



**KAY COUNTY
EXTENSION**

JULY/AUGUST 2024

STRENGTHENING OKLAHOMA FAMILIES

Family and Consumer Science News

School Lunches: Pack or Pay

Derrell S. Peel

Oklahoma State University Extension Livestock Marketing Specialist

The kids are still playing in the pool and there still may be time for a vacation, but no doubt about it, the start of a new school year is just around the corner.

New school supplies, new teachers and new friends are exciting, and so is having lunch at school. Will you pack a lunch from home or pay for lunch at school?

One of the benefits of purchasing and eating a school lunch is that it includes a balanced meal with foods from all the food groups at a reasonable cost, said Candy Gabel state coordinator for [Oklahoma State University Extension's Community Nutrition Education Program](#).

"School lunches must follow USDA guidelines, which means these meals provide nutritional standards to improve children's health," Gabel said. "Children learn best when their bodies are fueled with nutritious foods. The standards the USDA sets are updated regularly to reflect the latest research and guidance on what kids need to do their best in school."

Recent changes include reducing sugars and sodium and promoting a variety of whole grains, fruits, vegetables and protein-rich foods. The USDA encourages schools to create new recipes and menus that meet cultural preferences, vegetarian choices and personal tastes.

Gabel said school meal costs vary within districts. Depending on household income, students may qualify for free or reduced lunches.

Some students may prefer to bring a home lunch due to allergies and food preferences. A well-balanced home lunch should include a portion of bread, rice, potatoes or pasta; fruit and vegetables; a serving of dairy or calcium-rich alternative; protein such as beans, fish, eggs or meat; and a healthy, non-sugary beverage.

"Try to avoid processed and pre-packaged options. Also, limit foods with added sugar," she said.

Keeping foods safe until lunchtime is as important as the food itself. When packing a lunch, think about the type of food, a safe temperature for the food and how long the food must be stored until it is consumed.

Remember, some foods can become unsafe in just two hours at room temperature.

Kay County Extension Office

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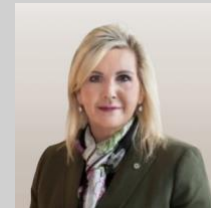
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Facebook: OHCE Kay County

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Here is additional information on the [types of food that need to be kept cold, hot or at room temperature](#).

As parents consider the lunch options for their child, it may be beneficial to talk to the school's nutrition director to see if the school offers breakfast or participates in programs such as Farm-to-School, where the school partners with local farmers and producers to source fresh produce. Inquire about food waste reduction initiatives or meal programs for special dietary needs. In addition, setting up an online ordering and payment system makes it easier for parents to manage their child's lunch account.

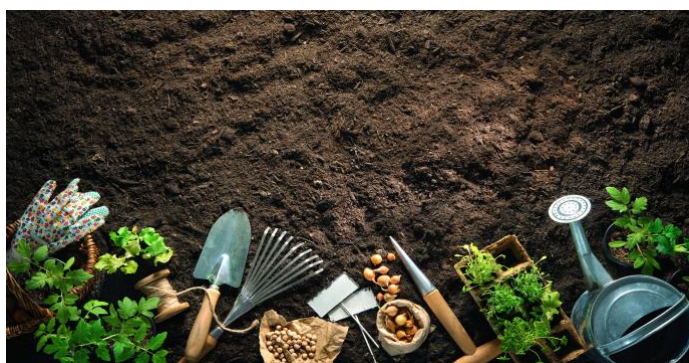
HOME GROWN: Fall Gardening Tips

*Laura Payne, Horticulture Educator
Payne County Extension office*

If seeds from your spring garden have been stored in a cool, dry location or in the refrigerator or freezer, you can utilize them for your fall garden. Typically, seeds that are stored properly will remain viable for many years.

If you aren't sure if your seeds are viable, you can always do a viability test. Simply take 10 seeds from a seed packet and place them in a damp paper towel. Fold the paper towel to cover the seeds and place in a plastic baggie. Set the plastic bag out of direct sunlight, but in a warm location. Check on the seeds regularly and be sure the paper towel doesn't dry out. After about seven to ten days, check to see if the seeds have germinated. If seven out of the ten have germinated, you have a 70% germination rate, if only four germinated, you have a 40% germination rate, and so on. It's not recommended to spend your time on the seed packet if less than 70% percent are germinating, but that's ultimately your call. You could just sow more seeds than you normally would in an area to make use of your seeds.

Vegetable crops will benefit from supplemental irrigation. Installing an irrigation system can save you time and money in the long run. A simple home irrigation kit may be all you need, depending on the size of your garden. But don't assume just because you have an irrigation



system, and you turn it on that it is working properly. You will still need to monitor your plants.

Soaking seeds overnight before planting will hasten germination and seedling emergence when soil drying is most critical to plant growth. Just don't soak beans or peas overnight.

Cover seeded rows with a shade cloth, burlap or straw to reduce soil temperature and keep the soil from drying out so fast.

Keep your garden weed free. Mulching can help with weed control, and hand weeding is very effective as well.

Insect pests may come into the fall garden and seriously damage plants in a short period of time. Frequently check your plants for insect activity and immediately start protective measures. For control to be effective, determine what specific pests are causing the damage. Use the proper control method for those pests and always read the pesticide label and follow the instructions.



Kay County Extension Staff work on button art in preparation for the Leader Lesson.
L to R: Mackenzie Overman, Lisa Robinson, Lori Evans, & Rachel Rolando



**KAY COUNTY
EXTENSION**



Lisa Robinson, CFLE

Meet & Greet

**Come and meet the new Kay
County FCS /4-H Educator**

August 22nd, 2024

6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Cookies & Quenchers

Kay County OSU Extension Office

226 S. Maple. Newkirk

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**OKLAHOMA COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION SERVICE**



Home Food Preservation Workshop Electric Hot Water Bath Apple Cinnamon Jelly and Peach Jam with Electric Jelly Maker

Tuesday, Aug. 27, 2024

10:00 AM—2:00 PM

Registration Fee: \$30.00

**Kay County OSU
Extension Center
226 S. Maple
Newkirk, OK 74647**

*(includes supplies, canning
book, bring your own apron, &
pack a lunch)*



Workshop sponsored by the Kay, Logan, Cleveland, & Noble OSU Extension Centers
Participants will learn how to properly use a Electric Jelly Maker and Hot Water Bath Canner.
Each participant will take home a pint jar of jelly and jam.

Class size is limited & pre-registration is required by Friday August 23rd at 4:30 p.m.

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

E-MAIL

Questions: (580) 362-3194
Register to attend and pay at the
Kay County OSU Extension Office (cash or check)
226 S. Maple
Newkirk, OK 74647

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Kay County OHCE County Fair pre-entry forms due in The Kay County Extension office by August 16.

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Upcoming Events

August

- 1-OHCE State Board Meeting, OKC
- 2-OHCE State Board Goal Planning Session, OKC
- 13-Bread Workshop, 9 a.m.
- 13-OHCE Fair Committee Meeting, 6 p.m.
- 16-Kay County OHCE County Fair pre-entry forms due
- 22-Button Art Leader Lesson, 1 p.m.
- 22-Meet & Greet, 6 p.m.
- 27-Jam & Jelly Canning Workshop, 10 a.m.

September

- 1-Elect 2025 Officers & County Committee Members
- 2-Labor Day, Office Closed
- 9-OHCE Fair entries taken
- 9-14-Kay County Free Fair
- 15-Fair entries released
- 26- Bone Broth Leader Lesson, 1 p.m.

Family & Consumer Sciences helps communities, families, youth and individuals address issues of health, wealth and well-being through research-based Extension education and programs that are proven to work.



Oklahoma Home & Community Education, Inc. is a local and statewide partner with Cooperative Extension which brings the best knowledge from OSU to its members. Join a local OHCE group and enjoy programs that help make Oklahomans be their best.