

Well Preserved

The Well Preserved news column is prepared by Lancaster County Cooperative Extension. It includes food preservation information and questions.

Vacuum Packaging

Several models of vacuum packaging machines are available to consumers. Some create the vacuum in plastic packaging materials similar to freezer bags while others are capable of removing air from specially designed jars. At first glance, they appear to be nifty machines to enhance food storage with fresher, higher quality food. Closer analysis provides some risks as well as benefits.

How does vacuum packaging work? Producing a vacuum means removing air from the contents of a package.

What are the advantages of vacuum packaging foods for storage? Oxygen in the air promotes certain reactions in foods that cause rancidity of fats and color changes. Removing air may extend the storage time of refrigerated foods, dried foods, and frozen foods.

Are there any risks to vacuum packaging foods? Yes, it may raise the danger of increased growth of disease-causing bacteria such as botulism. Removal of oxygen does not eliminate the possibility for all bacterial growth. The bacteria most likely to be eliminated are ones that cause spoilage in the form of odors, color, sliminess, etc. These are bacteria that need oxygen. However, pathogenic bacteria that cause illness thrive in low-oxygen environments and repro-

duce quickly in vacuum-packaged foods. Without the competition from spoilage bacteria, some of these pathogens will reproduce even more quickly. Pathogenic bacteria may cause the food to be unsafe and yet show no signs to warn the consumer.

According to Elizabeth Andress, from the National Center for Home Food Preservation, foods that are vacuum packaged must still be refrigerated or frozen at proper temperatures and vacuum packaging is not a substitute for the heat processing of home canned foods.

How should perishable vacuum packaged materials be handled? Practice safe food handling practices at all times.

Refrigeration below 40F is critical for storage of low-acid vacuum-packaged foods that aren't canned or frozen. Vacuum packaged foods only benefit from the reduction of oxygen in the environment. Frozen foods that are vacuum packaged require proper thawing under conditions that minimize bacterial growth. Thaw them in the refrigerator or in the microwave oven. Food thawed in the microwave oven must be cooked immediately.

If the food thaws in the vacuum packaging, an anaerobic environment still exists that can foster growth of anaerobic bacteria. Perishable food that is vacuum packaged should not be out of the refrigerator any longer than two hours total time. Food that needs to be refrigerated without vacuum packaging still needs to be refrigerated even when it is vacuum packaged. Food needs to be packaged under extremely clean conditions



with sanitized equipment and work surfaces. Raw meats, poultry and seafood should be cooked thoroughly to recommended temperatures before eating

Can vacuum packaging be used for storing dried foods such as dried nuts or crackers? Products like this are low enough in moisture that bacterial growth is prevented. Vacuum packaging dried fruits, vegetables, and jerky prevents re-absorption of moisture from the air.

Is a vacuum packaging machine needed? One needs to ask if the amount of the investment is worth the uses for the appliance. Initial cost ranges from about \$100 to \$300 for a home model. Special packaging materials are an additional cost.

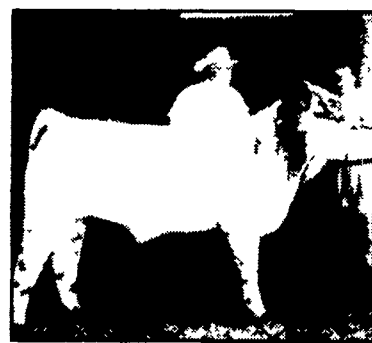
Traditional freezing and canning procedures will produce high quality products with reasonable shelf life if proper procedures are used. Storing dried foods in air-tight storage containers will also keep them of high quality for a reasonable period of time for normal usage.

If you have food preservation questions, a home economist is available to answer questions on Wednesdays 10:00 a.m.1:00 p.m., call (717) 394-6851 or write Penn State Cooperative Extension, Lancaster County, 1383 Arcadia Rd., Rm.1, Lancaster, PA, 17601.

Shorthorn Market Steer Grand Champion At Frederick Fair Show



Mark Butler, Jr., Emmitsburg, Md., is shown with his champion Angus steer at the Frederick Fair market steer show.



Charles Kreitz, III, Frederick, Md., is pictured with his shorthorn steer, the grand champion at the Frederick Fair market steer show.

FREDERICK, Md. — At the Frederick Fair Market Steer Show, the Shorthorn steer champion of Charles Kreitz III from Frederick went on to be chosen the grand champion by the judge, Jimmy Williams from Boling Green, Tex.

Chosen reserve grand champion of the show was the champion crossbred steer of Jacob Wolfrey from White Post, Va.

The reserve champion Shorthorn steer was also shown by Kreitz. The reserve champion crossbred steer was shown by Tyler Fitzwater.

Other top class winners were: ANGUS: champion, Mark Butler Jr. from Emmitsburg; reserve champion, Heather Willis from Union Bridge, Md.

HEREFORD: champion, Kayla Baer, Frederick, Md.; reserve champion, Bradley Seiss, Thurmont, Md.

LIMOUSIN: champion, Jordan Fox, Jefferson, Md.; reserve champion, Zachary Willard, Smithsburg, Md.



Kayla Baer, Frederick, Md., is shown with her grand champion Hereford steer at the Frederick Fair market steer show.

Top winners in Beef Showmanship chosen by Williams were: master showman, Mark Butler Jr.; senior showman, Heather Willis; intermediate showman, Cory Kreitz; junior showman, Jessica Clarke; first year champion, Konnar Miller.

Extension Offers Quilt Workshop

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — "The Ripple of the Star in the Mountains" is the quilt chosen for the Lancaster County Extension's sewing workshop #61 at Farm and Home Center on Arcadia Road. The quilt will be on display in the office three weeks before the class begins.

The class is scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 6 from 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. and the cost is \$35. The instructor will be Carol Lee Shirk. Class minimum is four (4) persons and the maximum, eight (8). A sewing machine is required.

The deadline for registration is Friday, Nov. 21. A deadline is necessary because a list of supplies needed must be sent to registrants. No refund for cancellations can be made after the deadline. For more information, contact: extension office at (717) 394-6851.

The registration slip must include: Name of workshop and #; cost; name; address; phone number at home and/or work. Check payable to "Agricultural Extension" for amount of fee must accompany registration. Send to: Workshops, Penn State Cooperative Extension, 1383 Arcadia Road, Room 1, Lancaster, PA 17601-3184.



Goodville Mutual
New Holland, Pa

Find an agent near you
www.goodville.com
or 800-448-4622

affordable insurance

for farm, vehicle home, small business church

Northampton County Extension Annual Meeting Nov. 17

NAZARETH (Northampton Co.) — Dr. Lynn Brown, Penn State associate professor of food science, will be the featured speaker at the annual meeting of Northampton County Cooperative Extension, Monday evening at 6:30 p.m., Nov. 17.

Dr. Brown will speak on "What's New in the Supermarket?" and will provide updates on current food topics and issues such as genetically engineered, organic and conventional pro-

duce — what they are and how to tell them apart; functional foods; trans-fatty acids; food labeling; and health claim changes for the future.

The program will be conducted at the Star Grange on Route 512 in Moorestown. It is free of charge. Refreshments following the meeting will be available for a \$5 fee. Reservations to attend should be made by Nov. 10. Call (610) 746-1970.

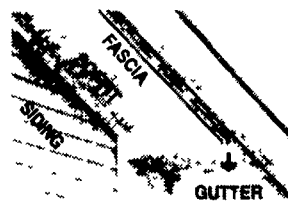


SUSQUEHANNA PRINTING

- Wedding Invitations
- Brochures
- Business Cards
- Sale Cards
- Catalogs
- Newsletters
- Newspapers



Arl Haas
One East Main Street
P.O. Box 527, Ephrata, PA 17522
717/733-6397 • Fax 717/733-6058



CALL THE SPOUTING SPECIALISTS

For

- 5", 6" & 7" Seamless Gutters in 32 Colors
- Half Round Gutters
- Windows & Doors
- Tubular Skylights

SENENIG'S SPOUTING

Call Today For A Free Estimate

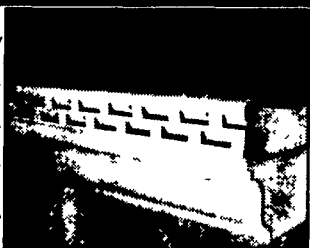
265 E. Meadow Valley Rd., Lititz, PA 17543

717-733-7160 - 1-800-247-2107 - 717-627-6886

Financing Available



See us at the Senior Expo
Lancaster Host Resort
November 4



Turn Your Gutters Into Virtually SELF CLEANING GUTTERS

With

Gutter ProTech

- .027 Aluminum — Never Rusts
- 20 Yr. Limited Warranty
- 32 Colors Available
- Affordable