Preservation** <https://nchfp.uga.edu/> - if there is research to support safe home food preservation, you'll find it here.
- **Safe & Healthy blog** (UW Division of Extension) <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/safepreserving/> safe recipes (including a link to Wisconsin food preservation bulletins), how-to videos, a blog with frequent updates, and training resources for Educators!
- **The Learning Store** (UW-Extension) <https://learningstore.uwex.edu/> Print copies of Wisconsin bulletins.

**Encourage consumers** to sign up for the **Safe Preserving & Food Safety** blog and receive updates right to their inbox: <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/safepreserving/>! Extension does not support commercial web sites, Pinterest, etc for food preservation information.

As educators, please do **not** provide a personal interpretation of any recommendations unless you have training/foundational knowledge. Even though consumers may be insistent and their concerns very real, our organization is put at-risk if incorrect or incomplete advice is given. Consumers do ask some complicated questions, and **if you find yourself stumped or need help for any reason**, please contact Barb Ingham (Food Safety Specialist) for help 608-263-7383 or [bhingham@wisc.edu](mailto:bhingham@wisc.edu)! Consumers should not contact Barb directly.

**Resources for educators** are constantly being developed. Check out the 'Resources for Educators' tab on the food safety/food preservation blog <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/safepreserving/> for training materials, handouts, etc.

The **local foods movement is growing**. Because of **liability**, please refrain from answering questions related to the **manufacture of food for sale**. These questions it **would** be OK to direct to Barb Ingham (608) 263-7383 or [bhingham@wisc.edu](mailto:bhingham@wisc.edu).

Extension's niche has always been that we share **research-based or best practice information**. Please do **not** refer consumers to organizations or resources where we do not know the basis of the information being shared.