

25-4

## **National Center for Home Food Preservation**

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Home food preservation remains a popular cultural activity. It is critical that those who practice preserving and processing foods at home have access to the most reliable information available concerning food safety and food quality. The National Center for Home Food Processing and Preservation (NCHFP) was established with funding from the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES-USDA) in 2000 as a multi-institutional effort with The University of Georgia and Alabama A&M University as the primary institutions. Expert scientists in home food preservation from industry and eight other U.S. universities comprise an advisory committee for the Center.

The Cooperative Extension System (CES) and USDA have a long history of being recognized as credible sources for science-based recommendations; however, a recent survey by the Center revealed that USDA and the CES were no longer being cited as primary sources of instructions for home canning and freezing. The same survey also revealed that a high percentage of home food processors are using practices that put them at risk for foodborne illness and economic losses due to food spoilage.

The Center is conducting outreach activities and research in food microbiology and food quality, in the validation of new and existing preservation methods. The objectives being addressed include: (1) updating home food preservation recommendations based on critical reviews of existing literature and additional laboratory evaluation and scientific validation; (2) development of a National Center website ([www.homefoodpreservation.com](http://www.homefoodpreservation.com)) containing USDA, NCHFP and CES recommendations and publications, as well as a new web-based curriculum on home food preservation; (3) updating professionals and volunteers in the Extension System with food preservation findings; and, (4) production of a video series on home food preservation. University undergraduate and graduate students are receiving educational benefits through their involvement in the research and curriculum development aspects of the Center's activity.