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Once a Month Cooking

Pauline Williams, MPA, RD, CD – USU Extension Agent

It's 5:30 p.m. you just walked through the door and have no idea what to make for dinner. With once-a-month cooking (OAMC) you walk through the door take the thawed chicken enchiladas from the fridge, pop them in the oven, add a tossed salad and broccoli and in 30 minutes a quick nutritious dinner is on the table. The strategy of OAMC is to spend one day a month cooking and freezing food for future use. The technique can be modified by preparing triple batches for a few weeks or spreading the cooking into two or three days.

•Step one choose and group recipes. Many of your favorite recipes will freeze well; you can also search for freezer recipes on the web or check out books from the library. After you have chosen recipes, group them according to ingredients. By grouping chicken dishes together, you can cook a large batch of chicken and then make enchiladas, casseroles, or fajitas.

•Step two prepare dishes. Plan a day or two to cook, cook, cook! Work wisely – chop vegetables for numerous recipes at once, cook meat and divide for recipes, and shred cheese for all recipes.

•Step three freeze. Clean out the freezer to make room. Have freezer bags, freezer paper, plastic wrap, foil, and freezer containers available. Choose good quality products, wrap items tightly, and remove as much air as possible. Label and date all foods.

•Step four enjoy. To enjoy a quick meal thaw dinner in the refrigerator overnight and then reheat in oven or microwave to at least 165 degrees.

Below are meals ideas for OAMC.
Chicken. Chicken & stuffing casserole, chicken enchiladas, curried chicken and rice, taco chicken soup (chicken, canned tomatoes, canned kidney beans, canned corn, and taco seasoning), chicken & broccoli casserole, chicken fried chicken, chicken fajitas (freeze filling only and serve on fresh tortillas), chicken pot pie, and chicken nuggets
Beef. Sloppy joes, barbeque beef sandwiches, beef chimichangas, cabbage rolls, stuffed green peppers, nacho casserole (layer tortilla chips, beef, rice, beans, enchilada sauce and cheese), chilli, meatloaf, meatballs, and stroganoff.
Pork and ham. Bean and ham soup, macaroni and cheese with ham, stuffed pork chops, barbeque pork sandwiches, ham brunch strata (layer 4 cups bread or cornbread cubes, 2 cups ham, 2 cups shredded cheese; pour 2 cups milk mixed with 4 eggs over bread; bake 350 degrees for 45 minutes or until set).
Sides and other. Pizza, stuffing, garlic mashed potatoes, scalloped potatoes, spanish rice, quiche, lasagne, twice baked potatoes, vegetables, cookies, and fruit pie.

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What to Do If Your Income Drops

Summary prepared by Marilyn K. Albertson, MS, CFCS - Extension Family & Consumer Science Agent

If you have suffered a down turn in your income due to a job layoff, loss of a second income, or reduction in work hours, you are probably feeling concerned as to how you are going to make ends meet. Barbara R. Rowe, Professor and Family Resource Management Specialist for Utah State University, has prepared a series of fact sheets that suggest steps you can take to maintain financial control if you have suffered a reduction in income. They are:

1. Don't Panic- Take Control
 2. Control Stress
 3. Take Stock of Family Resources
 4. Set Priorities for Spending
 5. Plan to Pay Creditors and Protect Family Welfare
 6. Keep a Roof Overhead
 7. Meet Insurance Needs and Sharpen Survival Skills
- These can be accessed from your local USU Extension Office or on the Utah State University Extension Web page using the following address:
<http://extension.usu.edu/publica/fampubs.htm>

In the Fact sheet, "Take Stock of Your Family Resources", February 2002, FL/FF 1-03, Rowe suggests you start with evaluating your net worth. The net worth statement is a listing of what you own (assets) and a listing of what you owe (debts). You record all your cash from checking, savings, and money market accounts, Certificates of Deposit, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and other market securities. Some assets, like real estate or personal property, may take time to sell. Retirement funds may have penalties for early withdrawal. Some assets like vehicles, furnishings, and appliances depreciate in value. You can research the estimated current value of these items.

Next, you need to assess your debts. This includes the balance on your home mortgage, car loans, and other

personal loans, including credit cards, installment loans, and taxes owed. List the total balance due as well as any current unpaid bills, utilities, medical and dental bills, telephone bill, etc. then subtract these liabilities from the assets and what you have left is your net worth. This is the picture of the financial assets that would remain if you disposed of all your current financial obligations.



It is good to review what you learned about your assets. Some of the questions you might ask yourself are: Where are most of your assets? How much of them could be easily turned into cash? How long will your savings last if you use it to pay current living expenses?

Some tips: You might use your savings to supplement your reduction in income, but don't use it on low priority items. Consider selling property you no longer need or can't afford to keep. Find out what assets are worth before setting a selling price. Explore all the ways you might advertise those items for sale. In addition, consider the nonfinancial resources your family might have that could be turned into income or used to save your dollars through trading of services. Evaluate skills, knowledge, creativity, time, energy, etc. of each family member. For more details and worksheets, refer to the complete fact sheet.

Celebrating Diversity

Celebrating diversity is a unique introduction
to the flavors of international culture.



Food consumption links many people to cultural traditions, events, and holidays. The strongest tehnic links to food are visible at holidays when food traditions are remembered and perpetuated.

The “Celebrating Diversity” series (articles) is less like a formal dinner, and more like a big buffet of world eating practices, stopping just riefly in many different cultures to understand the diverse ways in which people interact with others while celebrating - all through the lens of how people prepare, cook, and eat holiday cuisine.

April Holidays

Passover - Jewish

Sham al Nissim (The first Day of Spring) - Egypt

Quing Ming or Ch'ing Ming - (The Festival of “Supreme Light” or the Festival of the Tomb”) - China

Solar New Year - Thialand and Burma

May Holidays

Cinco de Mayo - Mexico

Mother's Day - America

Maytime - Ireland

Cheung Chau Bun Festival - Hong Kong

May Day

This holiday on May 1st dates back to ancient pagan Spring festivals. It is thought that the Romans spread the holiday throughout Europe, although many pagan religions already held Spring celebrations about the same time of year. May Day traditionally features flowers, fruits and other sweets, and dancing, especially around a May pole with streamers. The ancient Celtic celebration of Beltane was also held on May 1st. Lare oatcakes, called bannocks, were eaten as part of the festivities. Traditionally, a portion of the cake was burned or marked with ashes. The unfortunate sould who received the marked piece was sacrificed to the Gods. More recently, the recipient simply jumped over a small fire three times instead. In 1889, an association of French solialists declared May Day a celebration of working people, similar to Labor Day in many countries.

June Holidays

Gawai Dayak (Iban Festival) - Malaysia

Midsummer's Eve (St. John's Day) - Europe

Shrimp Festival - Belgium

Juneteenth

At the end of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing slaves. Although freedom came on January 1 1863, it took over a year and a half for the news to make it across the country. The explanation for the delay is lost to history, but there is speculation that the information was withheld by white owners so that another crop could be harvested or that the original bearer of the news was killed. The slaves in Texas were notified on June 19, 1865. One year later, they began the tradition of celebrating the anniversary of their emancipation with picnics, music, and storytelling (Juneteenth is a state holiday in Texas). The news arrived in the west during the middle of June, the official date of Juneteenth is usually between June 13th and June 19th. Observations vary from family barbecues to community events with parades, entertainment, and food. Soul food is often featured. It includes dishes created in the homes of plantation owners, using African techniques and American indigenous ingredients, such as fried chicken and fried catfish, and the tew-type dishes called gumbo, made with okra. Greens are cooked in the traditional manner, are flavored with a little meat, (usually salt pork) andspiced with hot sauce. Variety meats, such as ham hocks, chitterlings (pork intestines, pronounced “chitlins”) and hog maw (stomach lining) are some of the meats cooked. Barbecued ribs are often served. Corn breads, such as spoon bread, and hush puppies, and desserts featuring vegetables, such as sweet potato pie are also served. To round out the menu other soul foods could be served, such as ham, biscuits, baked bens, sweet peas or green beans, potato salad, and an array of desserts including custard pies, fruit cobblers, and chocolate, carmel or coconut cake.

Source: EatEthnic.com Compiled by Paula Scott

Diabetes Tip – Portion Sizes

Pauline Williams, MPA, RD, CD – USU Extension Agent

Break out your measuring cups, spoons, and scales. Measuring correctly is important in caring for diabetes. A food's serving size determines its carbohydrate content. For example 1/3 cup of rice contains 15 grams of carbohydrate while 1 cup of rice contains 45 grams of carbohydrate; the difference can show up in your blood glucose levels. Measure most foods in a dry measuring cup. The food should be level to the top of cup for an accurate measurement. Measure liquids in a liquid measuring cup, bend down and check the amount at eye level. Take a week to measure and weigh each item you eat. You might be surprised how a serving looks. For a detailed list of serving sizes for diabetes refer to Exchange Lists for Diabetes available in our office or from the American Diabetes Association.



Longer Life for Leather

Care tips - wear a neck scarf to protect the collar area from perspiration, body oils and tonics. Store leather in a cool, well ventilated place. This will keep it from drying out or attracting mildew. If the garment gets wet, air dry it away from heat. Source: Cleanliness Facts, Soap & Detergent Association



Leather furniture is easily cared for. Dust regularly. Wipe leather sofas and chairs with a slightly damp (not soaking wet) cloth monthly to remove body oils and other soil that has accumulated. Buff with a dry cloth to bring out natural sheen after cleaning. This simple procedure will extend the life of the furniture.

Avoid Damage to Clothing



Skin preparations, including fade creams, skin creams, and acne preparations, generally contain bleaches that may discolor fabrics, so be sure they are completely absorbed into the skin before getting dressed. Towels and wash cloths can be bleached as well by these preparations. When using these products, try using white cloths and face towels to avoid the bleaching of that favorite colored towel. Source: Cleanliness Facts, Soap & Detergent Association

Salts from perspiration can eat away at fabrics, causing holes. Avoid deodorants and/or antiperspirants that contain aluminum chlorides. These cause fabrics - usually rayon to deteriorate or turn yellow. To minimize damage, clean the garment as soon as possible after wearing. Source: Cleanliness Facts, Soap & Detergent Association

Gardener's Grapevine

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- *Easy to Reach Herbs*
- *Father's Day Bouquet*



Spring Myths Can Boggle the Mind

Wade Bitner, USU Horticulture Agent

worms which invade roots) were common. Gardeners learned to raise French Marigolds to the flower stage, then plowed them under. The plants contained a pyrethrin which would kill the nematodes as the green material broke down and allow normal crop production in that area. Some say it makes a good story even if it is not true.

Another myth is mice and other rodents will not be able to live in the presence of high frequency sound. Boxes that emit a high frequency sound are sold to rid homes of the pesky pests. This story is not true and preys on the people who do not want to see a dead mouse. But it sold a lot of boxes.

Another myth is that newly planted trees need support for a long time. Newly planted trees may need support if strong winds are common, but the support should be removed as soon as possible to allow the trunk to strengthen and stand alone. Normally, they need not additional support if properly planted.

The coming of spring heralds many things. It also brings on misconceptions called "myths". Myths are usually started by well meaning people who do not have sufficient information to define the reality they are looking at.

For example myth: "The earth is flat"...this myth although perpetuated for many years was demonstrated by Columbus to not be true.

One that has made it into many of the printed horticultural publications is "Planting marigolds near plants will prevent the desired plants from being eaten by insects". Growers of marigolds know they are preferred plant food for many insects which are not killed by eating the marigold. This "myth" started in an area where nematodes (microscopic

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Easy-to-Reach Herbs: Planting a Container Herb Garden

Maggie Wolf, USU Extension Horticulture & Technology

Fragrant, flavorful herbs add highly prized richness to our diet. History tells the tale of humans' craving for herbs and spices, and the exploration of the world searching for such treasures. Instead of reaching in the cupboard for dried herb flavorings, try growing your own fresh herbs this summer. A container herb garden is an attractive accent on your patio or porch near the kitchen door, within easy reach as you cook your meals. To start a successful container herb garden, consider the basic rules of containers, know the basic needs of herb plants, and choose herbs you use most often so you'll savor the results of your gardening efforts.

Gardening in containers presents some challenges not found in a normal garden. The confined root space, artificial potting media, and top to bottom weight ratio of container gardens are limitations you must acknowledge and deal with in order to grow the herbs successfully.

The limited volume of a container creates a confined root space for the contained plants. The only available moisture and nutrients the plant will use must be present in the container, because the potted plant's roots cannot wander freely through the garden as if they were planted in the ground.

Because a regular garden soil is heavy and contains relatively little organic matter, it won't allow good drainage in a container. This poor drainage results in root damage. Conversely, a potting media has high organic matter content and drains well, but

can dry out quickly. Container gardens usually need watering every day during the hot summer. Some potting mixes have slow release fertilizer mixed in. If not, then you will need to use a soluble fertilizer



every third or fourth watering. Potting mix is lighter in weight than a regular soil, which is great for containers that may need to be moved every once in a while.

The size of the container needed depends on the number of plants included in the container garden. Most herb plants need a pot at least 4 to 6 inches in diameter to grow healthfully to maturity. If you would like an herb container garden to hold 5 herb plants, you will need a pot at least 10 inches in diameter. For a container holding 10 plants, the pot should be at least 17 inches diameter.

Whether you choose ceramic pots or plastic is a matter of preference. Plastic pots are usually cheaper and retain moisture somewhat better. Ceramic or terra cotta pots are more

aesthetically pleasing and also add weight to the base of the garden (this is important if you have any tall or top-heavy plants growing in the pot). Half whiskey barrels work well for herb gardens.

When choosing the plants you would like to include in your herb garden, list the herbs you use most often. Consider the characteristics of these plants, such as their texture, color, and size. Almost all herbs prefer full sun, although in the hottest months of summer they will tolerate afternoon shade. When arranging the planting, place the taller plants to the back or center of the container, shorter plants to the front or edges. Use variegated or colorful foliage varieties to create an interesting display. You may also want to include a small or trailing flowering plant, such as nutmeg geranium or nasturtium for a colorful accent. Herbs recommended for container growing include: basil, chamomile, chives, cilantro, lavender, marjoram, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, summer savory, and thyme.

The most important maintenance step for your container herb garden is proper watering. Every time you water, add enough water to the pot so that water runs through the bottom drain holes. Allow the pot to drain completely; never let a pot sit in a tray of water. As the herbs grow, keep them pinched back to prevent them from growing too tall then falling over.

Growing herbs by your kitchen door will add beauty and flavor to your home. Try a container herb garden this summer!

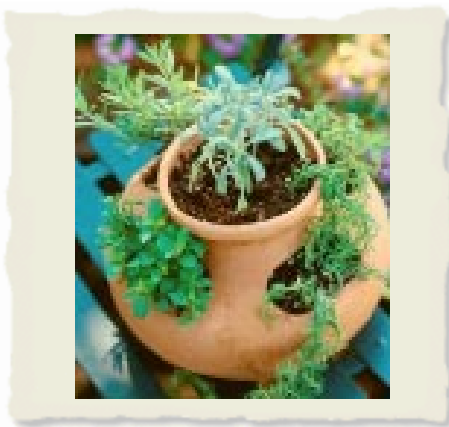
Dad's Day Bouquet: Family project

Maggie Wolf, USU Extension Horticulture & Technology

Surprise your favorite dad with an edible 'bouquet' this year on Father's Day! Container gardens of vegetables are attractive and useful – the perfect gift for the dad who has everything! This is a project that can involve the whole family (unless you would like it to be a surprise gift to dad).

Start with a 12-inch or larger diameter pot. The pot may be decorated with colored markers or acrylic paints. Fill the pot about 2/3 full with a good quality potting mix, preferably one with a slow release fertilizer mixed in. Transplant one or two seedling plants like dwarf hot peppers or patio tomatoes into the center of the pot, or leave room to transplant them in later. Add more potting mix up to about one inch from the pot rim. Do not pack

the potting mix tightly as you fill the pot. Push in some onion sets or garlic cloves along one side of



the pot. Plant groups of seeds along the outer edge of the pot. Water the pot gently with a watering can or gentle spray until the potting media is completely saturated and water runs through the bottom holes of the pot. Time the planting of the different types seeds according to the

length of time it will take before they mature. Use the information on the seed packets to count back from Father's Day to know about when to plant those seeds.

Keep the seeded areas moistened daily until the seeds sprout. Once the seedlings emerge, they require full sun or 14 to 16 hours per day of artificial light and should only be watered when the soil surface is dry.

The key to success in this project is providing enough light for the seedlings. If your seedlings start to get 'leggy' (too tall for their size), they are probably not getting enough light. Also, be sure to not overwater, since this may lead to fungal growth that can kill your plants.

As with any gardening project, the fun is in the doing. Don't be afraid to try again if you don't succeed the first time! By June 16 you will have at least a couple of plants in your pot that the dad at your house can nibble on!

Crop:	Ready to Harvest in:	Suggesting Planting Dates:
Patio tomato	Varies	Transplant
Dwarf hot pepper	Varies	Transplant
Carrot, 'Thumbelina'	50 to 60 days	April 21
Lettuce, 'Red Sails'	45 days	May 2
Spinach	40 days	May 3
Radish, 'Gourmet blend'	23 to 30 days	May 17 – 24

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Myth: Plant a tree without removing the burlap. The burlap will deteriorate over time and will protect the roots until then.

Solution: Burlap has not deteriorated over a 25 year period for some trees. It does not break down in alkaline soils very well and should be completely removed if possible when transplanting a tree.

Myth: There is a set angle to make a correct pruning cut.

Truth: The branch collar of

different trees has a different angle and should be followed when making a cut rather than just removing the branch at a specific angle.

Myth: During hot summer days, my lawn needs water twice a day to keep it green. **Truth:** Lawns watered frequently may develop roots above the soil. These roots take advantage of the light, frequent watering and do not have to penetrate soil...until hot days deprive them of moisture. Then they become dried out and brown.

Solution: Water deep and infre-

quent to help roots grow as deep as they can in your soil. Longer root systems will be drought resistant even during hot summer days.

Myths are interesting and usually contain a half-truth which makes them somewhat acceptable. When you think of a myth, please let me know so I can add it to my collection and perhaps prevent someone else from falling prey to the follies and foibles already out in the horticultural arena.

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