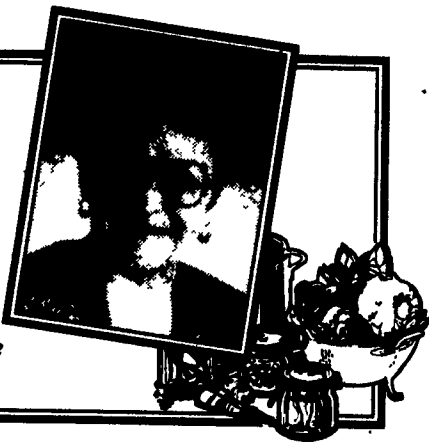


# Consuming Thoughts

by  
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Barbecuing is a great summer-time activity but be sure the foods you choose are healthy and the methods of food preparation are safe.

We all know that meals cooked outdoors increase dramatically during the summer months. A race is on to find fancy recipes and unusual grilling methods for all kinds of food.

With this variety, there is an increased need for awareness of safe food handling practices. Some recipes and grilling methods may not be safe, especially in warm weather when foodborne illness rates increase anyhow.

Use these simple guidelines for a safe outdoor meal, whether it's marinated shish kababs, smoked

fish or your favorite grilled franks.

The smoking of meat and fish is one method of food preparation that has become increasingly popular. Smoking is a grilling technique used to add flavor to large cuts of meat, using a slower cooking method. Depending on the size of the product you're smoking, the process can take up to 8 hours.

Use high quality charcoal to build a hot fire. Pile about 50 briquettes in the center and when they are covered with grey ash, push them into two piles. Center a pan of water between the two piles.

Chips, such as mesquite or hickory, are used for additional flavor. Using dry chips at the start

creates a fast smoke, wet them late for sustained heat. Center the food over the water pan and close the lid. Keep the grill vents open.

The temperature in the smoker should be maintained between 250°F and 300°F for safety. Add about nine coals every 1 to 2 hours during the smoking process. Smoking times vary considerably with the outside temperatures, so monitor the smoker temperature carefully in colder weather. Meat is done when it reaches an internal temperature of 160°F; poultry should reach 180°F.

Remember return to cook everything thoroughly. Rare or medium rare meat or poultry can harbor harmful bacteria. Fish should always be fully cooked. For optimal safety, meat should reach 160°F on a meat thermometer, and poultry should reach 180°F for doneness. Since grilled food often browns very fast on the outside, make a "sample cut" to visually check for doneness. The juices should run clear and flesh should not be pink. Be careful also not to overcook, and don't consume charred food.

Barbecuing is an easy way to prepare nutritious tasty low fat foods. Here are some tips to help you brush up on your barbecuing skills.

- When coals turn white, they are ready for cooking.

- Avoid letting the grill get too hot. Food will burn or blacken on the outside, giving it a bitter taste and leaving it less done inside.

- Prevent putting food into the flame. It will be charred, not cooked.

- Clean the grill with a stiff wire brush after each use. Black residue

on the grill will make the food taste bitter, and will carry over the flavor of the last meal.

- Don't place cooked food on the same plate that held raw meat, fish, or poultry. Cooked products can become contaminated with bacteria from the raw food that was previously on the plate.

- Marinate meats overnight in the refrigerator for increased tenderness.

## Lancaster Dairy Princess Search

**LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)**  
— The Lancaster County Dairy Princess Pageant will be held on Saturday, June 17, at the Farm and Home Center. A milk punch reception will begin at 7 p.m. The program starts at 7:30 p.m. In addition to the Dairy Princess pageant, there will be a recognition for Dairy Darlings. Any young girl between 8 and 10 years of age is eligible to become a Dairy Dar-

ling. These girls are given the opportunity to travel with the princess throughout the county and assist her at various events. Handing out stickers, serving milk punch, and visiting schools are just some of the fun activities for the Dairy Darlings.

Ice cream and light refreshments follow the crowning of the 1995-96 Lancaster County Dairy Princess.

## No Time To Sew

**ALLENTOWN (Lehigh Co.)**— Two exciting two-hour presentations "Embellishment of the Cloth," and "No Time to Sew," will be presented by Sandra Betzina, nationally known sewing specialist, author of "Power Sewing"

and host of the national television show "Sew Perfect."

Held on Saturday, May 20, from 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Penn State University, Allentown Campus, Fogelsville, the cost is \$50. For a free brochure detailing the workshop, request the "No Time To Sew" brochure at the Berks Co. Cooperative Extension, P.O. Box 520, Leesport, PA 19533-0520.



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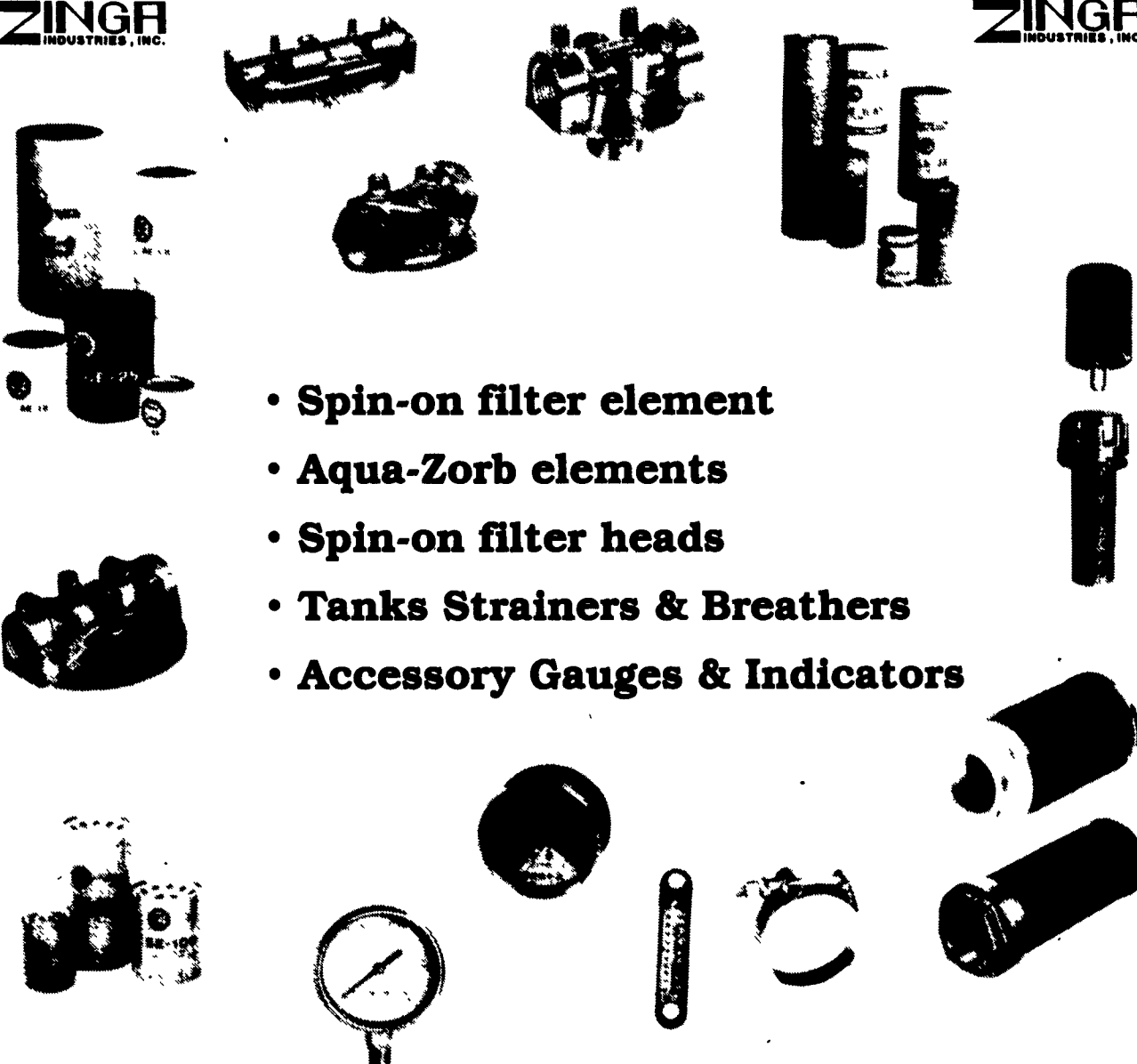
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