

Column Name - The Heartland Minute

By: Ben Sims

K-State Research and Extension Greenwood County

Agriculture Extension Agent

*“Peel Produce Before Preserving”*

Food preservation can be done in many ways, but food safety should be a priority in all instances. One way we can do this is by peeling produce to ensure food safety. The peel of many produce varieties are nutritionally beneficial, but those peels can hold onto microorganisms and dirt as well. The first step to removing those microorganisms and dirt is to rinse produce with water before peeling them. After peeling, rinse and preserve.

If your recipe says to peel the produce, then this must be done. Skipping this step can lead to improperly processed food and spoilage. Some helpful hints are that you can save these peelings to make a vegetable stock that can be froze and used in soups and other recipes; add them to a garden compost pile; or feed them to animals.

Getting that perfect peeling. Many of us will use a vegetable peeler or paring knife to peel our produce. However, KSU food scientist, Karen Blakeslee, offers an easier method that works for certain foods. “For tomatoes, blanching them in hot water works well and less flesh is lost.” First, heat a large stockpot of water to boiling. Then, core tomatoes or poke the skin with a knife and place in the hot water for about 60 seconds or until the peel starts to pull away from the flesh. Next, you will remove the tomatoes from the hot water and plunge them into an ice water bath to stop the cooking process. Gently rub the peel and it should slip off easily. You can also use this method on other thin skinned produce like peaches and nectarines.

Information comes from Kansas State University food scientist, Karen Blakeslee.

For more information regarding Agriculture and Natural Resources, 4-H Youth Development, or K-State Research and Extension call the office at 620-583-7455, email me, Ben Sims, at benjam63@ksu.edu, or stop by the office which is located inside the courthouse. Be sure to follow K-State Research and Extension- Greenwood County on Facebook for the most up-to-date information on Extension education programs and the Greenwood County 4-H program.