

Tallapoosa County Extension Newsletter



Tis the Season for Food and Fellowship

Shane Harris
County Extension Coordinator
Tallapoosa County

As the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday seasons quickly approaches, there is a common theme that is very much a part of these two holidays that cannot be ignored – The Food. It’s funny how food unites us and brings us together. We get excited about the fellowship but truthfully it may be about the opportunity to savor Momma’s and Grandma’s home cooking. We can’t help but wonder what will be served. We get giddy and impatient so we sneak into the kitchen to check out what’s on display on the dinner and dessert tables. Maybe take a quick peak or sneak in and grab a bit, before getting scolded out of the kitchen. Turkey and dressing, baked ham, sweet potato casserole, green bean casserole, creamed corn, pecan pie, oh my!

Food is important here at the Tallapoosa Extension office too. A running joke is ‘What’s for lunch?’ In Extension, there is an unwritten but well known rule amongst County Agents for conducting educational events. It is “Feed Them and They Will Come.” In other words, if a meal is involved, folks are more likely to attend the Extension sponsored program. Maybe it really was the food and fellowship that attracted me to a career Extension.



So when Extension hosts a meeting, we include refreshments. When we have workshops, we have a meal. When we have staff meetings, we go out to lunch. When we have a party, we invite the entire courthouse. Even our Master Gardener classes always include pot luck lunches. I often tell the participants, “We may not learn much about gardening, but we going to eat well.” ☺

Important Dates:

December 2nd Propagation Workshop 8:00 - 12:00 in the Extension Auditorium

REMINDER: Office is closed for Thanksgiving November 23 - 25
Christmas closing is December 19th–January 2nd

New Master Gardener Cookbooks on sale in the office for \$10. Going fast stop by to get your copy!

With so much food preparation and carrying food from one family gathering to another social event, food safety is always a concern during the holidays. Food contamination and poisoning can quickly ruin the festive spirit. Seek advice on how to properly prepare, cook, transport, and store food and meals. Extension has numerous publications and information on food safety and preservation. Visit our office or website – www.aces.edu for sound advice.

On behalf of the Tallapoosa County Extension office staff, Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year! Follow us on Facebook, give us a call, or come by for a visit.





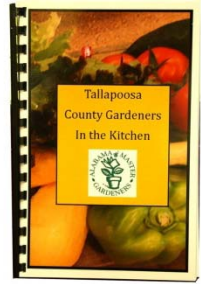
Extension News and Events

Sallie Mason

Administrative Support Associate II
Tallapoosa County

New Master Gardener Cookbooks

During the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday seasons, new recipes and cookbooks are in high demand. This year, in addition to our "Auburn Cookbook" (\$15), "Wild Game Cookbook" (\$8), and Extension "Home Food Preservation" book (\$12), we have a new cookbook – "Tallapoosa County Gardeners in the Kitchen." Our Master Gardeners can cook too; they have finally combined all their favorite recipes and dishes to share. Proceeds from the new \$10 cookbook are to support the Tallapoosa County Master Gardener Program. Cookbooks make great gifts so pick up your copy today.



Plant Propagation Workshop – December 2nd

On Friday, December 2nd the Tallapoosa County Extension office, is offering a plant propagation workshop at the Extension office located in the Courthouse in Dadeville from 8 a.m. – 12 noon. Plant propagation is the practice of producing more plants through methods such as division, layering, seeds, stem cuttings, budding, and grafting. There is a \$5.00 registration fee for the workshops and you must pre-register to attend. To register for the meeting or for more information contact the Tallapoosa County Extension office at 256-825-1050.

Congratulations to the Class of 2011 Master Gardeners

Our newest Certified Master Gardeners from the 2011 Class are: Bob Blokzyl, Bonita Books, Linda Bodine, Deena Davis, Jacquie Johnson, Myrna Lehman, Kathy Nicholson, Billy Wall, Jean Whitehead, and our very own Sallie Mason. Congratulations! If you are interested in becoming a Master Gardener, contact your local Extension Office. Classes start in January 2012. To host a course in Tallapoosa County we need at least 15 students.

Visit us Online and Be-Friend us on Facebook

Help Extension help you. If you have an email address that we could send this newsletter directly to, it would help on our mailing costs a great deal. Stay connected and informed by finding us online at www.aces.edu/Tallapoosa and now on Facebook. Call the office at 256-825-1050 or email and let us know. Your email will not be published on any lists. Thanks for your assistance!





New Body Quest Program

Sue Pemberton

Agent Assistant II

Nutrition Education Program (NEP)

Our new Body Quest program is well into our 10th week. The students are really enjoying it. They love learning with the I-pads and are excited about our food tastings every week. Students answer questions about the foods that they are trying that day by using clickers. That information is relayed into my response card receiver and I export the information on my computer to Auburn University, when I get back to the office. We can tell if students are trying new fruits and vegetables and whether they are beginning to like certain fruits and vegetables that perhaps they like. This is a real high tech program and students are really into this mode of learning.

Kids today are into heroes and warriors so this curriculum is called “food of the Warrior”. According to the Body Quest leaders’ guide, “this curriculum encourages elementary students to examine their eating behaviors and to develop new, healthier habits. Specifically, Body Quest focuses on fruit and vegetable consumption. The curriculum prepares students to explore their feelings and thoughts about eating fruits and vegetables and to discover new ways of looking at the benefits of eating fruits and vegetables.”

This program is a combined effort between the Nutrition Education Program and the 4-H Program. It was written by Molly Gregg and Chuck Hill who are 4-H Youth Development Specialists and contributing authors are Sondra Parmer and Barbara Struempfer, who work with the Nutrition Education Program.

Our goal is that students will learn all about nutrition and health and that they will learn to eat more healthy foods like fruits and vegetables.



New EFNEP Agent Assistant

Danielle Patterson

Agent Assistant I

Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)

I recently joined the Tallapoosa County Extension Office last month as an Agent Assistant for the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). EFNEP works to improve the dietary practices and management of available resources for limited resource families by providing three classes, listed below.

- Cent\$ible Nutrition: comprised of six (6) lessons and is designed for adults that have the feeding responsibility of a child and/or family.
- Have a Healthy Baby: comprised of six (6) lessons and is designed for pregnant women and new mothers.
- Kids in the Kitchen: comprised of 7 to 8 lessons and is designed for children ages 6 to 18 years.

These classes each contain information on nutrition, dietary guidelines, how to Eat Smart, Spend Less and food demonstrations. Each class can be taught in the home, churches, community centers, and any other type of small group setting. If you or anyone you know would be interested in enrolling in a class starting in January 2012, please contact me at 256.825.1058 or mdp0017@aces.edu.



Using Extension's Website

Chip East

Regional Extension Agent III
Commercial Horticulture

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System is an information source for a wide range of topics. These topics include livestock, agronomy, horticulture, forestry and wildlife, food nutrition, food preservation, money management, family and child development, and many others. These programs are provided for adults and are also available to youth as part of the 4-H program. Information from the Extension System is provided through a variety of ways including our web site, newsletters, newspaper, e-mail, radio, Facebook, and others.

We have an office in every county of the state that you can call, e-mail, or visit. However, with the use of our website you have access to information anytime. If you have internet access and are not visiting the Alabama Cooperative Extension System web site, you are missing out on a lot of great information. Extension recently changed the look of our website to make it more user friendly. The point of this article is to explain how to use our web site to find needed information.

How do you get to the Alabama Cooperative Extension System or ACES web site? Well it's easy. Just go to www.aces.edu and you will find the Alabama Cooperative Extension System home page. Like any site the more you use it, the easier it will be to navigate. I work with the commercial horticulture producers so I refer many people to the horticulture information on the site. Let's say we would like to look up information on blueberry production.

From the home page simply click on the Publications & Services tab at the top of the page, then click on ACES Publications. This will take you to a page that lists several program areas: Agriculture, Family & Consumer Sciences, Forestry and Natural Resources, 4-H Youth Development, Community & Economic Development, Urban Affairs & New Nontraditional Programs, and General Extension.

Since we are interested in blueberry production, we will point to Agriculture with the cursor. This will bring up a box with many agriculture topics listed. Since we are looking for blueberry information, find horticulture on the list and click it. This will reveal a bar with ACES Publications and other things listed. This page shows our horticulture publications.

We are looking for blueberry production; just scroll down until you see ANR 904 Commercial Blueberry Production Guide for Alabama. Click on it and you will find the information you need. This publication was written for commercial growers and is several pages long. You could also scroll on down and find ANR-1078 Home Gardening – Rabbiteye Blueberries. It is a much shorter version for homeowners. As you are scrolling through the publications, you will probably find lots of interesting material you will like to read.

Here is another easy way to find information. From our home page there is a place at the top for you to search our site. Simply type in a subject you are interested in, and it will bring you to several links from our site concerning that topic. If you type in "blueberry" it will list publications such as the ones mentioned earlier, news articles, recipes, and other materials we have published concerning blueberries.



There is another feature on our Extension site you should know about as well. It is our Extension Calendar. Extension conducts many educational events throughout the state. You can use our web site to find out information about these events by going to our Extension Calendar on our web site.

From our home page click on the Calendar tab at the top of the page, and it will take you directly to the calendar which lists events from the entire state. You can even search months ahead for events. You can also check events in your county by looking at your county's web site. From our web site (www.aces.edu) click on the Office tab at the top of the page. Then click on County Offices and select the county you live in to get to your county home page. From your county's home page you can see the Upcoming Events on the left of the page. You may want to click on surrounding county home pages as well to find out what is going on there. Most all of our events are open to anyone no matter where they live.

There is a lot of great information on the Alabama Cooperative Extension web site and it is there for your benefit. The more frequently you use the web site, the easier it will become to navigate. Use patience and contact us if you have trouble.



Acorn Poisoning in Livestock

Jack B. Tatum

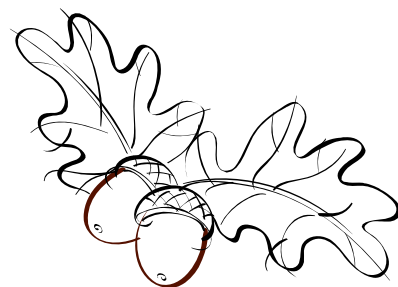
Regional Extension Agent III
Animal Sciences and Forages

In the past two weeks, I have had two real good frosts on my 45 acres. That means my cattle are now on the feed trough once a day. I was trying to stretch that supply of corn gluten and soy hull pellets as far as I could.

One Sunday afternoon I noticed my cattle under the several large oak trees in the side corner of my pasture. Immediately I thought of my forage test question when I was a student at Auburn, "What damage can oak trees do to cattle and other livestock?"

Acorn poisoning happens to cattle and all forms of livestock each year. All forms of livestock will look for acorns when they are hungry. The poisoning usually occurs when green, ripe acorns are consumed when they drop from the oak trees in the fall. Often livestock can consume buds and small leaves from standing or cut trees in the spring that could also lead to poisoning.

Tannins are the agent found in acorns that are toxic. The consumption of the tannins can lead to gastrointestinal problems, kidney damage and death in cattle. Early signs of acorn poisoning in cattle include lack of appetite, diarrhea (black or bloody in color), abdominal pain and occasional constipation. For horses the toxin can cause kidney failure, as well as severe intestinal problems including colic or diarrhea that can be deadly.



Be careful this fall and winter if your livestock have access to acorns. It would be best to remove them if possible from the acorn population.

Thanksgiving Turkey Tips

Patti West

Regional Extension Agent II
Food Safety, Preparation and Preservation

Are you planning on preparing a Turkey for Thanksgiving? Planning ahead can make the traditional Thanksgiving meal safer and less stressful. Here are some tips from your local County Extension Office to help make this year's holiday meal a success.

Before purchasing your turkey, make sure you have ample space in your refrigerator. Turkeys look smaller at the grocery store, so be careful not to underestimate the size of your bird. Think about using a cooler to thaw and store your turkey. The turkey should be kept on ice and should stay 40°F or below to prevent bacteria from growing. Storing the turkey in a cooler will free up space in your refrigerator and will help keep the raw turkey juices from contaminating other items in your refrigerator.



Thawing and Handling

Never defrost turkey on the counter! Turkey can be thawed in the refrigerator or in cold water. The refrigerator method is the safest and will result in the best finished product. Leave the bird in the original packaging and place in a shallow pan and allow refrigerator thawing time at a rate of 4 to 5 pounds per 24 hours. To thaw in cold water, keep turkey in the original packaging, place in a clean and sanitized sink or pan and submerge in cold water. Change the cold water every 30 minutes. The turkey will take about 30 minutes per pound to thaw. Cook the turkey immediately after it is thawed. Do not refreeze. If buying a fresh turkey, purchase it only 1 to 2 days before the meal and keep it refrigerated or on ice. Once thawed, remove neck and giblets from the body cavities and keep bird and parts refrigerated at 40 °F or below until it is ready to be cooked.

Always wash hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling the turkey.

Cooking and Stuffing

The single most important thing to know about cooking a turkey, no matter the cooking method, is that the turkey must be cooked to the proper internal temperature as measured with a food thermometer. An unstuffed turkey will generally take 14 to 20 minutes per pound to cook and a stuffed turkey will take additional time.

Stuffing should be prepared and stuffed into the turkey immediately before it's placed in the oven at 325°F. Mix the wet and dry ingredients for the stuffing separately and combine just before using. Stuff the turkey loosely, about 3/4 cup stuffing per pound of turkey. Bake any extra stuffing in a greased casserole dish. Cooked inside or outside the bird, all stuffing and dressing recipes must be cooked to a minimum temperature of 165 °F. (For optimum safety and more even cooking, it's recommended to cook your stuffing in a casserole dish.)

Take the temperature! Insert a meat thermometer into the thickest part of the thigh, not touching bone. Cook to a minimum internal temperature of 165 °F as measured with a food thermometer. If the turkey is done and the stuffing is not yet 165 °F, remove the stuffing from the turkey and place it in a greased casserole dish to continue cooking to temperature.

Safe Carving and Serving

It's best to let the turkey rest for 20 minutes before carving to allow the juices to set, so the turkey will carve more easily. Use a clean cutting board that has a well to catch juices. Remove all stuffing from the turkey cavity. Make sure your knife is sharp before you start carving. Do not leave any extra turkey, stuffing or other leftovers out for more than two hours.

Storing Leftovers Safely

Remove the stuffing and carve the extra turkey meat from the bones. Within two hours, store leftover turkey in shallow containers and put in the refrigerator or the freezer. Use cooked leftover turkey, stuffing and gravy within 3-4 days. Cooked turkey keeps for 3-4 months in the freezer. When using leftovers, reheat the foods thoroughly to 165 °F or until hot and steaming; bring gravy to a boil before serving.

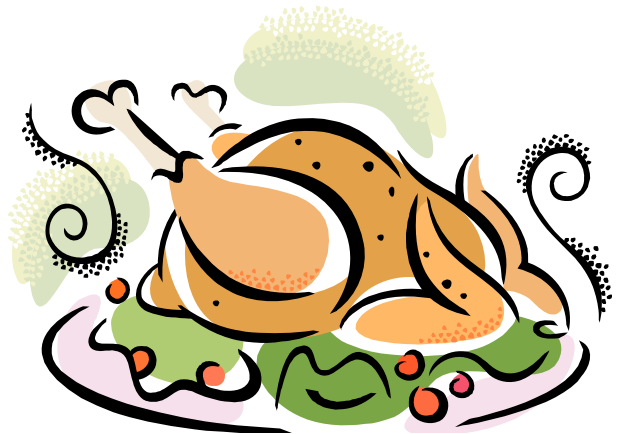
For more information on safe food handling and cooking, please contact your local Extension Office.

Happy Holidays from your County Extension staff! We hope you have a safe and joyous season. Please try the Turkey and Broccoli Quiche recipe below. Let us know what you think.

Turkey and Broccoli Quiche

Ingredients

2 (9 inch) ready-made piecrusts
4 eggs
1 cup low-fat or skim milk
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup low-fat cheddar cheese
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup cooked, chopped turkey
1 (10 ounce) package frozen, chopped broccoli
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup carrots, shredded
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup finely chopped onion
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup teaspoon garlic salt
Pepper to taste



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Bake piecrust according to package directions.
2. In a mixing bowl, combine eggs, milk, garlic, salt and pepper. Mix well.
3. Cook broccoli according to package directions. Pour off liquid. Let broccoli cool; squeeze broccoli to remove some more water. Make sure broccoli is well drained.
4. Layer the turkey, vegetables and cheese into baked piecrust. Pour the egg mixture over the ingredients.
5. Bake at 350°F for 30-40 minutes or until top is brown and a knife inserted in the center comes out clean.
6. Let stand 5 minutes before cutting.

Makes 12 servings | calories 270 | total fat 16 g | saturated fat 6 g | protein 16 g | carbohydrates 17 g | fiber 2 g | sodium 450 mg



Composting to Create Gardener “Black Gold”

Mallory Kelley
Regional Extension Agent I
Home Grounds, Gardens, Home Pests

It's that time of year again, time for football games and fall festivals, pumpkin carving, apple bobbing, and leaf raking. Everything from the plants to the animals and even me seem to enjoy a break from the heat with cooler crisp mornings and pleasant temperatures throughout the day. With all the leaves falling and fall and winter pruning, this is a great time of year to start a compost pile or grow the one you already have. Composting is a cheap and wonderful way to recycle your garden debris back into the soil. There is nothing better you can do for your garden. Compost contains beneficial bacteria necessary for plant growth, improves soil texture and provides necessary nutrients for a healthy garden. Composting also relieves pressure on public landfills by reducing the amount of garbage.

Making your own compost is probably the simplest way to ensure high quality compost and save some money. It's really not as complicated as you may think: There are many commercial composting bins and containers on the market that make it a mess-free and hassle-free process.

It only takes a few things to create compost; a lot of browns, a little greens, moisture and air. Browns are the leaves, pruning materials and paper. The greens are plant materials cleaned out of your flower beds and gardens and kitchen scraps such as: vegetable peelings, egg shells, tea bags and coffee (do not compost meats, dairy products or products with oils). The ratio to use is 3 Brown : 1 Green, so it takes much more leaves and paper than it does kitchen scraps.

When starting a compost pile you should start with browns on the bottom and create layers. Then add water for moisture and let the pile sit for a few days. Then begin turning the pile to add air for the microbes to work and break down the materials quickly into what most gardeners refer to as “black gold”. Keep in mind, once you get one pile going do not continue to add more and more raw materials to the pile or you will never have a finished product. Once you get a pile going well, start another pile adjacent to it. Once the items in the pile are not recognizable any longer, then you know your pile is ready to be used.

Compost is a great amendment for flower or vegetable gardens. In the “prairie mud” of Montgomery and clay soils often found in our area of the state, it is an excellent way to add organic matter to the soil to improve soil structure and drainage while adding nutrients at the same time.

All of these factors help plants to grow best and develop a strong root system. The better the growing conditions for the plant the healthier it will be and the healthier the plant is the less susceptible it is to insect attacks and diseases and seasonal environmental stresses such as drought.

So instead of spending your fall outdoors bagging your leaves, start a compost pile. Your flower beds and vegetable gardens will thank you for years to come.





Healthy Holiday Tips for Diabetics

Sharon A. Haynes

Regional Extension Agent II
Human Nutrition, Diet and Health

“How can I eat healthy during the holidays?” That is the #1 question asked by people with diabetes—or anyone who’s made a commitment to eating with their health in mind. From Thanksgiving to Passover to Kwanzaa, food is all around us. And not just any food, but the types of rich celebration foods we look forward to all year long. For the most part, opting out of these foods just isn’t an option, since they are such a part of who we are. The best option is to try to seek alternatives such as revising a recipe, sticking to portion control or perhaps take your own dish to a party or family gathering. Below are a few tips for individuals living with diabetes. Hopefully, these holiday tips will help you enjoy the season without putting one’s health at risk.

Keep to your blood glucose monitoring schedule and monitor more frequently if you find you are eating more often or at different times of the day.

When dining out with friends and family, try to eat at your normal meal time.

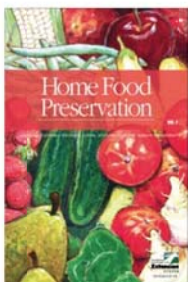
There are ways to revise many holiday dessert recipes, so they are healthier and still great-tasting. Many times, you can replace up to half of the sugar in a recipe with a sugar substitute. Try cutting down on sugar and increasing the use of cinnamon, nutmeg, vanilla, and other sweet-tasting spices and flavorings.

Replace half of the fat in your recipe with applesauce or baby-food prunes when making chocolate brownies, cakes, or cookies.

Avoid holiday weight gain by watching portion sizes. During the holiday season, when gatherings and even shopping trips are often centered on food, weight gain may seem unavoidable. But watching portion sizes can help prevent those extra pounds.

Whenever possible, choose to bring a dish to the party rather than a hostess gift or a bottle of wine. That way you can be sure of at least one healthy item.

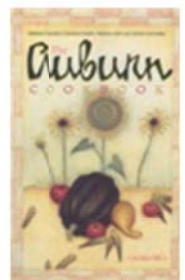
Focus on activities other than food. Enjoy the season with friends and family at a holiday-themed movie or cultural event. Don’t feel deprived during the holidays. You may need to exercise more, make insulin adjustments, or eat less of other foods but you can enjoy the holidays to the fullest.



For the beginner, Home Food Preservation is a must, with its complete, step-by-step procedures. For the experienced, it provides quick reference charts with processing times.

The Auburn Cookbook contains 480 pages of recipes, nutrition information, meal planning tips and cooking techniques.

Holidays are just around the corner and both The Auburn Cookbook and Home Food Preservation make a great gift.





4-H'ers Learn the Importance of Agriculture

Kirsten Holt

Regional Extension Agent I
4-H Youth and Development

The importance of Agriculture is something that affects us all on a daily basis. Did you know that by the year 2050 that 9 billion people will inhabit the earth? That means that our food production will have to increase by 100%. Did you know that the average farmer feeds 155 people? Alabama has approximately 48,500 farmers producing items that we need to live. These facts were recently presented to Council Middle School 4-H'ers by Anna Leigh Peek, National Collegiate Agriculture Ambassador.

Ms. Peek began her presentation with a simple question "Why Should I Care?" to the 4-H'ers. She gave key facts to illustrate concerns of the decline in productive farms. Anna Leigh identified many household products that consumers use: clothing, bedding, towels, soaps, meat, furniture, money, crayons are just to name a few. Similar agriculture programs were done at Dadeville Elementary, Stephens Elementary and Horseshoe Bend by local farmers. A special thanks go to Anna Leigh Peek, Ora Finley, Terry Martin and Dylan Oliver for volunteering their time to share their knowledge and experience with Tallapoosa County youth.



The 4-H members definitely came away with a new perspective on Agriculture and how they can make a difference in the choices they make. For example, buying produce locally is a great way to support the local farmer. The 4-H'ers of Tallapoosa County voiced their appreciation for that farmers do for all of us!

National Collegiate Agricultural Ambassadors are trained to educate audiences of all ages to become more aware of the importance of Agriculture. Anna Leigh Peek attends Auburn University and is currently serving as an Agriculture Ambassador. She is one of twenty college students across the nation with this title. Also, Ms. Peek is a 4-H alumni of Alabama. So she was extremely honored to present Agriculture Awareness to 4-H members of Council Middle School.

4-H Partnering with Volunteers

4-H is looking for volunteers to work with youth in community/special interest clubs and through school enrichment programs such as Jr. Master Gardener, Ag in the Classroom and 4-H Wildlife Stewards. It's a wonderful opportunity for both youth and adult to make a positive impact in one another's life.



Holiday Spending Tips

Isaac Chappell
Regional Extension Agent III
Financial Management

It's time to start thinking about gifts for family members, friends, co-workers, neighbors, hairdresser, etc...or maybe you've already gotten started with your shopping. Remember that gifts won't be your only expense this holiday season, and it's very common for people to splurge much, much more than they expect. Keep these tips in mind to avoid a financial hangover and keep your spending in check.

- 1) Reflect on last year. Take a look at your bills from last year and think about whether your financial situation has improved or worsened since then. Be brutally honest with yourself. Are you really ready for a repeat of last year? If not, start thinking hard about how much you want to spend.
- 2) Count the costs. Remember that gifts aren't the only holiday expense. Factor in the costs of travel, food, tree & decorations, wrapping paper & cards and postage when calculating your budget.
- 3) Check your list twice. Get organized as early as you can, by making a list of those you plan to buy for, along with a list of possible gifts. Having this list with you while shopping can help avoid impulse purchases.
- 4) Limit your use of plastic. Unless you are good - very good- at paying off your balances each and every month, view the cards in your wallet with a healthy measure of fear and trepidation. If you must use credit this year, and you know you won't be able to pay everything off right away, try this approach: Don't pay for every single purchase with credit; make sure you can pay your purchases off completely within 2 to 3 months, and limit your spending to the card in your wallet with the lowest interest rate.
- 5) Don't procrastinate. Avoid waiting until the last minute to shop so you'll have time to compare prices and take advantage of sales.
- 6) Time the sales. When you see an ad for an enticing sale, consider this: You may be able to avoid crowds and get first dibs on everything by shopping after 6pm on the day before the sale officially kicks off.
- 7) Steer clear of unwarranted warranties. In almost every case, you can feel comfortable about saving money by not paying for extended warranties on gift items. Unless you're buying a not-fully-proven technology, rest assured that the cost of the extended warranty usually equals the cost of a typical repair.
- 8) Hunt for discounts on the internet. When making online purchases, have you ever spotted those little areas where you can enter a "promotional code", "discount code", or "coupon"? That's a sign to open a web browser in another window and do a quick Google search for the retailer's name along with the same catch phrase used on that retailer's Web site. You could find a coupon in seconds and save on the purchase you're about to make.
- 9) Make your own gifts. Give some homemade gifts, such as cakes, cookies or gift certificates for your services. Such services could include babysitting, running errands, cooking a nice dinner, doing handyman work, repairing or detailing a car, just to name a few examples.
- 10) Keep it simple. Substitute expensive get-togethers and elaborate holiday dinner parties with inexpensive entertainment at home, such as a neighborhood potluck dinner or an evening of caroling. Finally, keep in mind that the Holidays are not all about spending, but giving. Some of life's richest gifts can be given without any real cost to you. Spend time with your loved ones and friends, and have a blessed Christmas!

Apple Pie in a Jar (by Sandy Copeland)

6 quarts, apples
4 ½ cups sugar
1 cup cornstarch
2 teaspoons cinnamon
¼ teaspoon nutmeg

10 cups water
1 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons lemon juice
few drops yellow food coloring

Peel, slice, and pack apples into hot sterile jars. Cook sugar, cornstarch, cinnamon, nutmeg, water, and salt until thick. Add 3 tablespoons lemon juice and a few drops yellow food coloring. Pour over apples. Seal and process in water bath for 20 minutes. ** Use with crumb crust on top or regular pie shell.

Cabin Fever Soup

2 cups of cooked chopped chicken breast (or one small can)
2 cups of cooked rice
2 cans (14 oz. ea) Minestrone soup
2 cans (16 oz) pinto beans (rinsed and drained)
1 (10 oz) can rotel tomatoes
1 (15 oz) jar of cheese whiz
2 cups of water
Salt and pepper to taste

In large pot simmer until hot or in a slower cooker for about 4 hours. 10 to 12 servings.



Cajun Casserole

1 lb. raw hamburger meat
1 cup uncooked rice
4-6 tablespoons creole seasoning
1 cabbage, finely chopped
1 lb. link sausage, sliced
1 can original Rotel
1 large onion, chopped

In an iron Dutch oven, layer all ingredients in order given. Sprinkle the creole seasoning all over the hamburger meat. Cook at 300 degrees for one hour. Remove from oven, stir. Return to oven and cook for an additional hour.

Newsletter prepared by Sallie Mason, Administrative Associate -Tallapoosa County Extension Office