

Master Food Preservers at the Fair
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UCCE El Dorado County Master Food Preservers

The El Dorado County Fair begins June 14th and continues through the 17th, to the delight of county residents both young and old. This year, as always, the Master Food Preservers (MFP) of El Dorado County will be making sure not only that those with home food preservation skills receive the proper awards, but that the members of the public get a little “taste” of the recipes used in preserving food at home.

Volunteers from the MFP UC Cooperative Extension Program work many long hours aiding fair judges. The volunteers provide clerks and runners for the actual judging, which is done by fair appointed judges. The samples used in the judging of each category have been separated from another entry from the contestant. One sample remains on display, and one garners closer inspections from the judges while competing for ribbons and possible prize money. Although the amount of money seems insignificant, there can be no price put on the sense of accomplishment felt by a winning contestant.

On fair days, people stroll by and gaze at the many items entered in the various home food preservation categories. While strolling, they may stop at the MFP booth and get a free taste of sample food made from a UCCE tested and recommended home food preservation recipe. The samples offer a glimpse of the many ways food can be preserved at home. The MFP volunteers in the booth will have recipes for the samples and for many other home preservation projects for sale, at a nominal cost. These volunteers enjoy talking about food preservation and about the many ways the MFP Program helps people learn about safe home food preservation.

The volunteers will not fail to mention the upcoming public education classes being offered at the Placerville Extension Office. These classes remain free to the public, and begin the first week in July. Each week a different aspect of safe home food preservation will be presented and demonstrated by a team of MFP volunteers. Check out the MFP website for specific days and times. After the closing day of the fair, the MFP volunteers remain to take down displays and return sample products to the competitors. The volunteers also record the winning entrants and help distribute prizes.

The MFP volunteers work long, hard hours to present their home-based craft to the crowds at the fair. Take some time to check out the beautiful displays of homemade, preserved food, and find the MFP booth in the Marshall Building. One taste may be all it takes to convince someone to take advantage of the free public classes to learn how to safely and easily preserve delicious food at home.

For questions about safe home food preservation, or to schedule a speaker for organizations or clubs on the topics of food safety or food preservation, call the Master Food Preservers at (530) 621-5506. For more information, be sure to go to the Master Food Preserver website at http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.org/Master_Food_Preservers/. Sign up to receive our new Master Food Preservers E-Newsletter at <http://ucanr.org/mfpnews/>.