



"Food Safety and Nutrition"



Provincial Programming Theme for 2002-2003

As Provincial Education Coordinator for the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario (FWIO), and on behalf of the Education Committee, I would like to suggest the following program ideas that have been generated in the past year.

But first, we know that members have come to associate ROSE with the ROSE Health Program. Now, the Education Committee challenges all members and Branches to strengthen and reinforce the Women's Institute as an organization that truly supports all aspects of ROSE – rural Ontario sharing education. We challenge each of you to continue this rich heritage and think of ROSE when planning your programs for the coming year.

Secondly, the Education Committee is expecting to receive a new tool for programming, which will be available on loan to Branches from the Provincial Office (Branches to pay postage both ways). It comes to us from CALLCANADA99. This new tool is a binder of resources entitled "Construction Tools for the Facilitator." It is well laid out, easy to follow and highly recommended by Glenna Ladell, the Agriculture Representative on the Education Committee. And many of the topics covered, such as "The Health of Our Air" and "Climate Change and Its Impact Upon Agriculture" – fits with our programming for 2002-2003, "Food Safety and Nutrition." Call today and reserve this great resource!

Now to Programming Ideas!

Food safety is in everyone's hands - the farmer, the retailer, the importer and the consumer. All take a hand in ensuring that everyone has safe, edible food and water.

The Women's Institutes across the province continue to ensure that members, families and friends are knowledgeable when it comes to buying, storing, cooking and handling the food products and produce they purchase.

But what other avenues can be explored to ensure that we, as consumers, are knowledgeable enough to know that our families will have a safe and healthy food supply? Here are some programming ideas to help answer this question:

Agricultural Issues

- Invite a representative from your local Federation of Agriculture Board to speak about what the government is doing about food safety and water quality.
- Ask a government representative to talk about the proposed Food Safety and Quality Act 2001.
- A local chemical supplier could discuss the use of pesticides (both farm and urban/residential use) and how they affect your food.
- A seed company representative could explain genetically modified seeds. The labelling of these foods is still in the news!
- Your local Public Health Inspector could explain how water samples are taken, how the results are interpreted and what to do if your water is contaminated. The Public Health motto is "Helping You Stay Healthy," so use them as a resource. They also have numerous brochures and fact sheets and a website to check out!
- Compose a "Farm Produce" Cookbook. Feature, for example, recipes made from beef, pork, poultry and vegetables (etc.). Your cookbook could also include notes for proper thawing, storing and cooking methods, with a list of tips to eliminate bacteria in the kitchen.
- Consider edible weeds and flowers and organically grown vegetables as topics.
- Explore the topic of new fruits and vegetables on the market – how to store and cook them and their nutritional value.

Business and Industry

- Invite a representative from any of the animal commodity boards – beef, pork, dairy, feathers, etc. – to speak on the safe handling and preparing of food.
- Contact the Becel Heart Information Bureau at PO Box 9679, 661 Millidge Ave., Saint John NB E2L 4M8, for a free copy of "Shopping for Heart Health." They also have a fact sheet entitled "Understanding Food Labels."
- Tour a local grocery store. You can learn how their products are handled for food safety and what regulations they have to abide by. Another topic your grocery store manager might help with is "Imported Fruits and Vegetables" – what you should watch for and how do prices compare with locally grown products?
- Tour a cheese factory (or any local food manufacturer) to view the processing and safety procedures employed.
- Visit an apple orchard and their storage facilities. Visit a bakery. The possibilities are endless!
- Invite an owner/operator of a "Bed and Breakfast" to speak regarding the regulations that govern their business and their safe food handling procedures.
- Other topics to research and present might be "Water – As Big Industry," Is this good or bad? and "Water Run Off," and who is in control?

Citizenship, Culture and Community

- For those in urban areas, engage someone from your local water commission to speak about the local water supply and how you can know that it is safe to drink. Your local municipality could also provide you with information on the regulations they have in place to protect the local water supply.