

COLLEGE of FOOD, AGRICULTURAL, and ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Ohio Farm to School December 2018 Newsletter

Success Story- Bexley City Schools



Kristin Peters, Franklin County Public Health Educator; Congresswoman Joyce Beatty; and Juli Carver, director of food services at Bexley celebrate an Ohio Days Meal at Bexley City Schools.

“School food does not have to be great, it just needs to be good,” explained Juli Carvi, the director of food services at Bexley City Schools. She thinks she has the best job in the school, because it is rewarding for her to make kids happy (with lunch) and she does not have to worry about giving them grades.

"I have found zero resistance while implementing a Farm to School program in my district. The hardest part is the leg work and going after the Ohio products. It takes extra work for me to go after the products, but I am passionate about serving local foods. We (food service directors) need to identify it and get it into the mouths of the students closest to the food," she said.

Bexley schools began using local foods about five years ago when they initiated Salad Bar to Schools with the Chef Ann Foundation. During August through October, they procure many local items. The growers she works with reach out to her with their list of available produce. She first checked with her local health department and they confirmed that her cafeteria could use locally grown produce.

They are involved in a harvest of the month program called Ohio Days: My Plate, My State. This program features one meal a month served in the school cafeterias that is entirely grown, raised and/or processed in Ohio. This program encourages schools to provide healthy, local, fresh foods in the cafeteria and learn about this food in their classroom or through experiential learning.

Franklin County Public Health (FCPH) created the [Ohio Days](#) program materials. As part of the program, students, their families and teachers are provided resources such as newsletters and a poster to feature the monthly menu. Carvi said, our younger students are very enthusiastic about Ohio Days, because they love anything that is promoted.

"Our goal is to continue to use the Ohio Days promotion. We want to see more Ohio food in our cafeterias. We want more access (to local products) and have it prominently labeled. I want to keep our food closer to where it is grown. What I have learned through this program is there is not enough food processed in Ohio in order to have it available throughout the year," she said.

"(Many) institutions want to procure local labels, but it's not labelled locally for us to buy. I encourage more Ohio schools to become involved in Ohio Days, because the more we (institutions) demand the local products, the more interested the distributors and the decision makers will be about developing local processing for us," she said. "One example is the Conagra plant of Ohio, their products are sold nationally, therefore it is not prominently labelled that their products are from Ohio, even though people in Ohio want to know," she added.

Her biggest take away about procuring local products is learning more about agribusiness and the complexity of manufacturing, distribution and about the whole process of getting foods delivered to the schools.

The enrollment at Bexley City schools is 2,300 students. Each day, more than 600 students are buying a whole lunch while 800 youth are buying at least one item. Carvi said, to serve local foods, school kitchens only need cutting boards, knives and people who know how to use them. In the 1980's we got away from scratch cooking. Once the Healthy Hunger Free Act was passed, the nutritional rules became more stringent which lead us away from processed food and back to scratch cooking. In order for this

to be successful, the kitchens need to be able to pay an appropriate hourly wage for those doing the work.

They have a school garden at one elementary and one high school life skills class. Their school has experimented with tower gardens in the past, but saw an increase in their electric usage with them and no longer use the towers.

They have a food waste program in place in which one of our science teachers collects our kitchen scraps to feed to his 50 chickens at his home. He brings in buckets and we fill them with our vegetable ends such as carrots, peppers and lettuce scraps.

Their local farmers are Bryn Bird's Haven Farms of Granville, Yellowbird Food Shed of Mount Vernon, Quarry Hill Orchards of Berlin Heights, and Bright Farms of Wilmington, which grows baby greens and herbs.

During a recent Ohio Days lunch, their school cafeteria had a visit from their local Congresswoman, Joyce Beatty. Carvi was able to discuss with Beatty her concern about Ohio's need for more food processing infrastructure. "We can find protein items all year round, but not the produce in the cold months," she concluded.

Ohio Farm to School Reflects on 2018



Carol Smathers, Ohio Farm to School Director addressing the National Farm to Cafeteria Conference Opening Plenary Session in Cincinnati

Ohio hosted 2018 Farm to Cafeteria Conference

More than 900 attended the national event in our state, which promoted the local food economy and drew attention to our elected officials. More than 30 seminars were offered in several tracks from Early Care Education to Farm to College. There were 11 field trips organized by OSU Extension providing highlights of Ohio and neighboring states in which our partners had the opportunity to network. We also hosted a dynamic preconference meeting with an Ohio focus for producers and food service directors

while enjoying delicious local foods. Senator Brown and Representative Fudge provided video messages about the importance of F2S.

Great Lakes Great Apple Crunch

This year there were 1.5 MILLION Crunches in the Great Lakes Region! In Ohio alone, we had 571 *different locations registered*. Ohio-grown apples took center stage for Ohio's students, teachers, and/or colleagues

Highlights:

- New Ohio record! 181,063 reached, including Cincinnati Public Schools for the first time
- Social media exposure
- More than 900 whole and sliced apples were donated by DNO Produce Inc. who distributed them to YMCA's and Head Starts in Franklin County
- Resolutions from local governments

New Success Stories in 2018 (more at farmtoschool@osu.edu)

- OSU Goal: 40% Local and Sustainable Foods by 2025
- Rural Action Provides Local Foods to Schools
- Yellowbird Food Shed of Mount Vernon
- Bexley Schools
- Seminary Hill Farm

“Ohio Days” in Central Ohio school districts

Now in their third year of offering locally sourced “Ohio Days” meals each month, Columbus City Schools is making new connections with more local producers and substantially increasing the percent food budget spent on local foods. Franklin County Public Health (FCPH) has rallied 5 schools in the Columbus area to also serve an Ohio-sourced meal each month. FCPH has developed an extraordinary Food Service Director Toolkit, a local foods directory, and materials to help students become more aware of the local foods in their cafeterias.

Presentations

- OSU Outreach and Engagement: Putting the “to” in Farm to School through Community Engagement
- National Farm to Cafeteria Conference: Three Million Apples...and More (panel of Ohio successes: Ohio Days, Cuyahoga Co. group purchasing, and **PSEREADl.org tool**); Field Trip to see CCS apple slicer
- International Town and Gown City and University Relations Conference – CCS apple slicer tour
- Project Green Teacher – School Garden Seminars
- Ohio STEM Learning Network
- Ohio Food Policy Network Conference
- Ohio School Nutrition Association- Northwest Ohio area meeting
- National NFSN Communities of Practice call focused on Extension
- National NFSN “SNAP-Ed for Farm to School” Webinar
- Policies that Support F2S: Trends, Models of Success, & Emerging Issues, for Ohio Food Policy Network
- Apple slicer demo and F2S presentation for CFAES leaders

Publication (accepted for publication in Journal of School Health)

“Identifying indicators of readiness and capacity for implementing farm to school interventions”

Grant Proposals

- Farm Bureau funding proposal with 4-H
- FASLP - Lettuce growing curriculum grant
- USDA F2S Grant (Franklin Co.)

Partnerships

- Local: CCS Wellness Committee and Franklin Co. Ohio Days
- State: Ohio Food Policy Network; Ohio Early Child Health Network; School Gardens of Ohio, BCOP
- National: NFSN, USDA F2S



Franklin County Commissioners recognize OSU Extension for the Great Lakes Great Apple Crunch with a resolution



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