

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

SCHOOL TO FARM ROAD TRIP –August 1, 2012

Farm to School initiatives are being developed across the county to encourage local school systems to utilize local foods in their school lunch programs as well as for special meal events. We are pleased to report that OSU Extension in Trumbull County is helping to make this community connection a reality in Northeast Ohio. On



August 1, OSU Extension and the Trumbull County Health Department collaborated to offer a School to Farm Road Trip to help connect schools to local fruits, produce and food. Twenty-nine decision makers from nine school districts (and even one student) participated in day-long bus trip visiting and learning about local food opportunities and making healthy school food choices. The 100 mile bus trip highlighted some of the farm operations who are willing and able to source local foods to the schools. The program evaluation demonstrated positive outcomes. This trip was funded in part by a Creating Communities grant from the Trumbull County Health Department. The following is a recap of this program:

Geauga Growers Association Auction – Middlefield, Ohio

Participants visited Northeast Ohio's largest producer wholesale auction in action. Participants were able to see first-hand the auctioning of the high value quality of fruits and vegetables grown in this region.



Middlefield Original Cheese-Middlefield, Ohio

Northeast Ohio has a lot of dairy farms producing high quality milk. At this stop, the participants saw cheese production up close and personal



Miller Livestock Company-Kinsman, Ohio

On this stop, participants learned about grass fed beef, pork and lamb and got to see the 1 day old turkey poults with will be grass fed and be ready for Thanksgiving. While at this stop, the group also learned the Lake to River Cooperative which is helping to connect schools with local producers. The group also enjoyed a lunch prepared of all local food.

Lutz Farm - Leavittsburg, Ohio

It is sweet corn time in Northeast Ohio and the group stopped at one of the largest sweet corn producers in Northeast, Ohio. Participants were challenged to use local sweet corn for a sweet corn roast for students upon their return to school in the fall or as a fundraiser before the first home football game. School systems can also freeze the corn to serve to students throughout the school year.



Warren City Victory Garden

On this stop, we discussed the possibilities of a school and community partnership which could lead to local vegetables being grown and used on site at your school district. Here we learned how the Warren City Schools and OSU Extension are producing local vegetables for consumption in the school system.

Impact

The attendees reported a large increase (over 2.00 gain on 5 point scale) in their knowledge of the benefits of using local foods in the school lunch program, how to access and purchase local foods, and are better able to make the connection to local farms. More information can be obtained by contacting, Marie Economos, OSU Extension at 330-638-6783.