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CANNING 4-H PRODUCTS

A radio talk by Dorothy Murphy, Sussex County, Delaware, to be delivered Saturday, September 3, 1932, in the National 4-H club radio program, broadcast by a network of 57 associate NBC radio stations.

How are you 4-H members and friends?

I am delighted at being able to tell all of you about the canning work of our club.

Five years ago some of the girls in our community asked me to join a 4-H Canning Club. As I was always eager to do anything new, I consented at once. With the help of Miss Anne B. Moore, our County Club Agent, we organized with only five members. Our club has grown until we now have eighteen members and we call ourselves the Staytonsville "Just-Us" Club.

When we began our work, people in our community didn't understand coldpack canning. Tomatoes were almost the only vegetable canned. In Delaware the 4-H canning requirement for the first year is twenty quarts of fruits and vegetables. All five of us exceeded this by several times that amount.

Interest in this new method of canning spread quite rapidly throughout our community and when we organized the following spring, we had grown to be a club of nine girls. Not only did the girls want to join the club, but their parents were anxious to have them do it.

In second year canning we not only canned fruits and vegetables, but we also canned meats and made pickle and jelly as well.

While I was canning as a 4-H club member, my mother was doing a different kind of canning. She was employed in a commercial cannery. This brought in money, but it did not stock our store-room with canned products, for the coming winter. I had the care of my two little sisters and I did a large part of the cooking for the family, but I was able to put up quite a variety of fruits and vegetables. I made jelly and pickle also, and altogether I put up two hundred and twenty-three quarts that year. I exhibited some of my canning at the Kent Sussex Fair and great was my delight when I won first on my collection of fruits and second on my collection of vegetables.

The following year I was awarded a scholarship to our State 4-H Club Short Course. Here our nutrition specialist, Miss MacDonald, had arranged some very interesting lectures. These lectures were illustrated by chickens which had been improperly fed and could not even stand on their feet. This made a great impression on me and I paid a great deal of attention to what was told us regarding the foods needed to build strong bodies. Very soon after this I was to have the opportunity of putting this information to good use. My mother was taken seriously ill and was in the hospital for eleven weeks. I did the cooking and also planned all of the meals and took entire charge of my two little sisters, six and eight years old. I had so much work to do that I might have neglected canning this

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season, but I thought of all that I had heard Miss MacDonald say regarding the importance of plenty of beans, peas, greens and tomatoes in the diet. I spent every moment that I could in gathering and canning all of the vegetables and fruits that grew on our farm. I realized that our expenses had been heavy and that if we were to have the food that we needed, it would have to be canned food and not expensive fresh products. As a result, when winter came our pantry shelves were well filled.

Though I was so occupied with my duties at home, I didn't neglect my club. We had kind neighbors and they took care of my little sisters while I attended club meetings. I made the more effort because our county club agent depended upon me as the local leader of our club. The joy of being of use helped me to overcome many difficulties.

That year my club entered a national canning contest and we won third place, receiving sixty dollars (\$60.00). This sum of money and the proceeds of a clam bake enabled eight members of our club to attend the Short Course the following spring.

This year canning is being stressed in our state as it has not been since I can remember. Our nutrition specialist says that we should set as our standard eighty quarts of fruits and vegetables for each member of the family during the coming year. I feel sure that the eighteen members of our club are going to do their bit toward filling their store-rooms with canned products which in spite of hard times will enable us to have well-balanced meals this coming winter.