

Would you consider serving a two-year term as a canner operator? To learn more, contact Joe Miller at joemiller@mcc.org or call 717-808-2417.



2023-2024 CANNING CREW



Caleb Moss,
Rock City, IL



Sylvan Stoltzfus,
Narvon, PA

Not pictured:
Emery Yoder,
Wilmot, OH



Andrew Widrick,
Copenhagen, NY

MCC canned meat shipments

Fiscal year is April 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023.

Country	Cans shipped
Cuba	24,000
Ecuador	14,400
Ethiopia	192,000
Haiti	7,680
Malawi	11,520
South Sudan	24,000
Ukraine	58,560
Zambia	35,520
U.S. (Puerto Rico)	14,400
U.S. (Other)	960
Total	383,040

Visit mcc.org/canning or contact your nearest MCC office to get involved.

The Canner Times

2023-2024

MCC canned meat at a day's notice

By Ed Nyce

Most meat canned by MCC volunteers is sent where an emergency has recently occurred.

In some areas, however, disasters happen often enough that meat, and other MCC humanitarian relief items like comforters and hygiene kits, are sent to a region to be pre-positioned, so that they can be quickly distributed to people who have just experienced a storm or disaster.

Puerto Rico is one such place.

Having these resources on the island in case of an emergency means MCC

can respond quickly, explained Jean Carlos Arce, MCC East Coast Puerto Rico program coordinator.

“Within a day or two, we can meet the needs of families whose homes are lost or flooded,” he said.

And the supplies strengthen MCC’s ongoing work in Puerto Rico, said Arce, who lives in San Juan and was born in nearby Bayamón. “If hurricane season comes and goes and meat and other items are left, we can give them to the churches with whom we partner, who provide them to families in need.”

In May 2023, MCC meat canning staff joined a learning tour to Puerto Rico. It included a visit to a thrift shop run by Iglesia Evangélica Menonita de Aibonito (Aibonito Evangelical Mennonite Church), which provides MCC canned meat to people experiencing hunger. Pictured, from left, are shop manager Maria Rivera (holding a can of meat), MCC East Coast Puerto Rico program coordinator Jean Carlos Arce, MCC canning and trucking director Ken Litwiller, and canner operators Caleb Moss, Han Erb and Kyle Keeler. Once during a canner operator’s two-year service assignment, MCC makes it possible for canner crews to visit a location where MCC canned meat is distributed.



MCC photo/Joe Miller

Knowing exactly when hurricane season ends is getting harder, though. Traditionally, hurricane season was so predictable that its start and finish dates could be marked on the calendar, but those dates have been changing, Arce said.

And storms are getting stronger. “Hurricane Maria (2017) was much higher in intensity than any storm for years in Puerto Rico,” said Arce. “In some ways, it’s become a before/after marker for our generation in terms of impact on infrastructure.”

Arce has seen other changes as well, such as earthquakes in Puerto Rico in 2020. When we spoke in mid-June 2023, San Juan was two weeks into a record-setting heatwave.

MCC works with local partners like Iglesia Evangélica Menonita de Aibo-

nito (Aibonito Evangelical Mennonite Church), which shares canned meat with families and individuals experiencing hunger and runs a thrift shop. MCC canned meat also aids the efforts of Father Olin Pierre Louis of Iglesia (Church of) San Mateo de Cangrejos in Santurce, Puerto Rico. The church attends to Haitian asylum-seekers arriving on the island.

“We are grateful for the work and resources that [meat canning volunteers] provide, which directly impact peoples’ livelihoods, both in emergencies and for ongoing need,” said Arce. “One can of meat can feed a family for a full day, and for some, it might be their only protein for that day. Thank you for giving of your time, talents and treasures.”



MCC/Fairpicture photo/David Lomuria

Many students in Rumbek, Lakes State, South Sudan, have meat at home once a week at most. Often, children eat their only full meal in a day at school. This past year, schools in the Diocese of Rumbek, including Rumbek Comboni Primary and Loreto Rumbek, received 1,000 cartons of MCC canned meat through the Loreto School Kits and Nutritious Meals project. Broth saved from canned turkey fortifies the rice and beans the school serves on most days. Here, students Mary Aniong and Amida Yunis help kitchen staff member Mary Mayom serve a meal made with MCC canned turkey at Rumbek Comboni Primary School.

2023–24 MCC meat canning schedule

Date	Location
October 3–6	*Sterling, Ohio
October 9–11	Middlefield, Ohio
October 13–16	Kidron, Ohio
October 20–31	**Newton Area, Kansas
November 2–3	Milford, Nebraska
November 6–7	Freeman, South Dakota
November 9–10	Mountain Lake, Minnesota
November 13–15	Henderson, Nebraska
November 29–December 1	Fairview, Oklahoma
December 4–5	Pryor, Oklahoma
December 7–8	Kalona, Iowa
December 11–14	Freeport, Illinois
December 16–19	***Hagerstown, Indiana
January 2–4	Montgomery, Indiana
January 6–17	Goshen, Indiana
January 19–20	Berne, Indiana
January 23–26	Berlin, Ohio
January 29–February 1	Spartansburg, Pennsylvania
February 5–8	Belleville, Pennsylvania
February 12–16	White Horse, Pennsylvania
February 19–23	Hinton, Virginia
February 26–March 1	Chambersburg, Pennsylvania
March 4–8	Kirkwood, Pennsylvania
March 11–13	Myerstown, Pennsylvania
March 18–22	New Holland, Pennsylvania
March 25–27	Souderton, Pennsylvania
April 1–4	*Sterling, Ohio
April 8–11	*Penn Yan, New York
April 15–16	Lowville, New York

* MCC partner organization

** canning takes place at the MCC Central States warehouse

*** new canning site