

In a pickle or a jam? Read this.

By LAURELSCHAEFFER
Berks County Reporter

LEESPORT, Pa. - "Jellies and jams can be used as a catch all - they can be made of fruit which is not at its best for canning, such as too large, too small, or odd shaped fruit," explained Fay Strickler, Extension home economist, last Tuesday evening to dozens of interested gardeners and housewives who met at the Berks County agricultural center. During the evening, pickling and drying procedures were also discussed.

Beginning with jams and jellies, the home economist explained that these foods can be compared to a cake. "Balanced proportions are needed," she told the at-

tentive audience. "Here, it doesn't pay to be a creative cook. You can't add or reduce ingredients in jams or jellies."

The four basic ingredients needed to make jellies successfully are fruit, pectin, acid, and sugar. Fruit gives the product its characteristic flavor, and contains the pectin. Apples, grapes, and crabapples are high in pectin while other fruits need commercial pectin.

Mrs. Strickler emphasized the need to follow directions explicitly. Fresh fruit is not needed, she related.

"Unsweetened, canned, or frozen fruit can be used, but be sure to use unsweetened, otherwise you won't know

how much sugar to add," she pointed out.

Over-cooking is another problem in making jams and jellies.

"Over-cooking will change the color and consistency of your product," the home economist stated. Follow the directions on the recipe and only cook as long as recommended, but don't under-cook either. If the recipe calls for a full rolling boil for one minute, that means timing should start when the jelly can't be stirred down," Mrs. Strickler explained.

To seal jams and jellies, the two-piece lid is recommended by Penn State University, the jelly makes were told. This method reduces the chance of mold. Mrs. Strickler explained.

"If you use paraffin, use it when it's hot and make sure the jelly is still hot, also."

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Faye Strickler, Berks County Extension home economist, demonstrates the proper methods to use in preparing jellies, jams, and pickles.



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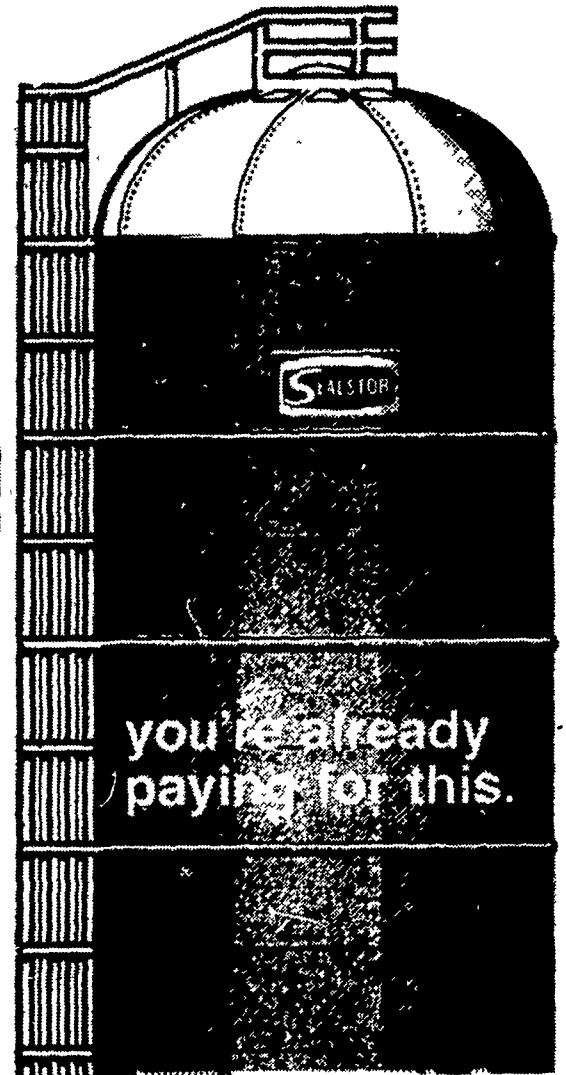
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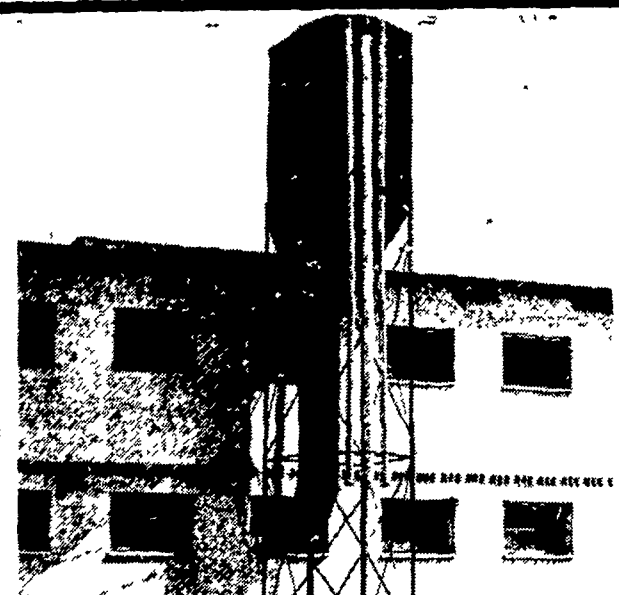
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