

FCS SPOTLIGHT

Northeast Region
by Markaye Russell

Northeast Region Family Consumer Science Agents from Catahoula, Concordia, Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland, Union, and West Carroll parishes held a pressure canning workshop during the month of May. Pressure canners are used with low-acid foods prone to harboring harmful microorganisms. They heat food hotter than boiling-water canners to kill off the microorganisms. Low-acid foods are those with a pH over 4.6. Most vegetables, soups, stews, and meat sauces are low acid. It's important to check dial gauges for accuracy before use each year. Gauges that read high cause under-processing and may result in unsafe food. Low readings cause over-processing. Pressure adjustments can be made if the gauge reads up to 2 pounds high or low. Replace gauges that differ by more than 2 pounds.

Today's pressure canner may have a dial gauge for indicating the pressure or a weighted gauge, for indicating and regulating the pressure. Weighted gauges are usually designed to "jiggle" several times a minute or to keep rocking gently when they are maintaining the correct pressure. Read your manufacturer's directions to know how a particular weighted gauge should rock or jiggle to indicate that the proper pressure is reached and then maintained during processing. Dial gauge canners will usually have a counterweight or pressure regulator for sealing off the open vent pipe to pressurize the canner. This weight should not be confused with a weighted gauge and will not jiggle, or rock as described for a weighted gauge canner. Pressure readings on a dial gauge canner are only registered on the dial and only the dial should be used as an indication of the pressure in the canner. One manufacturer now makes a dual-gauge canner; read the manufacturer's user manual for information on when and how to use either the weighted gauge or the dial.

The Northeast Region Family Consumer Science Agents will be putting together some workshops in the region for hands on pressure canner training. Plans are to offer the workshops hybrid format that includes online modules and virtual education sessions.



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