



February 2009

Dear Homemakers,

**Wibaux County  
Extension Office**

Happy Valentine's Day! In this newsletter I have included an article on an essay contest that I would ask you to pass on to your high school senior. In these tough economic times, I have included a few articles on cutting costs and financial tips.

For those of you who have been wondering, the Wibaux Health Fair has been scheduled for **Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup>**, at the Wibaux County High School Gym. I'm looking forward to seeing you there. I'm hoping that we see record numbers and that our weather will cooperate as it has in the past

As always, if you have any questions or need information on a publication, please feel free to stop by or call the Extension Office.

Sincerely,

Patti A. Goroski  
Program/Administrative Assistant

*Montana State University,  
U.S. Department of  
Agriculture and Montana  
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203 S. Wibaux St.  
PO. Box 345  
Wibaux, MT 59353-0345  
[www.msuxextension.org](http://www.msuxextension.org)

Tel (406) 796-2486  
Fax (406) 796-2625  
E-mail [wibaux@montana.edu](mailto:wibaux@montana.edu)

## **\$2,500 Prize for the Winning Essay**

The New America Foundation is looking to draw attention to the needs of children and for the next generation of policy ideas to help kids. We are inviting **all high school seniors in the U.S.** to voice your opinions by writing and submitting an essay that answers the question, “*You have just been elected the President of the United States. What is the most important thing you will do to improve the lives of America’s children?*”

This contest provides a unique opportunity for students to articulate their hopes for improving children’s lives. It is your turn to tell your parents, teachers, and Washington policymakers what you think America’s priorities should be.

Essays must be no longer than **600 words** and must also be accompanied by the Official Entry Form. The Official Entry Form must be signed by the student, a parent or guardian, and a teacher certifying that this is an original essay. Please do not write your name or school on the essay itself.

The top 25 essays, as chosen by our staff, will receive recognition as semi-finalists. Ten finalists will receive special recognition on the New America Foundation website. The winning essay will be selected from the finalists by a panel of distinguished judges based on clarity of thought, creativity, practicality, potential to improve the lives of children, and potential to draw attention to policies that help young people. **The winner will be announced in June 2009 and will receive a \$2,500 prize.** The winner’s essay will be published and distributed by the New America Foundation.

### **Contest deadline: February 20, 2009**

How to enter:

1. Read the Rules and Regulations found at:  
[http://www.newamerica.net/programs/workforce\\_and\\_family/essay\\_contest/rules](http://www.newamerica.net/programs/workforce_and_family/essay_contest/rules)
2. Write your essay
3. Download and complete the Official Entry Form, with signatures found at:  
[http://www.newamerica.net/files/Official%20Entry%20Form%202008-2009%20Essay%20Contest\\_0.pdf](http://www.newamerica.net/files/Official%20Entry%20Form%202008-2009%20Essay%20Contest_0.pdf)
4. Mail essay and entry form to address below:

*Essay Contest, Workforce and Family Program  
New America Foundation  
1630 Connecticut Ave NW 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20009*



## **Prairie Fare: Serve Convenience & Economy with Pasta**

By Julie Garden-Robinson, NDSU Extension Food & Nutrition Specialist

Boil. Drain. Serve. Even after a long day, most of us can manage the cooking directions for pasta. Not only is preparing pasta easy, but pasta also is an economical and versatile menu item. In these challenging economic times, consumers are stretching their food dollars with pasta-based casseroles and soups more often. As a result, pasta sales are coming to a rolling boil nationwide.

Most American pasta is made from durum wheat, which is milled to form semolina. A dough is prepared by mixing semolina with water. The dough is extruded through a die (a metal disc with holes in it) under pressure and cut to the appropriate length. The size and shape of the holes in the die determines the shape of the pasta. Shapes ranging from spirals to cartoon characters are possible. Finally, the pasta is dried and packaged.

Sometimes other ingredients are added. Products labeled "egg noodles," for example, must contain 5.5 percent egg by weight. Pasta is fortified with iron and B vitamins. The B vitamin folic acid can lower the risk for certain birth defects, so it's an especially important nutrient for women of childbearing age.

Pasta manufacturers also are adding "better for you" pasta varieties to their product lines. These include whole-grain pasta and pasta with added fiber or other nutrients.

We in the nutrition field are breathing a collective sigh of relief that low-carb dieting is no longer in style. While carbohydrate-rich foods, such as pasta and bread, have been blamed, we cannot point a finger at particular foods as the cause of the obesity epidemic.

Super-sized portions of many different foods are part of the equation. On Nutrition Facts labels, 1 cup of cooked pasta is considered a typical serving size. At 200 calories, 1 cup of cooked pasta has the same number of calories as two slices of bread. Next time you prepare pasta, fill a 1-cup measuring cup with cooked pasta. Place it on a plate and remember this image when you size up your servings.

Chances are you will receive three or more servings of pasta on your plate when you eat pasta at a restaurant. You may want to ask for a to-go box at the start of your meal so you get two meals for the price of one.

Consider your serving sizes, but think about your preferred pasta sauce, too. White sauces, such as Alfredo sauce, are much higher in fat and calories than most red sauces. One-half cup of

tomato-based spaghetti/marinara sauce has about 110 calories and 3 grams of fat. Restaurant-style Alfredo sauce has about 300 calories and 28 grams of fat per half-cup serving.

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## **Pasta Continued...**

Have you decided on tomorrow's dinner menu? Be sure not to overcook the pasta. Here's some advice from the National Pasta Association:

- \* For every pound of pasta to cook, allow at least 4 quarts of water.
- \* Bring water to a boil before adding the pasta. (Adding salt is optional. Skipping adding salt is advisable from a nutrition standpoint.)
- \* Return water to a boil and time according to the package directions. If you are making a baked dish, such as lasagna, slightly undercook the pasta by one-third of the cooking time.
- \* Remove a piece of pasta and taste test. While some people literally throw pasta strands against the wall to test doneness, save on your walls. Pasta is best cooked "al dente," literally "to the tooth." Remove a piece of pasta from the pan and taste. The pasta should be somewhat firm when you bite.
- \* Drain pasta. You do not need to rinse pasta unless you want to cool it prior to adding it to a salad.

### **Baked Spaghetti Cakes**

- \* 1 (16 ounce) package spaghetti
- \* 1 (14 ounce) jar of spaghetti sauce (whatever brand is your favorite)
- \* ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- \*\*\*Cook pasta until al dente and heat up spaghetti sauce. Combine together in pan then drop circular "cakes" of spaghetti onto a tin-foil-lined baking sheet. Top with Parmesan cheese and bake in oven at 350 degrees for about 15 minutes or until slightly crispy.



## **Money Talk: A Financial Guide for Women**

Money Talk: A Financial Guide for Women is a 192-page personal finance workbook published by NRAES (Natural Resource, Agriculture, and Engineering Service).

Geared towards women but a useful resource for all, Money Talk is a personal finance workbook that teaches smart money management. The book is useful for self-directed learning and has been used in educational workshops.

The book covers a wide range of topics including: financial and insurance basics, investing basics and investing for retirement, and estate planning fundamentals. Money Talk is a useful tool for individuals interested in learning more about personal finance and money management.

For ordering information, please contact the Wibaux County Extension Office at (406) 796-2486.



## **Seniors Should Apply for Homeowner/Renter Tax Credit**

Montanans who were 62 or older as of December 31<sup>st</sup> should check to see whether they qualify for Montana's elderly homeowner/renter tax credit for 2008.

If you can answer "yes" to the following questions, then you may be eligible for the credit.

- G Were you age 62 or older as of December 31, 2008?
- G Did you reside in Montana for nine months or more during 2008?
- G Did you occupy Montana residence(s) as an owner or renter a total of six months or more during 2008?
- G Was your total gross household income less than \$45,000 in 2008?

The state of Montana allows people who qualify a credit for a portion of their property taxes or rent paid based on their income. The credit can be used against their state income tax liability or as a direct refund, if they are not required to file a Montana state income tax return. Only one claim is allowed per household.

To determine eligibility, complete Form 2EC that may be available at your local library, post office, from tax preparers, or at the State or local Department of Revenue Office.

Form 2EC at the Department of Revenue website (<http://mt.gov/revenue>) is a "self-calculating" form but taxpayers can simply print it if they prefer. Form 2EC was redesigned for the 2008 tax year. Among the most notable changes are fewer lines on the form, and better instructions to help taxpayers calculate the credit. Form 2EC must be filed on or before April 15, 2009 or with your Form 2 or 2M.

If you think you may have been eligible for the tax credit in prior years and didn't take advantage of it, you are still allowed to file for the credit for up to five years from the original due date of the Form 2EC. If you need help in completing Form 2EC, call (406) 444-2830 (hearing impaired only) or toll free 1-866-859-2254.

For further questions, contact Marsha Goetting at (406) 994-5695 or [goetting@montana.edu](mailto:goetting@montana.edu).

### *Valentine's Day Cake Recipes*

#### *Chocolate Angel Food Cake*

16 large egg whites (2 cups)	4 Tbsp cocoa powder
¼ cup boiling water	2 tsp pure vanilla extract
1 ¾ cups granulated white sugar	1 cup sifted cake flour
¼ tsp salt	2 tsp cream of tartar

Preheat oven to 350NF, place rack in center of oven, have ready a 10-inch angel food cake (tube) pan. Separate 16 eggs, whites in one bowl and yolks in another. Cover whites with plastic wrap and bring to room temperature (about 30 minutes). Cover yolks and store in refrigerator or freezer for another use.

In a small measuring cup or bowl, combine the cocoa powder and boiling water and stir until smooth. Stir or whisk in the vanilla extract. Set aside.

In another bowl, whisk together ¾ cup granulated white sugar, the sifted cake flour, and the salt. Set aside.

In a large mixing bowl, beat the egg whites until foamy. Add the cream of tartar and continue to beat until soft peaks form. Gradually beat in the remaining 1 cup granulated white sugar until stiff peaks form.

Remove 1 cup of the beaten egg whites and whisk it into the cocoa powder mixture to lighten it. To the remaining egg whites, gradually sift the flour mixture over the egg whites (about ¼ cup at a time) and gently but quickly fold the flour into the egg whites. Once you have incorporated the flour mixture into the egg whites, fold in the cocoa powder mixture. Do not overmix.

Pour the batter into the pan and run a metal spatula or knife through the batter to get rid of any air pockets. Smooth the top and bake in the oven for 40-45 minutes. It is done when a wooden skewer inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean and the cake springs back when gently pressed. The top of the cake will have cracks.

Immediately upon removing from the oven, invert the pan. Suspend the pan by placing the inner tube on the top of a soda or wine bottle. Allow the cake to cool for 1 ½ hours.

When completely cool, run a metal spatula or knife around the sides of the pan to loosen the cake and then remove the cake from the pan. Next run a metal spatula or knife along the bottom and center core of the pan and remove. Place onto a serving plate.



This cake can be eaten alone with just a dusting of cocoa powder or confectioners sugar. It is also wonderful with fresh berries and softly whipped cream. Another suggestion is to serve with ice cream, strawberry or raspberry puree, or chocolate sauce. Serves 12.

### Red Velvet Cake with Cream Cheese Frosting

1/4 pound butter, softened  
1-1/2 cups sugar  
2 eggs  
2 oz red food coloring  
2 Tbsp unsweetened cocoa  
2-1/2 cups cake flour  
1 cup buttermilk  
1 tsp salt  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
1 tsp baking soda dissolved in  
1 Tbsp vinegar

**Frosting:** 1/4 pound butter, softened  
8 oz cream cheese, softened  
3 Tbsp milk  
4 to 5 cups confectioners' sugar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease two 9-inch round cake pans with solid vegetable shortening and then lightly flour them. Cream together butter, sugar, and eggs in a large bowl. Add the food coloring and cocoa. Alternately add half of the cake flour, half of the buttermilk, and half of the salt. Mix after each addition and then repeat. Stir in the vanilla. Fold in the baking soda and vinegar. Pour the mixture evenly into the prepared pans and bake for 30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Allow the cakes to cool slightly in the pans, about 10 minutes. Loosen the sides by running a thin knife along the edge of the pans. Turn the cakes out onto a wire rack and allow to cool completely.

Frosting: Cream butter, Add the confectioners' sugar consistency. Additional milk frosting if needed. Place the and frost the top. Place the frost the top and sides.



cream cheese, and milk. until you reach the desired can be used to thin the bottom layer on a cake base second layer on the first then

Happy Valentine's Day!!!

*“To laugh often and love much, to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others, to give one's self, this is to have succeeded.”*  
Ralph Waldo Emerson

