

By Mrs. Christine Frederick

PINT

MANY women have practiced home canning for years as a matter of course, and others took up the work when influenced by patriotic motives to "save the surplus." But how many of us think of canning at home as a straight business matter and relate it to the sum we allow for food in our monthly and annual budgets? In short, when we can foods, either those from our garden or those bought at market, do we actually figure the cost of canning and also the corresponding saving which must be credited to our food allowance?

Home canning, in variety and quantity, will definitely reduce next winter's high cost of living and should be considered on a business basis, either when we produce or when we buy foods to can. Even if we have a home plot or garden, we should not think of it as "costing nothing." We may prefer not to count the value of the land or the value of our time, but there still remains the cost of seeds, sets, fertilizers, spray, picking, and so on. This sum should be deducted from the value of the produce the land raises, as estimated at even a minimum current market price. For instance, a plot of 100 by 50 feet will produce so many bunches of beets, carrots, pecks of beans, tomatoes, and so forth. Estimate 5 cents a bunch for beets or carrots, 25 cents a quart for Lima beans, and so forth, or whatever the current price in your community at the height of the season. This will give you the value of the product raised and must be included in the canning cost. I, for example, never truly realized what our garden was worth until my small son ran it and charged me with the market price of every box of berries and each quart of beans he sold me.

Here is the record one woman member of a canning club kept on the tomatoes she raised, canned and sold:

Rent of land	\$1.00
Planting and fertilizer	3.50
Picking crop	2.00
Cost of extra jars bought, rubbers and fuel	9.50
Total cost of 485 jars	\$16.00
Value of 485 jars sold at 20 cents each	\$97.00
Total cost of 485 jars	16.00
Profit	\$81.00

Number of Cans to the Bushel

THE number of jars or cans which can be produced from a bushel of fruit or vegetables will naturally vary according to the size of the pieces, the skill with which the can is packed, and the quantity of sirup or of water. But the following table, showing the number of one-quart cans one bushel of a certain fruit or vegetable will make, may be convenient in estimating various common products:

1 BUSHEL OF	NUMBER OF 1-QUART JARS OR NO. 3 CANS
Peaches	18
Pears	30
Apples	20
Plums	30
Gooseberries	23
Tomatoes	15
String beans	20
Peas (shelled)	10
Corn	25
Lima beans (shelled)	20

Suppose this table is used in estimating the cost and value of one bushel of sweet pears, bought and canned at home:

Cost of 1 bushel of pears	\$3.00
Cost of extra jars bought	1.50
Rubbers	.30
Fuel, gas, one hour	.06
Total cost of 30 jars produced at home	\$4.86
Purchase price of 30 jars at 40 cents each	\$12.00
Total cost of 30 jars produced at home	4.86
Profit	\$7.14

In other words, to have bought the equivalent of such pears, so well packed and of such quantity in each can, the housekeeper would have had to pay 40 cents for each can bought from her dealer. Therefore, when she uses her own pears next winter she can see that she is saving 23 cents (or whatever sum each can was worth) out of her food allowance for that period.

Besides, there is nearly always an additional quantity of the product, of lesser quality, which can be made into jam, marmalade, fruit juice, soup vegetables, and so forth, and which has a cash value that should also be estimated. One might add



PHOTO BY BROWN BROTHERS

Economy on the Shelves

"WE EAT what we can and what we can't we can," used to be a popular joke that in years gone by never failed to draw an appreciative smile. Even to-day it continues to draw a smile—one at the ever-mounting cost of living—from housewives who have discovered how the family expenses can be held down by canning at home.

Each can of home-packed food taken from one's own shelves means that much off the winter's food bill, it is pointed out here for the benefit of the household managers, to whom the art of canning is presented as a strictly business matter requiring an account of the cost of its process to obtain the best results.

5 cents or 10 cents to profit for each small bottle of catchup, marmalade, fruit juice, and so forth, thus made out of the residue products. Also, the next year, when the housewife has no extra jars to buy, her cost will be only \$3.36 and her profit \$8.64.

Each housekeeper must thus figure the cost of what each kind of jar of fruit or vegetable represents. If sugar is used its price must be included; or if more jars are made from a given quantity, or if no jars are bought—all the cost must be figured and balanced against the value of each finished jar or glass or bottle of product produced.

Canning Cost a Part of the Food Budget

HOW shall the canning cost be met in relation to the food budget? Before she begins to can, the housewife should estimate how many jars she will probably need during the winter for ordinary family meals and also for company dinners.

Although families differ in the amounts of food used, I estimate that a family of four active adults, for any week in winter, would use approximately the following quantities of canned food, especially if removed from sources of fresh supplies:

	QUARTS
String beans	2
Canned tomatoes (as soup, sauce and vegetable)	2 to 4
Corn, beets, 1 each	2
Asparagus	1
Spinach or chard	1
Peas	2
Fruits (to replace fresh, as desserts and accompaniments)	6

Grape or other fruit juice as beverage	1
Soup vegetables	1
Catchup, pickle or relish	1½
Jams, jelly, preserve	2
Pumpkin for pie (1 quart every two weeks)	1

This is an average of about 20 quarts weekly of canned fruits and vegetables. Allowing only even the average minimum of 20 cents a quart for each jar used, this quantity of canned goods would represent a monthly saving of over \$15 on the winter monthly food bill.

If you have a reserve fund, I think the wisest plan is to draw a certain amount out of the bank and keep your canning account separate.

Then, when you begin to use your canned food, the refund is to be returned to the bank; also the profit, if you are free to save the profit and do not have to apply it to some other household need.

In other words, while we have been spending money in the summer for both foods and equipment with which to can, during all the winter months we save the same sum and a profit besides out of our winter food allowance for each month.

In whatever way we regard it, we must see that each can or jar of product we take from our own shelves means that our winter food bills are definitely less. We must estimate the saving on each can, not by what it costs to produce, but by what it would cost to replace it at the time it is used.

Naturally the canning budget plan becomes more and more of a success each year. Suppose the savings effected the first year are devoted to the purchase of a canner. In a couple of years sufficient jars may be accumulated to be adequate for any future year, in which case there will be an outlay only for new rubbers, fuel and the product, and much greater savings each successive year on the winter food bills.

I believe there is no better way to start an interest in household accounts and business management in the home than by canning at home and keeping a record of the value of the products.

Family Fixes Size of Jar

ANOTHER point is that the woman who cans her own foods may use whatever size container is best suited to her particular family. If her family is small, as husband and wife, it will be advisable to put up many of her vegetables and fruits in a pint size. A well-packed pint jar would be sufficient for her needs, whereas a quart can would be too much and the remainder would be hard to utilize quickly. On the other hand, if the family is large it will be more economical to use even No. 8 jars, especially for such things as tomatoes and pumpkin.

It must always be remembered that the canning cost on a small jar is approximately the same as on a large can; that is why it is better for the home manager to employ large containers where her needs are likely to be for larger quantities at a time.

That woman who wishes to learn the true value of the products she cans may do so best by seeing how many portions her canned food serves and then comparing the cost of this number with the cost of serving an equal number if the same food were bought at prevailing prices.

It is very expensive for the large family to use the small sizes exclusively. In my own home, for example, where there are seven or eight to each meal, we should have to open two or three cans to be sufficient. The typical No. 2 can of vegetables hardly serves four persons; thus three cans are needed if anyone is to have a double serving. But by packing the home product more firmly and using larger containers than normal, we need to open only one jar and thus are saved the double or triple cost of investing in separate cans or containers. In canning berries the woman at home can so put them up that there is a much larger proportion of fruit to liquid than there is in the bought can.

The best method of demonstration is to carry out an experiment with these contentions. To make a test it would be interesting to buy a can each of peas, tomatoes, peaches or other foods which are sold at a low price in the neighborhood at the height of the season and compare such can with the home-packed on a basis of both price and quantity.

This experiment is likely to convince the home manager of the undoubted economy of packing all the food products which she can buy at a reasonable price in her own market; or, better still, raise in her own garden.

Consider canning on a business basis and you will be startled at the savings in your next winter's food bills.