

PANHANDLE PATH TO HEALTHY LIVING



Let's Celebrate National Canned Food Month!

February marks National Canned Food Month. If this is news to you, don't fret: there are many ways you can still celebrate! Check out a few of these recommendations:

1. Take an inventory of your pantry—Metal food cans are recognized for their ability to extend a product's shelf life, as they are hermetically sealed to prevent contamination from unwanted microorganisms. In fact, canned foods retain their peak quality for approximately two years after being purchased. By surveying your pantry, you might find that you're missing an ingredient that's necessary for an upcoming recipe or item that is close to expiration.
2. Create a homemade meal —In addition to extending product shelf life, canned foods provide for added convenience, as they eliminate extra time needed for meal preparation. Over 1,500 foods are available in cans, and recipe options for maximizing not one but several canned food items are endless. Plus, the package format is fully recyclable after use.
3. Donate to your local food bank—Did you know that 41 million people struggle with hunger in the United States? Canned foods can help. Canned foods that are not dented or expired serve as an ideal donation to local organizations or to food banks because they are easy to transport, effectively preserve the quality of the food for an extended period of time and maintain the nutritional value of the foods they contain. According to FeedingAmerica.org, there are 200 food bank locations serving the United States.

How will you celebrate National Canned Food Month?

Path to Mindfulness

**Don't Cry Over Spilled Milk—What's done is done.
Don't let it bring you down.**

February 11th, Don't Cry Over Spilled Milk Day promotes a positive attitude even when things might not be going your way. It's a day for looking on the bright side of things and then carrying that feeling with you every day after. Do not worry and do not stress over the little things. Life is too short to let the little things bother us.

In one of its oldest forms, the proverb was "No weeping for shed milk," as referenced by James Howell in 1659. The saying has evolved over time, but still retains its original intent. There is no changing what is done and crying over it serves no purpose.

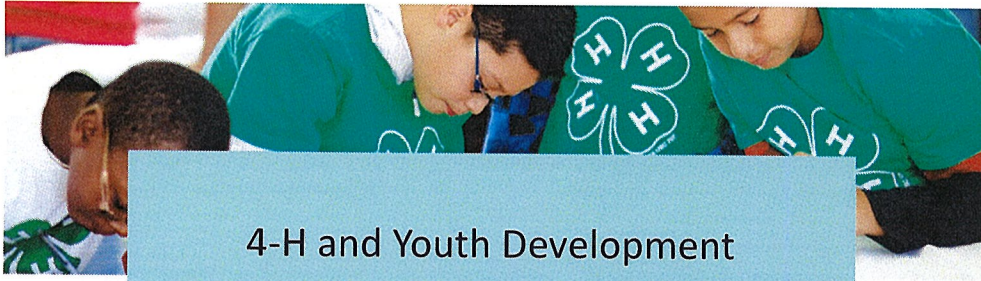
Everyone knows that unexpected or unplanned things happen in life, sometimes daily. With a positive attitude, life is much brighter and easier.

Why limit yourself to 1 day-When you can practice 365 days a year!

- Be prepared! Sometimes the things that happen do so because we didn't study, prepare or organize our day. While not every detail needs to be planned, the general stuff of the day does.
- Expect the unexpected. No matter who we are or what we do, things happen. Kids get sick. Customers make special requests. A car pulls out in front of you. The server brings the wrong dish. You take a wrong turn. If you adjust and move on, it will only be a blip on your day.
- Have a backup plan. These come in especially handy for big occasions. We're talking about surprise parties or a wedding. In the end, what's really important about special occasions are the good memories we make. If a little milk should fall, er, spill, while everyone laughs, dances and smiles, it really won't matter.
- *Breathe.* Ask yourself, Will this issue matter in a day? If the answer is, No, then it's just a little spilled milk. How about a week? Still a no? It's still just spilled milk.

If the issue doesn't change the entire course of your life, it's only spilled milk.





4-H and Youth Development

The Hansford County Stock Show will take place on Jan. 21-23. More info can be found on the Hansford County 4-H and Extension Facebook page, or you can call the office for more information at 806.659.4130

Interested in learning how to sew? Call the office to join us in our sewing project!

Is there a project that you'd like to learn or that interests you? Let us know!

Hansford County

If you are interested in 4-H, now is the time to get involved! We have a lot of upcoming projects and activities! Check out the Hansford County 4-H and Extension Facebook page or call the office at 806.659.4130 for more information!



Path to Protection..... Food Safety



Storing Canned Food

There are limits to how long food quality can be preserved.

Why? Several factors limit the shelf-life of canned foods.

- Cans or metal lids on glass jars can rust. When rust is deep enough, tiny holes open in the can or lid that may let spoilage agents in. Shipping accidents that dent or crush cans cause problems.
- Can corrosion. Food reacts chemically with the metal container, especially high-acid food like canned tomatoes and fruit juices. Over several years, this causes taste and texture changes. It eventually lowers the nutritional value of the food.
- Temperatures over 100 degrees F are harmful to canned foods. The risk of spoilage jumps sharply as storage temperatures rise. At prolonged storage temperatures above 75 F, nutrient loss in canned foods increases. Light can cause color changes and nutrient losses in foods canned in glass jars.

To store canned food wisely, follow these guidelines

- Store in a cool, clean, dry place where temperatures are below 85 F (between 50-70 F is good) but not freezing temperatures.
- Rotate foods so the oldest is used first. Try not to keep canned foods more than 1 year.
- Use canned meats and seafood within 3 years of the date on the package.
- Use low-acid canned foods like vegetables and soup within 3 years of the date on the package.
- Use high-acid foods like fruit, pickles and tomatoes within 2 years of the date on the package.
- Canned fruit juices can be stored up to 1 year.
- Foods stored longer will be safe to eat if the cans do not show signs of spoilage or damage, but the foods may deteriorate in color, flavor and nutritional value.

Storage process

If lids are tightly vacuum-sealed on cooled jars:

- Remove screw bands.
- Wash the lid and jar to remove food residue.
- Rinse and dry jars.
- Label and date the jars.
- Store them in a clean, cool, dark, dry place.
- Don't store jars above 95 F. Don't store near hot pipes, a range, a furnace, in an uninsulated attic, or in direct sunlight. Under these conditions, food will lose quality in a few weeks or months and may spoil.
- Dampness may corrode metal lids, break seals, and allow recontamination and spoilage.

Accidental freezing of canned foods will not cause spoilage unless jars become unsealed and re-contaminated. However, freezing and thawing may soften food. If jars must be stored where they may freeze, wrap them in newspapers, place them in heavy cartons, and cover with more newspapers and blankets.

Path to Protection..... Food Safety



(storing canned food continued)

Identifying and handling spoiled canned foods

Do not taste food from a jar with an unsealed lid or food which shows signs of spoilage. You can more easily detect some types of spoilage in jars stored without screw bands. Growth of spoilage bacteria and yeast produces gas which pressurizes the food, swells lids and breaks jar seals.

Spoilage warning signs

Never use foods from containers with these signs:

Loose or bulging lids on jars.

Bulging, leaking or badly dented cans (especially along the top, side and bottom seams).

Foul odor.

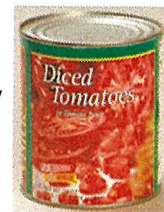
Check each jar thoroughly

1. As each stored jar is selected for use, examine its lid for tightness and vacuum. Lids with concave centers have good seals.
2. Next, while holding the jar upright at eye level, rotate the jar and examine its outside surface for streaks of dried food originating at the top of the jar.
3. Look at the contents for rising air bubbles and unnatural color.
4. While opening the jar, smell for unnatural odors and look for spurting liquid and cotton-like mold growth (white, blue, black or green) on the top food surface and underside of lid.

Carefully detoxify and discard spoiled food

Carefully discard any jar of spoiled food to prevent possible illness to you, your family and pets. You must detoxify the container, lid and all the contents before disposal. Follow this process if you suspect spoiled food:

1. Place container with contents and lid on their sides in an 8-quart or larger stock pot, pan or boiling-water canner.
2. Wash your hands thoroughly.
3. Add water to the pot so it is 1 inch or more above everything in the pot. Avoid splashing the water.
4. Place a lid on the pot and heat the water to boiling.
5. Boil 30 minutes to ensure detoxification of the food, container and lids.
6. Cool and discard the food, container and all container components, such as lids, in the trash or bury in soil.
7. Take care that animals or children can't get in contact with the disposed food and containers.
8. Thoroughly wash all counters, containers and equipment including can opener, clothing and hands that may have been in contact with the food or containers.
9. Discard any sponges or washcloths used in cleaning.
10. Place everything in a plastic bag and discard in the trash where they're unreachable by animals and children. This will prevent accidental poisoning.



TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

"Panhandle Path to Healthy Living" is a Family Community Health Information resource for area families in the Texas Panhandle Counties. The newsletter is published monthly. Readers are encouraged to read the newsletter and then pass it on. Any information may be reproduced for education purposes in any form and credit cited appropriately.

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Path to Plate.....

Strawberry Salad

Ingredients:

- 6 Medium Strawberries
- 3 1/2 tbsp Goat's Cheese or Feta Cheese
- Fresh Spinach
- 8 tbsp Olive Oil
- 4 tbsp Balsamic Vinegar
- 4 tbsp Honey

Directions:

1. Add goats cheese, spinach, Strawberries, olive oil and balsamic vinegar in a large salad bowl.
2. Drizzle honey over the salad & add walnuts if desired.

