

2010 Society for Nutrition Education Annual Conference

Food & Nutrition Extension Educators Division Pre-Conference Workshop

***Local and Regional Food Systems:
Opportunities for Food & Nutrition Educators***



Reno, Nevada
July 24, 2010

Title: Connecting Seafood Consumers with Fishermen: Integrating Direct-Marketing Capacity with Consumer Health and Environmental Sustainability

Author(s): Catherine Violette, PhD, RD, LD, Ken LaValley, PhD, and Charlie French, PhD

Institution: University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension

For over two centuries commercial fishing has been a vital component of New England's economy as well as its social and cultural heritage. Commercial fishing contributes nearly 500 million dollars to the regional economy including jobs in many food system sectors (e.g. processing and retail). Local fisheries are threatened by the increasing availability of lower-cost, imported seafood. To preserve stock, regulations to reduce the number of days-at-sea for some species has contributed to a significant reduction in New Hampshire's fishing fleet. The goal of this project was to sustain this regional industry by increasing the capacity of local commercial fishermen to direct market their products to consumers, thereby increasing availability and consumption of local seafood. To assess the issue two surveys were conducted by the multidisciplinary project team; one survey targeted members of the fishing industry while the second one assessed consumer purchasing practices, beliefs, and sources of information about seafood. Consumer survey results indicate that women are the primary household purchasers of seafood. Women were more concerned with the nutritional value and origin of seafood purchases than were male respondents. Fifty-one percent of the respondents ate seafood prepared at home while 42% consumed seafood in restaurants. To increase the availability of local seafood three major initiatives were implemented. First, a "New Hampshire Fresh and Local" brand identity to help consumers find and support local fishermen when purchasing seafood was developed. Twenty-three businesses are now brand partners. Second, seafood availability at seacoast region farmers' markets was increased from one market to ten in just one year. Using locally harvested northern shrimp as an example, fishermen increased their shrimp sales by 14,000 pounds over a comparable time period prior to vending at farmers' markets. Third, a community supported fisheries (CSF) program was established reaching over 450 consumers. The next phase of the project will focus on increasing consumer knowledge and purchase of local seafood by developing targeted educational materials. This project was funded by an internal grant from UNH Cooperative Extension.

Primary Contact: Catherine Violette, PhD, RD, LD

Address: 219 Main St., 209 Kendall Hall, Durham, NH 03824

Phone: 603-862-2496 Email: Catherine.violette@unh.edu

Title: Building a community coalition for an urban farmers market

Author(s): Jaymie Santiago, Nurgül Fitzgerald, Ph.D., R.D., William K. Hallman, PhD.

Institution: Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey

New Brunswick, New Jersey is a city exceeding 50,000 people with a diverse racial/ethnic population (48% minorities), where low socioeconomic status is common (28% below poverty), and access to fresh fruits and vegetables is limited. Supported by Rutgers University, Johnson & Johnson, Inc., and the City of New Brunswick, the aim of the New Brunswick Community Farmers Market is to improve access to fresh, local, healthful, affordable, and culturally appropriate foods in a convenient location to promote healthy eating behaviors among city residents. Designed from the start as a *community* enterprise, one of the first steps in developing the Market was to create an advisory committee comprised of key community, civic, religious, academic, government, and business leaders to establish the goals, objectives, and guidelines for the Market. An emphasis on community enhancement through shared ownership of the project was important to secure support for and engagement in the project. Therefore, location, public transportation issues, hours, vendor specifications and various other aspects of the Market were determined through direct input of the advisory committee. A market manager was hired, and Rutgers students and local youth participated in managing Market operations. Local farmers and vendors were recruited to participate in the Market to support the local economy. First-time vendors worked with a local micro-lending organization to help establish their businesses. The Market included a stand to provide nutrition information, samples of available produce, and healthy recipes printed in English and Spanish to Market customers. The committee worked with the Department of Agriculture to ensure that the vendors could accept federal assistance benefit cards/vouchers to help meet the needs of lower income residents. The Market also provided fresh produce to local emergency feeding programs. The Market manager and 4-H club members helped to facilitate transactions in Spanish. The Market evaluations and community assessments were conducted with the help of community members. Currently, the Market is in its second year, and direct engagement of leaders from business, community, civic and government organizations alongside university and Extension personnel remains critical in establishing and maintaining the partnerships necessary to guarantee the success of the Market.

Primary Contact: Jaymie Santiago

Address: Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Martin Hall, Room 316; 88 Lipman Drive
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8525

Telephone: 732-932-5000 x586 Email: jsantiago@aesop.rutgers.edu

Title: Apples to Apples: Developing a Framework for Comparing Farm to School Program Impacts on Student Health and Nutrition

Author(s): Linda Berlin¹, Kim Norris², Abbie Nelson³, Jane Kolodinsky¹

Institution: ¹University of Vermont, ²University of Maryland, ³Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont

One of the most explicit goals of Farm-to-School programs is to positively benefit children's health and nutrition. However, research specifically designed to identify child nutrition impacts of Farm to School programs has been limited, and the diverse array of approaches falling under the Farm to School umbrella makes it challenging to compare results across studies conducted. Farm to School programs may include one to many of a diverse array of activities, including formal or informal nutrition education, school gardening, taste tests, cafeteria purchasing and food preparation changes, student- or teacher-led clubs, student food competitions, school-wide celebrations, marketing and promotions, bulletin boards and publications, and many other activities. The degree to which individual or combined components of Farm to School programs influence health-oriented outcomes for youth, has proved difficult to measure, as have the outcomes themselves, while researchers lack a consistent framework for conducting transferrable research across such diverse programs.

We explore current national research and a wide array of ongoing Farm to School programs in Vermont (n>100) to determine ways to develop comparable studies examining health and nutrition impacts for children of farm to school programs. We examine commonalities and differences in program components and outcomes measured. We examine evidence of the impacts of Farm to School on changes in nutrition-related childhood behaviors, and likely factors influencing these changes. Next, we provide examples of how theoretical constructs in Social Cognitive Theory can effectively provide a framework for examining the impacts of highly varied and dispersed Farm to School efforts on childhood nutrition, and for yielding more comparable and transferrable results. We describe the relationship between key constructs of the Social Cognitive Theory, such as behavioral control, expectations, and locus of control, and how these constructs might apply to dietary behavior change incorporating local, healthful foods and Farm to School activities.

Finally, we provide evidence from Farm-to-school programs to explain why these highly varied efforts represent strong opportunities for achieving desired behavior changes likely to positively influence childhood nutrition. The paper, addressing school nutrition education practitioners and childhood nutrition researchers, was funded by a University of Vermont Whitepaper Series.

Primary Contact: Linda Berlin, PhD

Address: UVM Center for Sustainable Agriculture, University of Vermont, 106 High Point Center, Suite 300, Colchester, VT 05446-8800

Telephone: 802-656-0669 Email: Linda.Berlin@uvm.edu

Title: Building Capacity for Local Food System Education Across Maryland: Determining Interest, Readiness, and Training Needs of Extension Educators, Nutrition Educators, and Master Gardeners in Developing Youth Garden Education Programs

Author(s): Kim Norris, Carol Miller, Lisa Lachenmayr

Institution: University of Maryland

Garden education and Farm-to-School programs are being promoted as valuable education avenues for addressing childhood obesity and health issues because these programs allow youth to make stronger connections with local and regional food systems and better understand how their food is grown. Successful garden education programs require organizational buy-in for program establishment; educator and facilitation skills; food and nutrition education knowledge; food production, processing, and food safety skills; and gardening knowledge and skills. Prior to launching our newly developed youth-oriented nutrition and gardening education curriculum, *Growing Healthy Habits*, University of Maryland Extension's Food Supplement Nutrition Education program sought to determine the level of interest, skills, and readiness among initial curriculum users and trainers teaching others to use the curriculum. Information was captured voluntarily through a post-training on-line survey, two weeks after 67 Extension personnel, nutrition educators, garden educators, and key Extension collaborators were introduced to the curriculum and methods for establishing and successfully implementing programs using the curriculum. Post-training survey results (n=35) were to be used to assess likely current recruitment levels, and training needs to expand Extension-facilitated youth garden education programs.

Participant interest in conducting youth garden education programs was high (96%), and reasons for interest converged around its value as a tool for providing relevant, hands-on learning opportunities for meeting school standards and improving youth health and development. Participants with sufficient experience and access to sites for program launch were few (<20%). The poster will also describe perceived barriers, readiness levels regarding different aspects of program development, and priority training needs. Results imply that garden-oriented nutrition education represents a new intersect for our educators who traditionally worked in one or more, but not all, of the critical nutrition, gardening, education, and school organization arenas. Results define both the need and opportunity for training and or working options where experienced garden educators work alongside experienced nutrition educators to establish and conduct high quality garden-oriented youth nutrition education programs.

Funding provided by USDA SNAP-Ed. *E.g., Maryland Department of Education, University of Maryland Family and Consumer Science faculty, and Master Gardener coordinators in Maryland.

Primary Contact: Kim Norris

Address: Food Supplement Nutrition Education, University of Maryland Extension,
10632 Little Patuxent Parkway, Suite 435, Columbia, MD 21044

Telephone: 410-715-6903 Email: knorris1@umd.edu

Title: *Eat Wyoming: Wyoming Specialty Crops and Local Foods Project*

Author(s): Jennifer Jacobsen, RD; Suzy Pelican, MS, RD; Kentz Willis, MS

Institution: University of Wyoming (UW) Cooperative Extension Service

Eat Wyoming seeks to enhance and expand existing relationships among specialty crop growers, other local food producers, related networks and consumers in Wyoming through development, implementation, and evaluation of three components: a Wyoming-specific local foods guide, local food expos, and a training module for extension educators to promote local foods.

Progress to date: Since the project's inception in January 2010, we have developed a project logo; drafted a Wyoming-specific database of specialty crops, other agricultural food items, value-added products, and related networks; and created a website (www.uwyo.edu/eatwyo) that allows updating and posting of current project information, including a form for submission of information missing from the database. With regards to promotion, we have created a postcard for distribution at various events around the state; we have exhibited at several state-wide agricultural, sustainability, and nutrition conferences; and the project has been featured in a UW department newsletter distributed widely within and beyond Wyoming.

Initial challenges & decisions: Understandably, the original granting agency restricted use of funds to specialty crops. To help support promotion of non-specialty crops, we are documenting time, effort, and resources – above the original grant commitment – as match, and we sought and received funding from a second source. To avoid confusion related to value-added products, *Eat Wyoming* defines “value added” as a product with one or more components grown or raised in Wyoming.

Project plans: With funding through September 2011, we will enhance the website, making the database more flexible and versatile for visitors to access and use. We will continue to expand the database, eventually making it available to producers and consumers state-wide as a hard-copy and an online resource, with both versions having additional features such as food safety tips, recipes, and other local food information. We will also develop and pilot-test local foods expos in two communities. These expos will be a central component of the training module developed for other educators to use.

Funding: *Eat Wyoming* is supported by the Wyoming Department of Agriculture's Specialty Crop Program and from joint funding through UW Cooperative Extension Service and School of Energy Resources.

Primary Contact: Jennifer Jacobsen

Address: PO Box 1708, Jackson, WY 83001

Telephone: 307-733-3087 Email: jjacobsen@tetonwyo.org

Title: Collaborating Efforts for the Farm-to-School Initiative: Maryland Food Supplement Nutrition Education Program Makes Great Strides

Author: Erin Braunscheidel, MHS, RD

Institution: Food Supplement Nutrition Education, University of Maryland Extension

The Food Supplement Nutrition Education Program (FSNE), part of University of Maryland Extension (UME), provides community nutrition education to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants and those eligible for SNAP benefits. UME FSNE collaborative efforts have led to opportunities to partner with state and local organizations to expand Farm-to-School programs across the state. While FSNE involvement in Farm-to-School programs is limited by Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP-Ed) funding requirements, through strategic curriculum development and selection, FSNE has found creative ways to lead in efforts to connect children to local and regional food systems to promote consumption of nutritious foods.

Since 2005, FSNE has been conducting a train-the-trainer program in elementary and middle schools across Maryland called “Integrating Nutrition Education into the School Curriculum”. This class provides teachers with resources on how to incorporate nutrition concepts and physical activity into their required curriculum objectives. This program, a model collaboration with Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), is also approved for 2 MSDE continuing education credits.

In December 2009, FSNE introduced Growing Health Habits (GHH), a gardening-oriented nutrition education curriculum for elementary youth. This program provides hands-on learning opportunities to teach standards-based farm-to-school concepts in schools, and represents one of the first statewide farm to school curricula tied to state curriculum standards. FSNE has collaborated extensively with community organizations, Master Gardeners, and MSDE to help establish school gardens and implement this curriculum in schools.

FSNE is currently developing a curriculum using children’s books to promote nutrition concepts focusing on the consumption of fruits and vegetables and use of farmer’s markets through language arts for pre-k and elementary school youth, to be introduced in August 2010.

In September 2010, Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) and MSDE will celebrate Maryland Homegrown School Lunch Week to promote the Farm-to-School initiative statewide. FSNE has been invited to plan and support this program through the use of their school-focused nutrition curricula. FSNE resources highlighting local fruits and vegetables will be promoted, and FSNE nutrition educators will be supporting the Farm-to-School movement in low-income schools across the state during this week.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program funded project.

Primary Contact: Erin Braunscheidel

Address: 10632 Little Patuxent Parkway, Suite 435, Columbia MD 21044

Telephone: 410.715.6903

Email: embraun@umd.edu

Title: Home Food Preservation Education: Local Food Systems in a Jar!

Author(s): Kathy Savoie, MS, RD; Kate McCarty, VISTA Volunteer

Institution: University of Maine Cooperative Extension

Historically, preserving and “putting foods by” has been logical strategy in a local food systems. More recently, people have reconnected with food preservation as a means to extend their access to local foods beyond our abbreviated northern growing season. UMaine Cooperative Extension is recognized as a source of reliable and current food preservation, food storage and food safety information through publications, workshops and response to consumer calls. Canning, freezing, drying and root cellaring are methods of food preservation that help individuals maintain a year-round supply of local foods.

In 2009, over 600 people attended food preservation workshops, Preserving the Harvest, to learn about food preservation methods, to gain self-sufficiency skills to meet their own food needs and to gain confidence through hands-on, experiential kitchen labs. Freezing vegetables, canning jams/jellies, canning salsa and canning pickles were identified by workshop attendees as the top four items they intended to preserve.

Preserving the Harvest workshop evaluations identified the following impacts as a result of attending the workshop: 88% planned to do something differently when preserving foods, 98% understood how to preserve foods better and 97% gained confidence in their food preservation skills.

The Master Food Preservers program was launched in 2008 to help meet the increased demand for food preservation programs. The Master Food Preserver program will help to extend UMaine Cooperative Extension's education programs through trained individuals who serve as volunteers and resources within the community to provide the public with research-based information from the UMaine Extension and USDA. This year, 19 volunteers served 293 hours of public education volunteer time.

Master Food Preserver volunteer opportunities enrich our communities and local food systems through creating a more informed and skilled public who will be better able to meet their own food needs through food preservation of locally grown and produced foods. The Backyard Locavore Tour, displays at Farmers' Markets and public workshops have been effective methods to reach the public with food preservation resources.

Primary Contact: Kathy Savoie, MS, RD

Address: PO Box 9300, Portland, ME 04104

Telephone: 207-780-4205 Email: ksavoie@umext.maine.edu

Title: Building Effective Local and Regional Food System Partnerships through Collaborative Engaged Research.

Author(s): Ardyth Gillespie, Kathleen Dischner, Helen Howard, Laura Smith, Leigh Gantner.

Institution: Cornell University and Cornell Cooperative Extension

We have been connecting food systems with health and well-being through county/community-campus partnerships and generating grounded theory about effective food system partnership principles and strategies. Outcomes from our Collaborative Engaged Research (CER) which will be presented include a tool for engaging community food system stakeholders in decision-making about their community food system and partnership principles and strategies. CER is an asset-based approach to understanding family and community resources (defined as human, social, cultural, financial, built, natural, and political capital) and its practitioners seek to mobilize these assets for facilitating desired social, individual, and family behavior change. In CER stakeholders engage with researchers in co-generating grounded theory that illuminates their own local dynamic and evolving food decision-making systems and the social structures and resource allocations involved. The Community Food System (CFS) tool is designed to help community food system stakeholders (community nutritionists, community development programmers, food assistance providers, educators, food growers and co-producers (consumers) achieve their goals and create resilient community food systems through collaborations. It challenges participants to understand what constitutes a food system and how their agency fits into the current system. It also encourages participants to take an active role in improving their food system and building effective food system partnerships. Examples of food systems maps from workshops with a variety of groups will be presented as well as the method for leading a group in this process and a workshop evaluation form. The partnership strategies which we have used successfully in interdisciplinary campus community food system partnerships are: agree on common and complementary goals, clarify roles and responsibilities, develop protocols for partnering, commit the necessary resources, create a flexible and trusting atmosphere, celebrate milestones and evaluate success.

Funding: This project was funded by Cornell Cooperative Extension county associations and the New York Agricultural Experiment Station.

Primary Contact: Ardyth Gillespie

Mailing Address: Division of Nutritional Sciences, MVR Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853

Telephone: 607-255-2635; 607-592-0983 (cell) **Email:** ahg2@cornell.edu