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SEMINAR LISTING

Soaps and Scents

Dairy Maid's Day

Herbal Teas and Beverages

Seamstress' Day

Cooking like Grandma did

Food Storage

Quilting

Toys and Gifts

Organic Gardening

Leathers and Furs

Teaching the use of farm by-products

Sare grant #FNE00-335

Final Report

Jack Fick

Moravia NY 13118

There are no charges for the lard or lye that was used to teach the soap making classes, because we used our own products.

For the cheesemaking classes, the milk that was used came from a local farmer at the cost of \$1.00 per gallon. I always have rennet on hand and I use culture that I made for my own use.

Yogurt is only bought once in a while to replenish the bacterial count and keep it high. Otherwise, the culture needs to actually sour a little to create more bacteria and this creates a more sour taste to the yogurt. We do not like the sour yogurt taste. I also taught that if yogurt is allowed to drain for a longer amount of time, it becomes like cream cheese and can be used as such. If it is then pressed, it becomes a type of yogurt cheese that can actually become sliced. We like the taste of this, and we add herbs and/or fruit to our yogurt at all stages.

Jack would not eat yogurt, or even taste it, until we started making our own. Now he enjoys a bowl once or twice a week, for supper.

Many of the farmers wives love this idea, as it is something that takes a small amount of time and provides a healthy snack for their family.

We will continue teaching anyone that wants to learn. Kathy will be doing a re-enactment of the 1802 kitchen (using three generations of women) on May 12 at Homestar and on June 2, there will be a comparison day for the year 1920. These will be videotaped and documented for teaching purposes. These days are being done in conjunction with the Tioga County Agritourism Association. I am providing a few pages of my seminar notes with this grant. I hope these notes will help other farmers to try homemade products.

Jack and I are still teaching. We are still advertising and will continue to push education and marketing for farmers. We will also continue helping Homestar create the store in Candor NY.

Using Fats and Lye to make soap.

Before beginning, you should understand that making soap can be a hazardous operation. Do not allow children or pets near you when you are doing this. Distraction is not a good thing at this time. Do not use aluminum pots, dishes or utensils. Some people prefer to wear glasses or goggles as the fumes from the lye are very toxic. Be very careful to follow the directions exactly.

Melt 6 pounds of clean grease. Lard, tallow, oils whatever you have on hand. I have used coon grease. Allow this to cool down to 100 degrees.

While this is cooling, dissolve 12 ounces of Red Devil lye from the grocery store to 1 quart of water. This will immediately heat up to a very high degree. It will produce toxic fumes. Keep your face away from the fumes. Stir this while pouring. Otherwise, you will end up with a chunk of lye in the bottom of your container. Allow this to cool to 100 degrees.

If you want your soap to have a fragrance, add essential oils to the grease at this time. One ounce is usually sufficient. You can buy these, or make your own. Simply pack tightly full a pint jar with the flowers or spice that you want and then fill the jar with a cheap olive oil. Let this sit in a dark cool place for about four weeks, or until the fragrance is what you want. Then use it in your soap.

When both the containers are cooled down to 100 degrees, pour the LYE solution into the fat.

Always add the LYE to the Water and then the Lye water to the grease. **Never** in any other order. Stir this while pouring together. Now, stir this mixture until it becomes like honey. Very smooth and thick.

The next step is to pour this into a mold. The mold can be anything you like, as long as it is plastic or stainless steel. Again, nothing aluminum. Lye will eat aluminum. You can use any shape you want. You can pour individual molds and insert toys into them for children to discover. What fun. After pouring, cover the soap so that it dries slowly. Cut your soap on the second day after pouring or quicker, if it seems to set up faster. You may use cookie cutters for this. Save the scraps and soak them in water for a shampoo or laundry soap. Allow the soap to cure for at least two weeks before using, so the lye will be all ate up by the grease.

This process is called saponification. The making of soap. Enjoy. Be creative. Make it fun.

In March 2000, we started planning seminars, we advertised locally and made plans with Cayuga County Co-op extension. We talked to the Farm Bureau. We set up classes in Candor NY through Homestar Intergenerational Teaching facility. This was the most active place that public classes were held and attended. As the year went on, I called the surrounding Counties Co-operative Extensions offices. It was very hard to reach the person who would be in charge of this type of seminar. The Farm Bureau never returned the phone calls to their offices. I always seemed to reach the secretary of someone who wasn't in the office, and my calls were never returned. I was really disappointed in Cortland County, because they are so close to us. They said they didn't understand the grant or why they should set up a seminar in their county.

We set up a seminar in Auburn at the Co-operative Extension and no one signed up for the class. We finally did brochures, trying to reach farmers this way. We also included the general public, thinking that they would get the farmers wives interested. We mailed the brochures to local farms and put them in laundromats, etc. Anywhere someone would see them and respond.

At the seminars that were held, several people have started with ideas. The one great success is Fallow Hollow Deer Farm will add hunters soap to her line of products. Teresa Conklin and her friend Dion are going into the bathroom gift basket business. Dion knows a farmer who raises pigs and beef. She will buy the lard and tallow and use them to make homemade soap. These will be sold in local gift shops and specialty stores.

The seminars that were taught were well attended for the most part. I passed out evaluation sheets, but only received a few back. Most of the farmers wives wanted to know how to make homemade yogurt. Many were interested in the cheese. Especially in making the homemade cultures. This also greatly interested the teenage girls who came. Butter was not greatly exciting, but there was a great lot of discussion about using butter versus margarine. I tried to stay with the basics on creating products for sale in a farm store.

The seminar on creating leather from hides and the use of bones for tools and feathers for dusters and decorations was poorly attended. However, the people who did attend were very interested. I think a lot of this is because everything today is already done for them. This farm woman's son was looking for some way to use up the body products left after butchering. The main discussion was tanning the hides, using natural products and fairly safe chemicals, such as brains and alum. The use of wood ashes versus lime for dehairing.

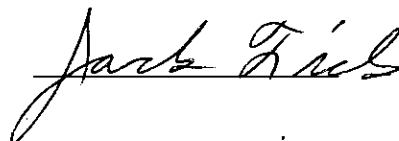
Working on the farm store project was basically started by my doing the research on the rules and regulations and taking printed copies of these to all the seminars. The basic line of thought is that it would have to be started as a farmers market and then expanded. There was very little support for this type of a store. The farmers and their families are very worried about the amount of time a project like this would take out of their schedules. Also, the cost of starting a store of this type was a great concern. The overwhelming rules and regulations and paperwork added to their present duties is considered to be too much for them to absorb.

Homestar owner, Gwen Clark, is in the process of starting a farm store in her horse barn and she hopes this will entice the farm wives to begin making homemade products to sell and it may branch off into something larger. There will be a small pilot project in a different barn this summer. Anyone with a homemade product that meets NYS regulations will be able to sell at her store. This will include at this time, goat cheese, soap, produce, and venison products. She is hoping for more participation as the work gets out that the store is open and operating. This is the only place that a store of this type is being considered. Gwen has applied for a "old barn preservation grant" and with it she hopes to open the store in a permanent position in her old horse barn. She raises sunflower seeds to sell. She also operates the Homestar Intergenerational Granary Wing, where we teach.

In our local village, Moravia, NY, there is a small contingent that is starting up another farmers market. This time it will be in a building, with bathroom facilities. I have spoken with the owner of this building and he is very interested in the farmers store, run by farmers. However, at the present time, he is going to run it as a farmers market, craft and flea. He needs the extra income to pay the taxes, and other expenses.

I believe that with the dedicated application of the skills that we have taught, some of these farmers will start small business'. And as we continue to search for store properties, where farm stores could be started, these stores will begin to appear. Owned and operated by farmers and their families stocked with products that came from the farms.

Respectfully submitted by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jack Fiel". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Respectfully submitted by:".