



Adding a Youth Flavor to Local Foods

Growing Community Involvement

Intended Audience:

- 8 year olds-18 year olds
- Adults who work with youth on food topics

Lesson Objectives:

Session participants will:

- Gain a basic understanding of local foods and nutrition.
- Have a better understanding of where their food comes from.

Time: Varies depending on activity

Equipment and supplies:

- Harvest of the month calendar
- List of potential activities to conduct from “Community Involvement Handout”
- Particular supplies outlined in activities (e.g. access to the internet for the internet search, paper and writing utensil to make a list, etc.)

Do Ahead:

- Review activity instructions.
- Gather equipment and supplies.
- Make copies of the handouts with suggested activities for participants.
- Conduct at least 1 of the other 3 local foods activities below to establish a foundation before conducting this lesson:
 - Sensory Testing
 - Grow Your Own
 - Chopped Competition

BACKGROUND

In order to encourage the local foods movement, community involvement is crucial. Individuals must spread their knowledge to others in order to promote the benefits of local foods. When people inquire about local foods being used at restaurants, groceries, and other places food is offered, it is more likely these establishments will look into offering local foods to consumers.

WHAT TO DO

The following activities are suggestions of what can be done at a 4-H club meeting, field trip, on your own, or with a group of individuals. They are suggestions taken from the *Local Food Does It Matter What You Eat?* idea starter. Pick one activity to do with a group of individuals and then challenge them to try other activities on their own.

Suggested Activities:

- *Meal planning.* Incorporate at least two locally grown or produced foods into your family meals each week for one month. Refer to the harvest of the month calendar for a list of produce in season.
- *Family food assessment.* Survey your family’s eating habits. Make a list of the types of foods your family eats. Think about whether some of these foods can be purchased from local growers or producers. Discuss this during a meal with your family. What do they think?
- *Family food survey.* Review your family’s food shopping habits.
 - Make a list of the stores where your family usually buys their food.
 - Are the stores owned locally or are they regional/national chains?
 - Why does your family choose to shop there?
 - Does your family ever shop at farmers’ markets?
 - If not, what would make them stop and shop there?
 - Are you concerned with food safety? List four things that might cause concerns.
 - Are you aware of the food eco-footprint? List four ways that food production and distribution might negatively impact the environment.
- *Start a compost bin in your kitchen.* Keep it clean and fresh by emptying it every few days into a compost pile outside. Go online and check out “Composting for Kids” from Texas A&M Extension Service at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/kindergarden/kidscompost/cover.html>.
- *Plan and plant a small garden this spring* (if you don’t have one already). If space is an issue, try cherry tomatoes, herbs, beans, or snow peas in containers.



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COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Sources:

- Raisin, B. (2010). *Local Food Does It Matter What You Eat?* Ohio State University Extension. Retrieved from: <http://www.ohio4h.org/selfdetermined>
- Locate a local farmer's market: <http://www.localharvest.org>
- Research Ohio products: <http://www.ohioproud.org/searcpartners.php>
- Find additional ideas at: <http://localfoods.osu.edu/ohio-local-foods-week/ideas-celebrating>
- Learn more about local foods in Ohio: www.localfoods.osu.edu

Additional lessons in this series can be found online at:

<http://localfoods.osu.edu/adding-youth-flavor-extensions-signature-programs>

- *Ask your school cafeteria director* if they serve any local foods. Dig deep. Ask why or why not?
- *Do a quick internet search* on “local food in schools” and write a short essay (two or three paragraphs) describing your findings. Could your school participate? What foods would be easy to begin with?
- *Organize a campaign* to ask your school to offer fruit that is grown locally. Include vending machines!
- *Ask your supermarket produce manager* if they purchase foods that are grown or produced locally. Dig deep. Ask for their definition of “local.” Do they consider it within a 50-mile radius? Or is it 250 miles? Not all “local” labels are equal.
- *Investigate restaurants* in your town that serve locally grown or produced foods. The next time your family eats out, ask to go to one of them. (And remember to tell the restaurant why you chose them!)
- *Investigate farmers' markets* in your area. How many are there? What days/hours do they operate? What types of foods and products do they sell?
- *Go online and search* for any Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) or Food Co-Op operating in your area. Investigate the pricing structure. Compare it to supermarket expenses. Discuss with your family the benefits of fresh food, and what it means to buy directly from a local farmer. If they agree, sign up for the program!

TALK IT OVER

Reflect:

- Ask, “What activity will you do on your own? What do you hope to accomplish by choosing this activity?”
- “How can you encourage others to purchase local foods?”
- “What can we do in our community to promote local foods?”

Apply:

- Do a report for your class or club meeting on what you've discovered under one of the topics you have selected.
- Encourage others to purchase local foods.
- Take the self-determined project “*Local Food Does it Matter What You Eat?*” (see ‘Sources’).
- Next time you go to the store, commit to purchasing \$10 worth of local foods.

PREPARED BY

- Hannah K. Epley, Extension Specialist
4-H Youth Development
OSU Extension, State 4-H Office
614-247-8144
epley.24@osu.edu
- Dustin Homan, Volunteer
4-H Youth Development
homan.64@osu.edu