

Figuring Out The Best Way To Can Walrus

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Linda Tannehill from the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service teaches a workshop on canning fish and meat in pint jars Tuesday at the Kodiak Fishery Industrial Technology Center. CES faculty were here this week to figure out the best way to can walrus meat. (Photo by Casey Kelly/KMXT).

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Casey Kelly/KMXT

About

20 people crammed into a conference room at the Kodiak Fishery Industrial Technology Center Tuesday for a workshop on canning fish and meat. Meanwhile, the instructors from the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service were busy teaching themselves to can another type of animal. KMXT's Casey Kelly has more.

Canning

fish is common enough in Kodiak, and for that matter throughout Alaska. Elsewhere in the state, it's not unusual for people to can moose, caribou, and other kinds of meat. The process is pretty similar no matter what you're canning. The only variations being the amount of time and pressure used for different kinds of meat and sizes of jars. Most of the participants were there for a refresher course, or to refine their canning technique. But for the three Cooperative Extension Service staffers running the workshop, coming to Kodiak also offered an opportunity to figure out how to can another type of animal. Kristy Long is a food specialist with the program based in Fairbanks.

(Long 1 :14s “…use it at a later date.”)

You heard her right: The extension service is perfecting a canning technique for walrus meat. It's mainly an issue in western and northwestern Alaska, where walrus is commonly hunted for subsistence. During the winter months it's usually not a problem to freeze walrus, but Long says the rest of the year is a different story.

(Long 2 :22s “…for
the information.”)

The main hurdle was finding walrus
meat to experiment with.

(Long 3 :09s “…for
about a year.”)

Long says they come to Kodiak
because the Fishery Industrial Technology Center has the facilities to make
sure the canning is being done properly, and also to work with Chuck Crapo, who
provides the state Department of Environmental Conservation with canning
guidelines.

(Long 4 :19s “…make
sure it looks appropriate.”)

Long says the process for canning
walrus is similar to any other kind of meat. The only difference will be the
time it takes.

(Long 5 :27s “…those
all are different times.”)

Once the guidelines are established
the Cooperative Extension Service will have them published and distributed in
the regions where walrus canning is in demand.

I’m Casey Kelly.

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