Prairie County Homemakers,

Happy St. Patrick’s Day! I hope by the time this newsletter reaches you, we will have some spring weather! We have a number of free gardening publications available to you at the Extension Office to help treat your spring fever.

This issue of the Domestic Engineer contains information about the upcoming Spring Council Meeting which is scheduled for April 24 at 7:00 p.m. at the Prairie County Courthouse. An agenda is included for your club to review and discuss prior to the Council meeting.

Sincerely,

Sharla Sackman
Prairie County Extension Agent

Thank you to all Homemakers who brought food and worked a shift to make the Annual Bake Sale & Luncheon a great success despite the weather!
“I had to go to the grocery store at 6 a.m. to pick up two more packages of deli turkey because somebody left the first two packages on the counter,” my husband noted one morning.

“Well, when in doubt, throw it out, right?” he added.

“Yes, that’s the rule,” I said.

I was happy I wasn’t that “someone” who left the perishable food on the counter overnight. I always feel bad about throwing away food.

Our daughter needed to bring snacks for an early morning school event, and she was assigned deli turkey and crackers. She and her dad stopped at the grocery store the night before to buy those items, then some distraction must have occurred. We certainly could not bring meat that had been on the counter for at least nine hours. I wish they had left the meat in our vehicle overnight. The food would have been frozen by morning on a cold February night in Fargo.

However, I wasn’t pointing any fingers of blame at anyone. After all, I recently left a beverage in our vehicle and it froze and made a mess. Moms get distracted, too.

Bacteria and other germs grow quickly in perishable foods at room temperature. Perishable food usually is high in protein and moisture. Refrigerator or freezer storage slows or stops bacterial growth but doesn’t kill bacteria.

On average, bacteria double in number about every 20 minutes. A few bacteria can grow to thousands in a few hours. Sometimes, toxins (or poisons) that form can withstand cooking. Throwing the food becomes the only safe option.

Food safety specialists promote the two-hour rule: Perishable food should spend no more than two hours at room temperature.

Unfortunately, distractions happen in households, and sometimes we have to toss the food to avoid the potential costs and suffering associated with becoming ill. Foodborne illness sickens about one in six people in the U.S. each year.

In some cases, we can save the forgotten food. For example, if we left canned goods in a vehicle outside in a cold climate, the contents may freeze. Most of the time, the food will be OK to use after you do a little investigating.

Check the seams and seals on the cans. Are the seals and seams broken or cracked? Do you know the food’s history? Has it frozen, thawed and refrozen?

Thaw the canned food slowly in a refrigerator on a tray so you can see whether the can is leaking through tiny cracks invisible to the eye. After thawing, check if the can is bulging. This could indicate spoilage or, worst case, the presence of the toxin that causes botulism, a potentially deadly foodborne illness. Discard bulging cans where no person or animal will consume the contents.

However, if safe, use the accidentally frozen food as soon as possible because the quality may not be as good as it was originally. If the frozen canned food has a broken seal and has thawed on its own (in your garage or camper in the spring, for example), discard it.

The bottom line: Maintain food at the appropriate temperature for safety. Visit https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/food/food-safety/at-home to explore the NDSU Extension Service food safety resources available for consumers. For more recipes and advice, see “The Family Table” at https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/familytable.

Do you have some canned goods awaiting a good recipe? This chili recipe adapted from the Midwest Dairy Council is perfect for a chilly end-of-the-winter meal.
Beef and Squash Chili

1 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp. salt
3/4 pound stew beef, cut into 1 1/2-inch cubes
1 (15-ounce) can black beans
1 (15-ounce) can pureed pumpkin or squash (or 2 cups cooked, mashed squash)
1 c. onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 (15-ounce) can fire-roasted diced tomatoes
3/4 c. low-sodium beef broth
1 (6-ounce) can tomato paste
1 chipotle pepper in adobo sauce, chopped
1 1/2 tsp. chili powder
3/4 tsp. ground cumin
1/2 tsp. dried oregano
1/2 tsp. ground coriander

Topping:
3/4 c. fat-free plain yogurt
2 Tbsp. cilantro leaves, finely chopped
3/4 c. shredded cheddar cheese

In a large bowl, combine flour and salt. Add meat and toss to coat with flour mixture. Place meat in bottom of slow cooker. Layer black beans, squash or pumpkin, onion and garlic over meat. Pour tomatoes over vegetables. Pour beef broth into a 2-cup measuring cup. Add tomato paste, chipotle peppers (but not the adobo sauce), chili powder, cumin, oregano and coriander to beef broth; stir until combined. Pour beef broth mixture over vegetables. Secure the lid on slow cooker, set heat to low and cook for six hours.

To serve, combine yogurt, chopped cilantro and adobo sauce in a medium bowl. Spoon chili into individual serving bowls, sprinkle with 2 tablespoons of shredded cheddar cheese and top with a spoonful of the yogurt mixture.

Makes six servings. Each serving has 310 calories, 8 grams (g) fat, 25 g protein, 36 g carbohydrate, 11 g fiber and 790 milligrams sodium.

Gardening in the Late Winter or How to Start Seeds Indoors!

By Jesse Fulbright, MSU Liberty County Extension

One thing that I noticed just the other day, and you probably have too, is that seed packets are appearing in stores and catalogs are, of course, appearing in our mail. So, what if you are getting the urge to begin gardening already and want to do something about it? How about starting seeds indoors? I have some tips for you!

Starting seeds indoors is about as much fun as a gardener can have in late winter! The idea is to grow transplants or starts for 2-8 weeks (depending on the vegetable and rate of plant growth) and then plant them outdoors where the crops will mature and be harvested. That in and of itself might be a reason for us to hold off on starting seeds this time of year, unless you have a small greenhouse that you can continue growing them in.

A common mistake is to sow seeds too early and then attempt to hold the seedlings back under poor light or improper temperature ranges. This can result in tall, weak, spindly plants that do not perform well in the garden. Sow tomatoes 6-7 weeks before you expect to plant. You will end up with stocky 8-10 in. tall plants. If they do get too tall, you can lay them down in a trench when planting and turn the growing tip up so only the top 2-3 sets of leaves is above the soil.

Start seeds in small, individual containers. It's best to use divided containers with a single seedling per container because otherwise the seedlings' roots will grow into each other and are likely to be injured later during transplanting. Exceptions to this rule are onions and leeks from seed. Most plastic seed-starting containers are reusable, but may harbor plant pathogens once used. Sterilize used containers by soaking the cleaned cups in a solution of bleach or other disinfectant for 30 minutes, then rinse and use.

A windowsill is not a good location for starting seeds. If you're starting only a few plants and have roomy windowsills, a south-facing window may be all the growing space you need. However, window sills can be the coldest place in the house, especially at night, and then the hottest during the day. It's much better to grow seedlings under fluorescent lights than to rely solely on natural light, even in a greenhouse. Some brands of lights are sold as "grow lights," designed to provide light in specific ranges required by plants, but standard fixtures with two "cool white" fluorescent tubes per fixture also give plants adequate light and are inexpensive.

There is much, much more information out there about starting your garden from seed, but I hope I have whet your appetite a little bit with these few tips.
Menopause and Weight

From www.eatright.org, Reviewed by Sharon Denny, MS, RDN

Unwanted weight gain is frustrating at any age, but if you've hit menopause you may feel the deck is stacked against you. Falling hormone levels, specifically estrogen, stress and inadequate sleep make some menopausal women prone to weight gain, especially in their abdomens. Unfortunately, menopausal weight gain isn't just uncomfortable — it's hard on your health. Visceral fat that builds under the abdominal wall is particularly risky because it's correlated with an increased risk of heart disease, high blood pressure and insulin resistance, which can lead to diabetes.

However, while menopause may be challenging, you're still in control when it comes to your health. "[Menopausal] weight gain doesn't have to be inevitable," says Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Spokesperson Vandana Sheth, RDN, CDE. With an active lifestyle and a healthy diet, you can feel more comfortable during this stage of your life.

Keep Moving

We naturally lose muscle mass as we age. If you don't replace that lost muscle, your body will have less muscle and more fat, which will slow your metabolic rate. Staying active in your 40s and 50s helps keep your metabolism humming.

"Incorporate physical activity as part of your daily routine," recommends Sheth. "Aim for a minimum of 150 minutes per week of aerobic activity and include strength training exercises at least twice a week."

Not only will strength training replace your lost muscle mass, but it also helps to slow mineral loss in your bones which can lead to osteoporosis.

This doesn't mean you have to be a slave to the treadmill. "Exercise can be as simple as taking the stairs or regular walks," says Sheth. "Make exercise fun. It should be something you enjoy."

Eat Well

Small changes in your diet can help prevent menopausal weight gain. "In general, you need 200 less calories a day to maintain your weight during your 50s," says Sheth.

The following healthy, whole foods are especially beneficial for women in perimenopause or menopause:

- **Bananas.** Bananas (along with apricots, avocados and sweet potatoes) are high in potassium, which helps regulate blood pressure. Blueberries. This fruit is full of stress-snuffing antioxidants and vitamin C. Plus, blueberries are high in fiber and low in calories.
- **Dark, leafy greens.** These vegetables are rich in calcium and vitamin K, which help support bone health. Women over 50 should aim for 1,200 milligrams of calcium daily.
- **Salmon.** Omega-3-rich foods such as salmon raise good cholesterol. Oily fish are also good sources of vitamin D, which aids calcium absorption. You need 600 IU of vitamin D a day — a 3-ounce serving of canned salmon supplies about 465 IU.
- **Whole-grain bread and oatmeal.** Studies show that soluble fiber may help your body remove cholesterol. The requirement for fiber decreases at age 50, so aim for about 21 to 30 grams of total fiber per day.
- **Yogurt.** Yogurt is calcium-rich and contains probiotics that may aid digestion. Choose fat-free or low-fat, low-sugar varieties with vitamin D added.

Menopausal women should watch their sodium intake and also limit themselves to one alcoholic drink per day. If you suffer from hot flashes, try cutting back on caffeine and spicy foods, which could trigger hot flashes in some people.

Have a Good Attitude

When menopause has you down, remember it's a temporary state. "Approaching menopause with a positive attitude while managing your stress level can help greatly," says Sheth. The healthy diet and exercise habits you put in place during menopause will keep you feeling great after the hot flashes, mood swings and sleepless nights pass.
Solid Finances is series of free financial education webinars beginning this fall and continuing through the winter and spring. The webinars are designed to empower you to take control of your finances by improving your knowledge of personal finance topics. This year's topics will range from Money Management, Student Loans, Retirement to Investor Protection. A full list of this year's sessions is available at http://www.msuextension.org/solidfinances/schedule.html. The sessions will be taught by faculty from the University of Idaho, South Dakota State University and Montana State University. Although the series is free, registration is required.

More information can be found on the Solid Finances website at: http://www.msuextension.org/solidfinances/

February 28, 2018
Home Loans
Presenter: Joel Schumacher, Montana State University Extension
Description: Buying a house is big purchase and understanding your home loan options can be as important as negotiating the price of your house. This session will look at some different types of home loans and compare their features. After this session participants will be able to evaluate what type of loan is best for their situation.

March 21, 2018
Student Loan Repayment Options
Presenter: Carrie Johnson, North Dakota State University Extension
Description: Student loan debt can seem overwhelming for most people. Learn about different types of repayment options to fit your budget.

March 28, 2018
To Be Determined
Presenter: Surine Greenway, Idaho State University Extension
Description: Student loan debt can seem overwhelming for most people. Learn about different types of repayment options to fit your budget.
Homemade Oatmeal Packets
From Iowa State University Extension

INGREDIENTS
1/2 cup quick oats
1 cup water or milk
Apple Cinnamon option: Add 1 teaspoon of sugar, 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon, and 2 tablespoons apples (chopped and dried)
Cinnamon Raisin option: Add 2 teaspoons packed brown sugar, 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon, and 2 tablespoons raisins
Cinnamon Spice option: Add 1 teaspoon of sugar, 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon, and a scant 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
Cocoa option: Add 1 teaspoon baking cocoa and 1 teaspoon sugar or 2 teaspoons "quick type" chocolate drink powder
Sweetened option: Add 1 teaspoon sugar or 2 teaspoons packed brown sugar

INSTRUCTIONS
Put quick oats and optional ingredients into a plastic snack or sandwich bag.
Seal bag and store for future use.
Empty packet into microwave safe bowl when ready to use.
Stir in 1 cup water or milk.
Microwave on high 2 1/2-3 minutes.
Stir before serving.

TIPS
Top with dried banana chips, small pieces of walnuts or almonds, dried cranberries, or other dried fruits.

Raisin Power Poppers
From North Dakota State University Extension

Ingredients
2 c. old-fashioned oats
1 c. creamy peanut butter (or another sunflower or other nut butter)
½ c. honey
¼ tsp. vanilla extract
¾ c. raisins (chopped in half or thirds)
¼ c. chia seeds (can substitute ground flaxseed)

Directions
Mix all ingredients in a medium- to large-size mixing bowl. Chill ingredients in refrigerator for one hour. Roll into tight balls (a little smaller than a golf ball, about a tablespoon in size). Store in an airtight container in refrigerator up to seven days

Makes 40 servings. Each serving has 90 calories, 4 g fat, 3 g protein, 11 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber and 50 mg sodium.
SPRING COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, APRIL 24, 2018 ~ 7:00 P.M. PRAIRIE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

CALL TO ORDER ~ Arlene Morast
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
WOMEN’S CREED
ROLL CALL ~ Lotty Rambur
   Roll call: Each club pays $2 dues per member
MINUTES OF THE FALL COUNCIL MEETING - Lotty Rambur
TREASURER’S REPORT ~ Nancy Birkholz
   Donation to Laura Glueckert for Potpourri
   Donation to Community Church for Banquet
   Donation to Legion for use of hall for Luncheon
   Disposal of old records

BILLs AND CORRESPONDENCE
REPORTS
   Fall Banquet ~ Fallon
   Club Reports ~ Exchange of Ideas
   Potpourri ~ Eileen Nielsen
   Food Sale and Luncheon ~ Patty Trask

UNFINISHED/OLD BUSINESS
Cowboy Bandstand:
   2018 Maintenance ~ Fallon
   2018 Christmas decorating ~ Cabin Creek
Phil Wilson Scholarship
Fair (August 3-5)
   Booth theme is “free choice”
      Pie & Baked Goods Auction
Chair Club: Ama de Casa
   *Proceeds recipient ?
   *Retain percentage ?

ONGOING BUSINESS:
*Speaker/Entertainment ideas for Fall Banquet
50-Year members
*Potpourri Presenter for 2018? Spring? Summer? Christmas?
*Programming ideas for the coming year
Refreshments for Fall Council meeting ~ Ash Creek
Nursing Home
   - Activity Ideas
   - Birthday List (determine if there are residents who don’t have a club “sponsor”)

ANNOUNCEMENTS
Vice President and Secretary to be elected at Fall Council meeting
MSU Extension Speaker, Marsh Goetting - September 12, 2018

Refreshments served by Ama de Casa

* Club representative should come prepared with their clubs ideas on these topics
Go for the GREEN on St. Patrick's Day
Alice Henneman, MS, RD, UNL Lancaster County Extension
E-mail: ahenneman1@unl.edu   Website: food.unl.edu

See GREEN on St. Patrick's Day and throughout the year.

Green fruits and vegetables contain many health-promoting phytochemicals including lutein and indoles. They help protect against certain cancers and help maintain vision health and strong bones and teeth.

Green fruits and vegetables include leafy greens, asparagus, green peppers, broccoli, green beans, peas, cabbage, green onion, Brussels sprouts, okra, zucchini, Chinese cabbage, green apples, green grapes, honeydew melon, kiwifruit and limes.

Some GREEN ideas for St. Patrick's Day (or any day) include:

- Tossed LETTUCE salad. Add extra green with green peppers if you like!
- Corned beef with CABBAGE is a natural for St. Patrick's!
- Include some KIWI FRUIT, GREEN GRAPES AND/OR HONEYDEW MELON in your fruit salad.
- Add AVOCADO slices to salads and sandwiches. To maintain avocados' green color, eat them immediately or sprinkle them with lemon or lime juice. Though 2 tablespoons of avocado have about 5 grams of fat, it's mostly heart-healthy monounsaturated fat.
- Enjoy your favorite veggie dip in combination BROCCOLI florets or a favorite fruit dip with GREEN APPLE slices.
- Vegetable pizza with GREEN PEPPERS.
- Serve thinly sliced GREEN ONIONS over rice, pasta dishes, broiled or baked fish, soups -- you're limited only by your imagination!
- Start thinking GREEN — here are some more ideas graciously shared by Jan Patenaude, RD: Spinach noodles (topping of choice); spinach soufflé; spinach, asparagus and/or green pepper omelets with parsley garnish; pesto on anything; cream of broccoli or spinach soups; finely diced spinach.
Suicide Prevention Resources

In an immediate crisis, call 911, law enforcement, or take the person to the nearest Crisis Center, hospital emergency room, or clinic.

Other Resources (note smaller communities are not listed by may have mental health centers)

Crisis & Suicide prevention HOTLINE (nationwide) 1-800-273-TALK

TEXT - MT to 741-741 and a crisis counselor will assist

Community Crisis Center (Billings, South and Central Montana) 406-259-8800
Helpline Mental Health Center (Billings) 406-252-5658
Tumbleweed Runaway Program (Billings) 406-259-2558
Voices of Hope (Great Falls, North Central and North East Montana) 406-268-1330
The Help Center (Bozeman, South Central and South East Montana) 406-586-3333
District XI Human Resource Council (Missoula, South West Montana) 406-728-3710
Center for Mental Health (Helena) 406-443-5353
Gilder House Crisis Line (Butte) 406-723-7995
Shodair Children’s Hospital (Helena) 406-444-7500

One’s own personal doctor, therapist, religious leader, family, mentor, etc.

Karl F. Rosston, LCSW, Montana state Suicide Prevention Coordinator, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services krosston@mt.gov 406-444-3349

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) 888-333-2377
For information on suicide prevention, depression education, resources for survivors of a loved one’s suicide, call toll free, or visit www.afsp.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Montana Chapter AFSP
To schedule a presentation in your community, contact montana@afsp.org or Montana Chapter AFSP chair Joan Nye joannyj@iwks.net 406-321-0591

American Association of Suicidology 202-237-2280
Call for written material on suicide and suicide prevention, or visit www.suicidology.org

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) www.nami.org 800-950-6264
Call Help Line for local support group and/or additional materials on depression, or visit NAMI Montana http://www.namimt.org/ info@namimt.org 406-443-7871
Office in Billings: info@namibillings.org 406-256-2001

National Mental Health Association 800-969-6642
Call for local referral and written information on depression, or www.nmha.org

TRAC Prevention program for Native Americans in MT & WY 406-252-2550
http://www.rmtlc.org/programs/transitional-recovery-culture-trac-project/

Suicide Prevention Resource Center 877- 438-7772
Provides prevention resources to assist organizations and individuals to develop suicide prevention programs, interventions and policies, and to advance the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention. Includes materials and state suicide data on state pages www.sprc.org

Mental Health America of Montana http://montanamentalhealth.org 406-587-7774
Free screenings, informative e-newsletter, other resources-at above website 800-969-6642
Suicide Coalition of Yellowstone County for training requests http://www.specoalitionyv.org/
Mastering the Pressure Cooker

WHEN: March 13, 2018
6:30 – 8:30
WHERE: First Presbyterian Church
REGISTER: Montana State University Extension, 874-3370 or custer@montana.edu
COST: $10.00