

Marketing Package Award

Fill Your Pantry: Home Food Preservation

Issue/Reason for Effort: Learning how to preserve food at home properly requires food safety knowledge and skill to ensure the long-term safety and quality of food. Educating Illinois residents about food safety and up-to-date home food preservation methods are a statewide priority programming area for University of Illinois Extension. Evaluation data gathered from the 2020 *Health at Home* webinar series (April to May) indicated an increased interest in learning how to preserve garden produce safely. The Nutrition and Wellness team generally provides hands-on, in-person classes to safely freeze, can, dry, and ferment foods at home. However, due to the statewide stay-at-home order in the spring and summer of 2020, classes were unable to occur.

The Nutrition and Wellness team quickly adapted to provide vital research-based food preservation information virtually, which served as an alternative for in-person education and hands-on classes. The team developed the *Fill Your Pantry: Home Food Preservation* program, which consisted of eight one-hour webinars addressing current food preservation techniques and 31 daily social media posts.

Targeted Audience: The team coordinated their marketing efforts with the university's state communications and marketing team. Program announcements were sent to specific internal and external networks such as 4-H families, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, Farm Bureaus, Farmer's Market boards, past program participants, and other local county Extension listserves. Additionally, special interest groups related to food preservation on Facebook were included in the targeted marketing plan.

Relevance to FCS and Extension: The University of Illinois Extension provides home food preservation classes based on research from the United States Department of Agriculture Home Canning Guide, the National Center for Home Food Preservation, and other universities Cooperative Extension services.

Uniqueness and Need for Effort: *The Fill Your Pantry: Home Food Preservation* webinar series and *31 Days of Food Preservation* social media campaign addressed a state priority programming area during uncertain times. This multifaceted marketing effort incorporated new strategies to engage consumers with Extension programming and safe home food preservation information. One unique aspect of this program was the additional marketing outreach following the webinar series. Registrants were emailed weblinks to the recorded webinars for ease of access and future viewing. Similarly, newspaper articles were published informing the public of these resources and how to access the webinars. The *31 Days of Food Preservation* social campaign was developed to answer frequently asked questions from the webinar series. Daily infographics provided readers with tips on current food preservation methods and links to reputable sources for additional learning.

When and Where Marketing Efforts were Used: Marketing efforts for the *Fill Your Pantry: Home Food Preservation* program occurred from May through August 2020. The team used social, print, and virtual media to reach a unique and broad audience when marketing the webinar series and social media campaign.

- Print media consisted of news releases and fliers
- Social media platforms included Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook
- Virtual media incorporated e-blasts, e-newsletters, podcasts, and radio interviews

Social media posts were shared by multiple organizations nationwide, including Missouri and Arkansas Extension services. The team created a podcast recorded on iHeart radio to promote the webinar series, access recorded webinars, and follow the campaign on social media.

A follow-up email marketing campaign was sent to the 1,800 unique registrants in August with access to the recorded webinars and handouts for future use. This layered marketing approach before, during, and after the series helped garner new audiences and expand our national reach.

Number of People Reached: Throughout a four-month timeframe, the Nutrition and Wellness team reached an estimated **1.8 million people** with their marketing efforts. No funds were used to promote these programs. See table below for marketing method and reach.

Marketing Method	Reach
Fill your Pantry webinar series promotions via Facebook (reach; shares)	425K; 95
32 Days of Food Preservation Social Media Campaign (reach; engagements)	51,783; 3,426
iHeart Radio podcast and other local radio interviews (listening audience)	350,000
New releases and blogs (total reach)	1,000,000+
Recorded webinar views (YouTube and Media Space)	2,361
Total Reach	1.8 million

Impact or Results from Marketing Efforts: *The Fill Your Pantry: Home Food Preservation* webinar series had **a total of 2,380 participants, with 1,800 unique participants attending multiple sessions.** The rate of **return for participant evaluations was 42.39%** (n=1,009). Of the participants completing the evaluations, data indicated:

- 79.2% indicated **increased knowledge related to food safety** while handling and preparing food during home food preservation
- 71.1% indicated **increased awareness of using a scientifically tested recipe**
- 94.1% indicated an **increased understanding of current food preservation procedures**

- 83.7% indicated **increased confidence** in following safe home food preservation methods discussed in the webinars
- 74.8% indicated they were **very or extremely likely to put a preservation technique into practice** due to these webinars
- 90.8% self-reported **increased ability to practice safe food preservation techniques**

How was the Extension Services identified: The Illinois Extension logos and wordmarks were used in all marketing materials and outreach efforts (see supplementary pieces for examples).

Illinois Extension branding guidelines were followed and approved by the state communications and marketing team before release.

This tagline was used in media communications. ABOUT EXTENSION: *Illinois Extension leads public outreach for University of Illinois by translating research into action plans that allow Illinois families, businesses, and community leaders to solve problems, make informed decisions, and adapt to changes and opportunities.*

Supplementary Pieces: Supplementary pieces included are the following; the *Fill Your Pantry: Home Food Preservation* webinar [press release](#) and the *31 Days of Food Preservation* social media campaign graphics, along with the text (tool kit) that accompanied each social media post.

Follow this link to view all supplemental pieces:

<https://uofi.box.com/s/fjryvw224284p8gvwh6pikg9w7x84a9s>

- Three or more marketing pieces:
 - Promotional graphics for the *Fill Your Pantry: Home Food Preservation* webinar series
 - Infographics for the *31 Days of Food Preservation* social media campaign and toolkit.

- Press releases announcing the *Fill Your Pantry: Home Food Preservation* webinar series (May) and the *31 Days of Food Preservation* social media campaign (July).
- Steam Canning blog post (August) for the social media campaign, day three, highlighting a watermelon rind pickle recipe for #NationalWatermelonDay.
- 2020 Nutrition and Wellness Team photo