

Food Preservation Training Model with Limited Staff and Resources

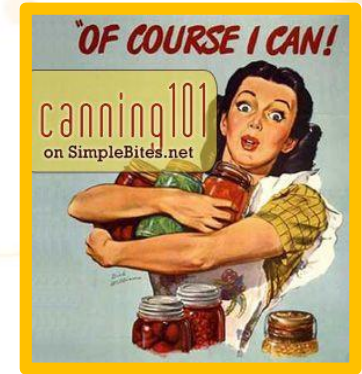
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Reasons for Project



- ▶ Renewed interest in growing & preserving
- ▶ Limited food safety staff
- ▶ Families with limited preservation skills
- ▶ Risk for foodborne illness
- ▶ 4-H leaders with limited skills

Most Important issue: lack of a unified protocol for answering food safety question

Project Goals

- ◆ To have competent Food Safety/Preservation Information Assistants in as many counties as possible
- ◆ Secure a two year \$50,000 grant to develop a statewide effort to develop a Consumer Food Safety project in Washington State

Current Situation



- Anyone was answering food safety questions
- No accountability
- Lack of up-to-date training
- No back-up support for food safety
- Risk for a potential lawsuit, disability or death

Assessment Process

Survey with Extension County Directors

- ✓ 30 counties responded
 - confirmed people were answering questions & teaching classes with little training
 - some chose not to answer questions in their county
 - all stated food safety & preservation should be a state priority

Requirements:

- ✓ Counties invited to fill out an application
- ✓ Fee: \$250
- ✓ Have designated county supervision
- ✓ 2-year training program

Accepted 52 people

Training Format



1. Enroll in *Preserve @ Home* – University of Idaho on-line course

- 6 lessons
- quiz with each lesson
- real time on-line chat

2. Face-to-Face Lab

- 3 day in-depth training with hands-on canning – WSU campus

3. Practice answering consumer questions, checking canner gauges & take home exam



WSU Food Safety/Preservation Information Assistants

You Can:

- ⇒ Test canner gauges
- ⇒ Provide food safety & preservation resources to consumers
- ⇒ Staff display booths & do Q & A sessions

You Will NOT:

- ⇒ Teach classes
- ⇒ Train volunteers

Expectations:

- ⇒ Keep log of contacts, questions, gauges checked and educational efforts
- ⇒ Maintain contact with assigned mentor



Regional Training – Part 2

How to Teach Classes

- Enroll in “*Preserve the Taste of Summer*”
- Attend a regional 2-day hands-on session to learn how to teach classes
- Practice teaching “in the kitchen”

How to Manage Classes

- Work with county director to determine costs
- Potential participants need to enroll in “*Preserve the Taste of Summer*”
- Understand class structure, advertising, recruitment and follow-up

Continuing Education

Mentors:

- Maintained contact with their trainees
- Helped trainees understand how to respond to difficult consumer questions
- Encouraged them to expand their delivery of information

Trainers:

- Provided on-going education with conference calls, handouts, webinars and other resources to keep them up-to-date



Project Results

- * 52 people were trained as WSU Food Safety/Preservation Information Assistants
- * 35 people were trained to teach
- * More pressure canner gauges checked
- * Classes taught in many counties
- * Provided an educational service to counties who previously had no one to answer questions
- * Educational exhibits were used to reach new audiences
- * 4-H leaders are now required to take “Preserve the Taste of Summer” before enrolling
- * **Hired a Consumer Food Safety Specialist!**

