



BLUEBERRY TWIST: Give cranberry relish a tasty, nutritious upgrade by adding fresh blueberries.



FARM FÊTE: The Rominger family marks birthdays, too, at holiday dinners. (Left to right) Patty Rominger, Rick Rominger, Ruth Rominger, Lars Tomanek, Rich Rominger, Evelyne Rominger, Bruce Rominger and Robyn Rominger celebrate Evelyne's birthday.

A farm family holiday

By **JANE EDWARDS
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CHRISTMAS means a holiday meal on the farm for the Rominger family in Yolo County, where Bruce Rominger and his brother Rick farm 2,500 acres on the western edge of the Sacramento Valley.

Family tradition

Chief organizer again this year of the traditional holiday feast is Robyn Rominger, Bruce's wife, and the mother of John, 4, and Rachel, 20 months. "We'll have 20 or more guests, including all the family and maybe an exchange student and a couple of friends," Robyn told me, as she explained how the annual festive meal usually plays out at her and Bruce's rice-straw-bale home near Winters.

Among the guests, of course, will be family patriarch Richard E. Rominger, and his wife, Evelyne. Richard is the former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, as well as the California Secretary of Agriculture in the late 1970s and early 1980s. They are the owners of the Rominger Brothers farming operations in Winters. They grow wheat, corn, safflower, sunflowers, rice and grapes, as well as tomatoes for processing. Recently Bruce and Rick have experimented with organic farming.

"Everybody will show up around noon, we'll open presents and then we'll all gather at the table," Robyn said.

First off will be individual bowls of fresh fruit salad. Then come the California yams and a roast turkey — usually it takes two — complete with turkey gravy and mashed potatoes. For a wine to complement the feast, Robyn suggests a chilled chardonnay from the Rominger West Winery. For dessert, she likes cheesecake and usually a birthday cake, "because it's always close to somebody's birthday at the holidays."

Robyn's California Yams

Yams that have been baked, peeled and sliced

Orange juice
Peeled orange slices
Brown sugar
Butter, sliced

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Pour the orange juice and then the brown sugar and the butter over the yams. Top these ingredients with the orange slices (The orange slices are not simply a garnish; rather, you eat them with the yams). Bake just prior to serving until thoroughly heated. You may prepare the dish ahead of time and refrigerate it until just before heating.

New holiday twist

Wake up traditional cran-

berry relish with a fresh blueberry boost. Thanks to Chile, Americans now can enjoy this luscious antioxidant-rich super berry all winter long.

Make sure to make enough of this delectable tangy relish to transform your leftover turkey and ham sandwiches from mundane to marvelous. And while you're at it, spoon some relish into pretty glass jelly jars, tie a ribbon around the lids and take them to neighbors as a healthy homemade holiday gift.

Fresh Blueberry and Cranberry Relish

1 cup fresh blueberries
1 cup fresh orange juice
8 ounces fresh cranberries
1 tablespoon orange zest
¾ cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla

Combine all ingredients in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Cook until the sugar dissolves and the berries soften, about 15 minutes. Remove from heat, cover and chill. Best if made in advance to let flavors blend. Makes 12 quarter-cup servings Use as a side dish for a traditional holiday dinner, poured over turkey, pork or ham; or as part of a dessert over vanilla ice cream, sorbet, or frozen yogurt. It's also good on a turkey and cream cheese sandwich, or to freshen up leftovers.