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ENERGIZE YOUR LIFE!
EAT HEALTHY-BE ACTIVE

This newsletter is produced by the *Nutrition Education Network of Washington* to enhance communication and coordination among those who educate Washington families about nutrition and food. *Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators* shares brief information about programs and materials that support healthful and enjoyable eating.

STAFF

Kathleen Manenica, MS, CN
Executive Editor
State Program Coordinator, *Food \$ense*
253-445-4598
manenica@wsu.edu

Martha Marino, MA, RD, CD
Writer
206-817-1466
martha_marino@yahoo.com

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators can be sent to you electronically each month. There is no charge. To subscribe or unsubscribe, contact Kathleen Manenica, WSU Puyallup, 253-445-4598, e-mail manenica@wsu.edu.

To access past issues, go to
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USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. SNAP. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact: <http://foodhelp.wa.gov> or the Basic Food Program at: 1 877 501 2233.

This Month's Focus: Farm to School

As the fall harvest season is upon us, we think about the farmers in our state who produce such a variety of healthful foods. Many of these foods are finding their way to school cafeterias, bringing good nutrition and local pride to kids. The focus of the September issue of the *Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators* is farm to school, just in time for October Farm to School Month. It includes valuable information for school nutrition staff and administrators, parents, nutrition educators, and...farmers! If you know a farmer, forward this newsletter to them to see the amazing things that farmers are doing to get local, nutritious foods to children in their own areas of Washington State.

Great Strides for Washington's Statewide Farm to School Efforts – Through

the passage of the Local Farms – Healthy Kids Act in 2008, the Washington's ambitious Farm to School Program was born. Chris Iberle with the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) says that the program is working well and has made a big impact on both schools and farms. And it has made a big impact on kids! He comments that the National Farm to School Network found that students in schools with farm to school programs increased fruit and vegetable consumption between 1.0 to 1.3 servings per day, and that more students eat lunch at school. A key project for this program was the creation of *A School's Guide to Purchasing Washington-Grown Food*. This guide assists schools in developing procurement procedures for local food. It was developed through a partnership between WSDA, Washington Sustainable Food and Farming Network (WSFFN), and the Washington Environmental Council through a grant from Public Health-Seattle & King County and US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. See <http://wsffn.org/our-work/farm-to-school/guide-to-purchasing-washington-grown-food>. As the program has evolved, it has moved into payment policy issues, assistance with the competitive bid process, school kitchen overhauls, building the value chain and supply, farm tours, scratch cooking classes for school nutrition staff, and much more. A key training program for farmers about food safety is Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), since roughly half of Washington State schools require GAP-Certified products. Because much of Washington's produce is harvested in the summer when school is out, certain school districts have done summertime freezing canning, and drying to preserve local foods for



Source: Photo Sam Tonn, with permission from WSDA

the school year. Chris encourages schools that haven't started a farm to school program to get in touch – WSDA will start where they are with resources and technical assistance. See www.wafarmtoschool.org for a wealth of information about WSDA's farm to school trainings, conferences, resources, and pilot projects. (Contact: Chris Iberle, Education & Outreach, Small Farm Direct Marketing and Farm to School, WSDA, 206-267-1874, Ciberle@agr.wa.gov).

Networking to Connect Farmers with Schools – Farm to school presents a dual challenge: farmers struggle to figure out



Source: Joan Qazi, WSFFN

how to gain access to school markets, while schools are challenged to know who the farmers are in their area and the foods that they produce. In addition to efforts by WSDA, the Washington Sustainable Food and Farming Network (WSFFN) helps bridge this gap. Joan Qazi, Farm to School Coordinator in Central Washington, says that WSFFN strengthens local food systems by increasing the opportunities for schools to buy Washington-grown food, helps farmers sell their products locally, and helps students get access to fresh, local food. As schools source more local produce, school food service directors, kitchen managers, and staff do more scratch cooking. A barrier to scratch cooking can be inadequate kitchen equipment, such as a reheating oven. Joan has found grant funding for kitchen equipment, and also for chef-taught classes on knife skills. Through WSFFN, she has taken kitchen directors and staff to farms, and has helped schools bring farmers to talk with students. Joan shares a story that a farmer visited an Ephrata school on Taste Washington Day and gave the kids samples of kale and carrots to taste. Later in the week at a farmers' market, one of the

students brought his parents to buy fresh carrots for the family to eat at home. Joan comments that the program extends from the school, to the home, and to the community. WSFFN offers many useful resources for both farmers and schools:

- *Local Food Directory for Schools and Farms in Central Washington* includes products that school districts would like to buy and what farmers have available to sell. <http://wsffn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Central-WA-Regional-Farm-to-School-Guide-web.pdf>.
- *Local Food Directory for Schools in NW Washington* is designed for school food service and farm-to-school programs in Whatcom, Skagit, and Island Counties, www.whatcomfarmtoschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Local-Food-Directory-for-Schools-in-Northwest-WA-print-version-1-1.pdf. A companion piece is the *Northwest Regional Farm to School Guide* for parents, teachers, administrators, food service staff, school board members, and community organizations, www.whatcomfarmtoschool.org/resources/nw-regional-farm-to-school-directory.

(Contact: Joan Qazi, Farm to School Coordinator Central Washington, WSFFN, 509-881-9182, jqazi@wsffn.org, <http://wsffn.org>).

Taste Washington Day – Schools across our state will celebrate Taste Washington Day to kick off October as Farm to School

Month. This celebration of local agriculture is a partnership program of the Washington School Nutrition Association and WSDA's Farm to School Program. Participating schools may feature menus highlighting local foods, invite farmers to lunch, have classroom activities to learn about local food, and more. For menus and a wealth of resources, go to <http://www.wafarmtoschool.org/page/28/taste-washington-day>. Not enough time to ramp up for Taste Washington Day? WSDA is planning a Winter Taste Washington Day for February to showcase local foods that can be on the menu in cold months, such as apples, squash, and root vegetables.



Source: Joan Qazi, WSFFN

Energizing Washington Farm to School Video – To see how excited kids can be to

eat local food at their school, watch this six-minute video about Wenatchee School District's Farm to School program, led by Food Service Director Kent Getzin. www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJDgINrCakw.

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Farm to Food Pantry Video – Washington State produce and dairy farmers care about providing perishable nutritious foods to our state’s hungry people. In this video, a dairy farmer in Monroe and a produce grower in Carnation share their stories. Produced in a partnership between WSDA and the Dairy Farmers of Washington/Washington State Dairy Council. www.youtube.com/watch?v=3NhnlOK4LLo.

IN THE MEDIA

New Rule to Reduce Risk of Cancer from Local Fish – As nutrition educators, we recommend eating more fish for better health. Here in Washington State we have bountiful seafood in our local lakes, rivers, and marine waters. However, those waters can be contaminated from chemicals that are part of wastewater discharges. In high enough amount, those chemicals can increase the risk for certain cancers. Last month the Washington State Department of Ecology adopted a new rule that sets standards for 97 chemicals and submitted it to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for approval. The updated standards are based on a higher intake of fish in the diet. The new limits mean that if a person eats 175 grams of fish per day (about 6 ounces) for 70 years, the chance of developing cancer is only one in a million. Previous standards were based on just 6.5 grams of fish per day (less than 7 ounces per month). In our state, some groups consume much more, especially Native American and immigrant populations. The ball is in EPA’s court now and we should know in a couple of months whether the rule is accepted or rejected. www.ecy.wa.gov/water/standards.



Source: Thinkstock

Heart Association Just Says No to Added Sugar – Although the US Dietary Guidelines 2015-2020 recommend shifting added sugars to no more than 10% of daily calories, the American Heart Association (AHA) recommends even lower levels. The AHA recommends that children under the age of 2 not consume any added sugars, partly to keep their palates from developing a preference for overly sweet foods. In the statement issued last month, the AHA recommends that all kids from 2 to 18 limit sugary drinks to just 8 ounces per week and that they not consume more than 25 grams of added sugars per day. For further explanation of these recommendations, go to: <http://newsroom.heart.org/news/children-should-eat-less-than-25-grams-of-added-sugars-daily>.

USDA Makes School Environments Even Healthier – In July, the USDA issued four final rules to implement important provisions of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act. Among them is a requirement for developing and annually assessing local School Wellness Policies. Another rule about Smart Snacks in School aligns the nutritional quality of snacks sold to children during the school day with USDA’s science-based standards for school lunches and breakfasts. www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=2016/07/0172.xml.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

NEW! Washington Smarter Lunchrooms Toolkit – An incredibly useful, pilot-tested suite of materials to help students make healthier choices at school has just been released by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Bianca Smith, RD, Team Nutrition Grant Coordinator with OSPI, says that the resources were piloted in 13 schools to help create a healthier school environment. The feedback from those schools, and from the students who taste-tested the recipes, was used to create the final product. Best of all, OSPI and the Washington School Nutrition Association are partnering to train contracted trainers, who in turn will train local school districts how to use the new toolkit. The trainings, to be advertised in the Apple Press, will take place October to December. Participants will receive a printed copy of the toolkit and fun fruit and vegetable name cards. The toolkit uses evidence-based research from the Cornell Center for Behavioral Economics, but all of the resources were created here in Washington State. Participants in the field test told Bianca that the toolkit made the process of improving the lunchroom much easier and more manageable. www.k12.wa.us/ChildNutrition/Programs/NSLBP/SmarterLunchrooms.aspx. (Contact for the toolkit and the training: Bianca Smith, Team Nutrition Grant Coordinator, OSPI Child Nutrition Services, 360-725-6057, Bianca.Smith@k12.wa.us).

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Farm to School Educational Materials – The National Farm to School Network offers a wealth of educational tools and ideas from schools around the country. It also includes suggestions for working with Native American populations.

www.farmtoschool.org.

Farm to School with Dairy – The Washington State Dairy Council’s “Dairy Farm to School” program is designed for grades 3-5 and includes a fun video with puppets, teacher’s guide, and student worksheet. Additional educational resources about Washington agricultural products are available such as “Incr-edibles” posters, booklets, and bookmarks, and “ABCs of Washington Agriculture” poster with classroom activity ideas. <http://nutrition.eatsmart.org/pages/dairy-farm-to-school>.

WASHINGTON GROWN

Fresh This Month – If a cornucopia could be filled to overflowing, September is the month. At farmers’ markets shoppers can find pickling cucumbers, corn, peppers in a zillion varieties from hot and spicy to mild, summer and winter varieties of squash. It’s a good month to try a new apple variety as so many have been introduced lately. For fruits, pears, peaches, apricots, and melons are in season.

Bell Peppers in a Rainbow of Colors – Bell peppers are nearly all the colors of the rainbow: red, orange, green, yellow, purple, or white. Green bell peppers are under-ripe and therefore slightly bitter. Peppers are low in calories since they are mainly water, and they’re an exceptionally rich source of vitamin C. Peppers are also good sources of antioxidants, vitamin B6, folate, and potassium. Certain colors of peppers (red and orange) provide a bonus: they’re good sources of beta-carotene (vitamin A). <https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/nutrition-through-seasons/seasonal-produce/bell-peppers> and <https://authoritynutrition.com/foods/bell-peppers/>.



Source: Martha Marino

DID YOU KNOW?

Nationwide, 6 out of 10 people biting into an apple will be eating fruit grown right here in Washington State. <http://bestapples.com/resources-teachers-corner/fun-facts>.



EAT TOGETHER EAT BETTER – Family Meals Focus

Because our readers have told us that Family Meals is a hot topic, in the May 2011 issue we began a small section on recent news relating to this topic and our long-standing signature program, Eat Together, Eat Better.

Pediatricians Support Family Meals to Prevent Obesity and Eating Disorders – The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) issued a clinical report with guidance for pediatricians to help prevent obesity and eating disorders in adolescents. One of the five recommendations is to increase the frequency of family meals. The AAP writes that family meals are associated with improved dietary intake, opportunities for parents to model good eating behavior, and a time for parents and teens to interact. More family meals means more fruits, vegetables, grains, calcium-rich foods, and fiber, and reduced consumption of carbonated beverages. Frequent family meals protect girls from disordered eating behavior, purging, binge eating, and dieting.

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/early/2016/08/18/peds.2016-1649.full.pdf>.

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