

## Canning Lid Shortage-What Are My Options?

With Spring just around the corner, many of us are gearing up for the planting and growing season, as well as canning season. And again, this year, the limited supply of canning equipment and supplies has left us wondering about just how much canning we will be able to do. You, like many, may be asking a few of these similar questions:

- What do we do when there is a shortage of the tried and true canning jars and lids we are all so used to using?
- Is there an option for safe canning with 'off-brand' products?
- When will we see our favorite brands on the shelves again?

Utah State University Extension offices (along with many other University Extension offices across the country) are aware of these concerns and offer these recommendations:

- ✓ Extension recommends standard home canning jars (Mason type jars) for canning. If you choose to use other types of jars, they must fit a two-piece metal lid and band. There is greater risk of jar breakage and possible seal failure with non-standard canning jars...such as mayonnaise jars, pickle jars, etc. These jars are not intended to be used in canning and are not made with the same quality of tempered glass. Check all jars to make sure they are not chipped or cracked.
- ✓ Only two-piece metal lids are recommended for home canning. For best performance, lids should be purchased new each year (the sealing compound will break down on storage); although stored in a cool, dry location, lids stored up to three years may still seal.
- ✓ Under no circumstances should you reuse canning lids. Reusing the flat metal lid is not recommended due to a higher risk of seal failure because the sealing compound is often dented after use and does not cover the jar sealing surface properly and/or there is not enough sealing compound left in the well to form a proper seal on the jar. Using them more than once may result in an improper seal. A jar that does not seal effectively may spoil or the contents may become unsafe. Individuals who have been canning for years are often surprised to find that lids no longer need to be heated before use, and they should never be boiled before using.
- ✓ Both jars and lids should be washed in clean, soapy water and rinsed before use. Jars should be pre-heated before filling. Sort through screw bands to make sure they are not rusted before applying.
- ✓ If using an unfamiliar brand of lids check seals every few months, and especially right before consuming the canned foods. It is helpful to remove the rings and not to store with rings on...so as to better see/check the seal and jar contents.

Retailers/distributors of the traditional Ball/Kerr brand products have informed consumers that they that they have not been given any clear timelines from the Newell Corporation as to when manufacturing orders would be fulfilled, due to smaller production lines still in place due to COVID. A recent conversation with a representative from the Newell Corporation (manufacturer of Ball, Kerr, and Golden Harvest canning products), indicates they are hoping for new shipments to go out toward the end of March 2021, but in limited quantities, and production will continue through the summer of 2021. With that in mind many consumers are turning to other manufacturers of canning jars and lids.

Utah State University Extension does not have a strong basis for suggesting people use or not use the 'other' brands of canning jars or lids. We do not have enough information in regards to their

performance, sealing success or failure, or the strength of the seal (which is based on how much air gets forced out of the jar during processing and cool down time) to provide specific guidelines one way or another. We are also not aware of any available research data regarding the use of these brands. Therefore, it is a case of 'buyer beware'.

However, we can say, with a degree of confidence that if the consumer follows all of the above practices, along with using up-to-date canning times/temperatures, recipes, and proven methods, and following the individual manufacturer's directions for use, the chances for success and safety are greater.

For more information regarding supplies and products from Ball, call the company at 1-800-240-3340, or contact your local USU Extension Office.

**Sources:**

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Utah State University Preserve the Harvest website: <https://extension.usu.edu/preserve-the-harvest>

University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/safefood/2020/09/14/safe-preserving-tips-in-the-time-of-covid-19>

North Carolina State University Extension <https://foodsafety.ces.ncsu.edu/2020/10/two-is-better-than-one-especially-when-it-comes-to-canning-lids/>

Clemson University Extension <https://www.clemson.edu/extension/food/canning/canning-tips/22mason-jars.html>

National Center for Home Food Preservation

[https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/general/recomm\\_jars\\_lids.html](https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/general/recomm_jars_lids.html)