

Good management is key to successful freezing

By JOANNE SPAHR

Editor's Note: It's that time of year again - time to freeze, can, and eat the fresh produce available in large quantities to homemakers. To help those individuals choosing to preserve their fruits, vegetables, and meat, Lancaster County Extension Home Economist Doris Thomas held a series of seminars on freezing and canning earlier this month. Her discussion on freezing will be printed in Lancaster Farming in two installments this week and next week.

LANCASTER, Pa. - "Your success with freezing depends entirely on how you manage the freezer," declared Doris Thomas, Lancaster County Extension home economist, to a group of women from all stations of life who gathered earlier this month to participate in her seminar on home freezing.

Discussing some of the positive and negative aspects of freezing, Mrs. Thomas pointed out that this method of food preservation is easier than canning, and that the products taste better than when they are canned. In fact, foods that are frozen and kept at or below 0 degrees F. taste more like fresh foods than those preserved by any other method.

On the negative side, freezing is more expensive both in the cost of the freezer and its upkeep as well as in the cost of freezing materials. (Those materials can be reused, however).

Also, preparation of frozen foods takes more preplanning than the preparation of canned foods.

"It takes organization to

have all the foods ready to serve at the same time," explained the home economist, "and, it also takes longer to prepare foods after they've been frozen. This is due to thawing."

If, after weighing the pros and cons, the homemaker should decide to preserve her foods by freezing, good management is the key.

And, according to Mrs. Thomas, that good management begins with getting top quality produce.

"Your finished product is only as good as what you begin with," she pointed out. Ideally, vegetables and fruits should be frozen within the same day they are picked, and varieties should

be carefully chosen, since some varieties of fruits and vegetables freeze better than others.

Purchasing adequate packaging materials is also a key factor to success. Mrs. Thomas stressed that using the plastic containers found in the "deli section" of the supermarket is a definite taboo in freezing.

"If you are going to use plastic materials," she said, "be sure to get the rigid plastic type. We are creatures that don't like to throw things away, but the small containers we get at the deli counter in the food market are just like "one way jars" - they were meant

to be used once and thrown away."

According to the home economist, the deli containers are not air tight nor are they sturdy enough for freezing.

"Don't shortchange yourself when you freeze," Mrs. Thomas pointed out, "or you may end up with freezer burn."

Although food doesn't spoil in the freezer, it can lose its color and taste, and just generally become tough and inedible. This is known as freezer burn. Proper packaging can help to alleviate this problem.

According to Mrs. Thomas, the most practical packaging material which

can be used for freezing is the plastic bag and cardboard box combination. She noted that boxes and bags can be reused, but she revealed that she doesn't encourage this practice because the bags don't always get as clean as they should when they are washed for reuse.

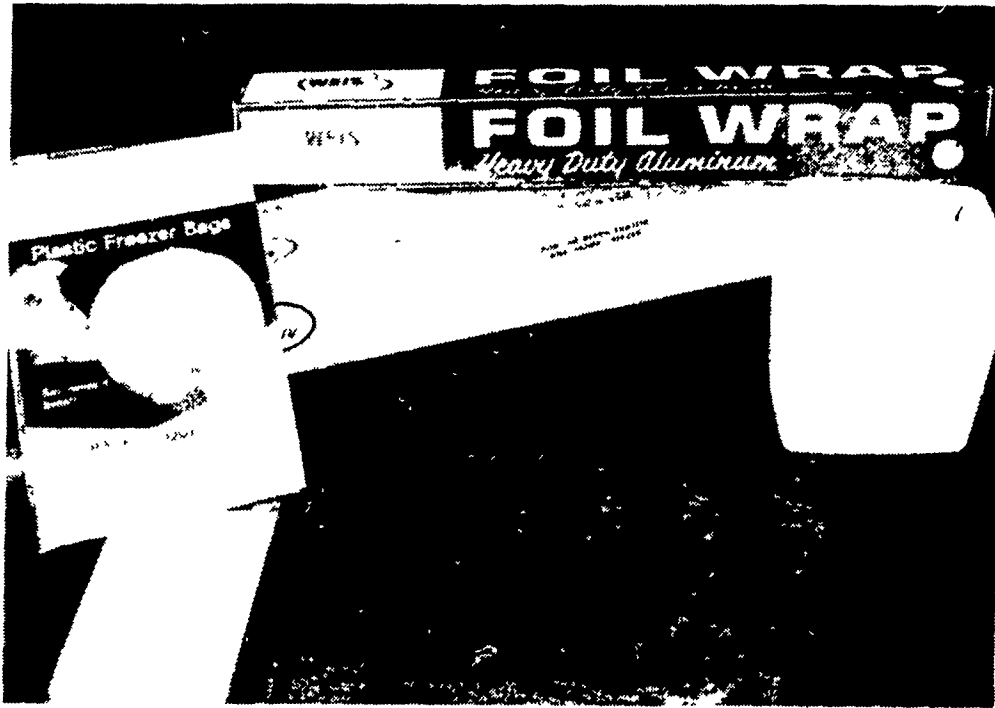
When selecting plastic bags, the homemaker should be careful to purchase only those that can be used in the freezer.

For odd-sized packages such as meats and poultry, laminated freezer paper or aluminum foil can be used.

(Continued on Page 59)



Doris Thomas
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The use of adequate packaging materials is important to the success in freezing.

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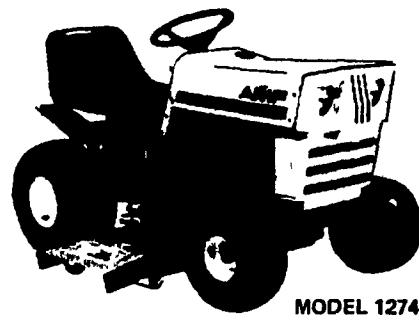
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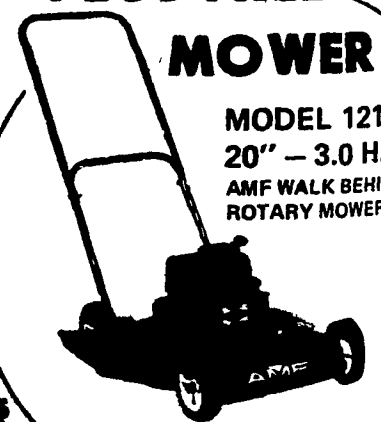
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