The Food Science Institute at Kansas State University welcomes Dr. Jeanette Thurston as Director of the Institute. Dr. Thurston began her position on June 17, 2019.

For the last 10 years, Dr. Thurston has held positions of increasing responsibility at the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture, advancing basic and applied research, education, extension and strategy in the area of food safety.

Dr. Thurston holds a Ph.D. in soil, water and environmental science and microbiology, a master’s in environmental science, and bachelor’s in microbiology – all from the University of Arizona.

For the last three years, she has served as NIFA’s science program officer. Among her responsibilities are serving as the champion for NIFA’s science portfolio, providing strategic support and counsel to top leadership regarding the agency’s science programs and helping develop and execute an annual budget of roughly $1.5 billion.

From 2009-2015, Thurston was a national program leader for food safety at NIFA, leading science programs and serving as a liaison to land-grant and other universities, national laboratories, industry partners, federal agencies and other stakeholders.

She began her career as a research microbiologist with the Agricultural Research Service where she established and managed a public-health microbiology research lab on the campus of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The Kansas Department of Agriculture is looking forward to hosting the fourth annual Kansas Agricultural Growth Summit on August 29, 2019. The Summit hosts Kansas farmers, ranchers and agribusinesses and invites them to work together in a collaborative setting to discuss growing agriculture in Kansas. Please join with agriculture leaders from across the state as ideas are shared about how we all can work together to expand opportunities for Kansas agriculture.

There is no cost to attend the event, but please register for an accurate meal count and to provide adequate materials for all attendees.

For more information and registration, see www.agriculture.ks.gov/AgGrowthStrategy/ag-summit-2019.
Kansas Environmental Public Health Tracking

In this time of emphasis on the culture of health, there are many environmental affects that can determine the health of consumers.

To help track data related to environmental public health, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment has a tracking network that brings together data concerning some health and environmental problems. The bottom line goal is to improve where all Kansans live, work, and play.

This tracking network is a part of the CDC’s National Environmental Public Health Tracking program. The CDC provides funds to 26 state and local health departments to feed data into the National Tracking Network.

Some of the topics addressed by this network in Kansas include:

- Air quality
- Lead exposure in children
- Asthma hospitalizations
- Cancer incidence rates
- Carbon monoxide poisoning hospitalizations

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New Canning Starter Kit

If you are new to home canning, you may not want to invest in a lot of equipment. A new starter kit is now available to help first-time canners be successful.

The new kit is from Newell Brands, makers of Ball® and Kerr® products. It includes four half-pint jars, a silicone rack to fit in stock pot, a packet of Classic pectin, a jar lifter, and head-space/bubble remover tool, and a funnel. It also includes instructions.

The silicone rack is a little smaller than a standard wire rack. It is for water bath canning only.

Learn more at https://bit.ly/2JrHzlS.

New Canner from Presto®

Smooth cooktops can be a challenge to use for home canning. Some of those cooktops are induction, which means they require cooking equipment that is induction compatible to function properly.

National Presto® Industries, Inc., makers of pressure canners, have just released an induction compatible pressure canner for induction ranges. This is a dial-gauge canner that has a stainless steel-clad base. It also works on gas, electric, and other smooth-top ranges. An exception is it may not work on some portable induction burners. It should not be used on any burner that is more than 12,000 BTUs. Current Presto® canners are safe for smooth cooktops as long as the stove manufacturer allows canning.

For more information, see www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3241.pdf and www.rrc.k-state.edu/preservation/index.html.
Eating Fish During Pregnancy Advice Updated

The Food and Drug Administration has updated their advice in regards to consuming fish while pregnant, breastfeeding, young children, and women planning to become pregnant. While the concern about consuming mercury is still valid, the advice now includes the importance of consuming fish as part of a healthy diet.

The nutritional composition of fish is beneficial to women during pregnancy and for young children. This includes heart health benefits and lower risks of obesity. The nutrients include protein, omega-3 fats, more vitamin B12 and vitamin D than any other food, iron, and other minerals like selenium, zinc, and iodine. A serving size for adults is 4 ounces and to consume two to three servings a week.

The FDA guidance includes charts and information in English and Spanish. There are lists of different types of fish categorized by best choices, good choices, and choices to avoid.

Learn more at www.fda.gov/food/consumers/advice-about-eating-fish.

Eat Some Nuts! Improve Your Mind!

Nuts have been touted as beneficial with healthy fats, protein, and fiber. New research from the University of South Australia shows that they can also help adults have better mental function, improved thinking, reasoning, and memory.

The study followed 4,822 Chinese adults aged 55-plus from 1991-2006. They consumed 10 grams (two teaspoons) of nuts a day. They mostly ate peanuts. The results showed an improvement in cognitive function up to 60% compared to those who did not eat nuts.

Age is the biggest risk factor for cognitive health. Eating a few nuts each day is worth the effort!


Shelf Life of Mrs. Wages Mixes

Mrs. Wages makes several packaged mixes to help make home canning easy and quick. All of their products for canning use the water bath canning method. But do the mixes have a shelf life?

The company recommends using their mixes within 24 months of the day and year it was produced. On the side of every package is an 8 digit code. On the packets, it is imprinted on the package. On the salsa canisters, it is printed on the bottom. So, in the example at left, the B identifies the production facility. The 5 is the last digit of the year the mix was produced (2015). The next three numbers indicate the day, out of 365 days in the year, the mix was produced. So 138 is May 18. This is known as the Julian date. The last three digits indicate the production batch code, B92. So this particular mix has expired and should not be used.

Source: www.mrswages.com/canning/frequently-asked-questions/
Choosing Edible Flowers

Edible flowers are used in salads, entrees, desserts and beverages. So which ones are safe to use? Not all flowers are edible.

Do some research. Good reference resources will guide you safely. Always be sure they are not poisonous. Do not use flowers from florists, garden centers, or picked from the roadside. Introduce them into your diet in small amounts as some can have unpleasant side effects. Not all parts of the flower are edible, so research can help determine which parts to use.

Here are some resources:

www.johnson.k-state.edu/docs/lawn-and-garden/in-house-publications/perennials/Edible%20Flowers.pdf
https://extension.umn.edu/flowers/edible-flowers
https://extension.colostate.edu/docs/pubs/garden/07237.pdf
https://extension.psu.edu/a-consumers-guide-to-edible-flowers
https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/choosing-and-using-edible-flowers-ag-790

Reference to any specific commercial products, process, service, manufacturer, or company does not constitute its endorsement or recommendation. Paid for by Kansas State University