

Chayote Contests and Tamarind Butter: The Natural Agricultural Range of Florida and its Role in Home Demonstration Programming, 1915-1930

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Between 1915-1930, the natural agricultural range and climate in Florida lent itself to economic opportunities for women involved in home demonstration programming. The differences between the vegetables and nuts in the panhandle of north Florida, to the citrus groves and home dairies of central Florida, to the tropical fruits of southern Florida, all coalesced into creating marketing and business prospects for the state's rural women. Florida became advantageous for home demonstration programming, as Floridian women and girls throughout the 1920s used this natural diversification in climate and environment to enhance agricultural and horticultural varieties to help their own financial situations. Using Florida's resources became part of the home demonstration agent's early plans, to which rural women responded with enthusiasm. These women would also capitalize on the tourist and "snow bird" economies of the 1920s, by selling and marketing their Florida-grown foods through a variety of methods, including their own businesses, contests which encouraged growing specific produce, local events, and other avenues. They marketed the "Florida" name by using the agricultural climate to their benefit and through the support of home demonstration programming, which resulted in rural Floridian women utilizing what Florida's environment had to offer.