

Ohio Local Foods Week 2015

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INTRODUCTION

Local Foods is one of Ohio State University (OSU) Extension's Signature Programs. In the context of food, the word *local* is often used as part of a larger discussion on nutrition, economics, the environment and a specific community or geographic area. A *food system* considers a broader context to include everything from growing to eating; or the processes of production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management.

In 2015, Ohio Local Foods Week was planned as a way to highlight this broad topic and to engage Ohio producers, consumers, OSU Extension staff and community partners to feature the work that is being done with local foods throughout the year. Ohio Local Foods week is not only about enjoying the tastes of local foods but is also about becoming more aware and better informed about the nutritional, economic, and social benefits of local foods in Ohio.

Ohio Local Foods Week Event Mark



AIM

- Create an online *Toolbox* of resources for Ohio Local Foods Week
- The topic and resources are inclusive of all OSU Extension program areas
- The week is applicable to Extension staff as well as to community partners
- In addition to communities and businesses, individuals and families can choose to actively participate in Ohio Local Foods Week



METHODS

In January 2015, a planning team was called together with representatives from all four Extension program areas, all parts of the state, and different job responsibilities. The planning team was open to everyone as we made direct contact with staff who had worked on local foods topics in the past and sent out an email to all Extension with an invitation for participation and input. In addition to OSU Extension staff, other partners joined in the planning and promotion of Ohio Local Foods Week.

All of the planning for the week was completed through 7 monthly conference calls, emails, additional phone conferences and sharing of resources in Buckeye Box. The main work of the planning team:

- Decide date of week to celebrate
- Create and review templates of materials for Ohio Local Foods Week Toolkit including: idea starter, proclamation template, event flyer, invitation and letterhead, and survey and link to online \$10 local foods challenge
- Create and promote the \$10 Ohio Local Foods Challenge
- Create Facebook page and Twitter account #olfw15
- Update the Local Foods Signature Program website to share all of the materials
- Promote the Toolkit and Ohio Local Foods Week

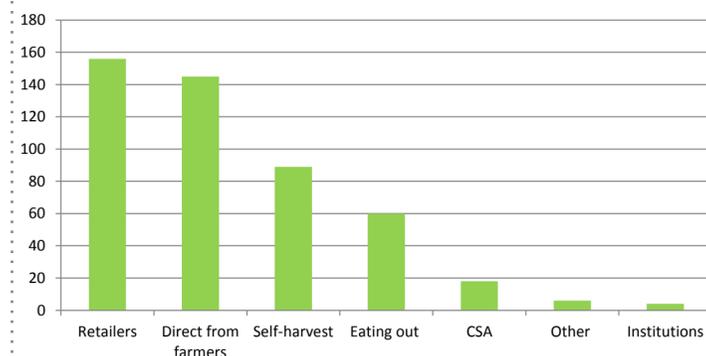
Ohio Local Foods Week was promoted through:

- Emails to all Extension
- Direct emails and personal invitations to Extension staff and partnering organizations
- Webinars and updates through program areas
- Ohio Local Foods Week was a topic for online and print material such as Buckeye Yard and Garden onLine and Live Smart Ohio blog posts
- News releases from Ohio State University's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) Communications on a variety of topics including regional/local foods guides and the \$10 local foods challenge

RESULTS

- Over 30 community events publicized around the state to celebrate the week
- State of Ohio Proclamation and proclamations or resolutions from at least three counties
- 225 individuals completed online challenge to commit to spending at least \$10 on local foods during the week
- 95% said they would spend over \$10 with an estimated commitment of \$3,820.00 to be spent on local foods that week
- They also answered the following question:

Where do you currently buy most of your local food? Please check all that apply.



CONCLUSIONS

Although the emphasis of this event was one specific week, we recognize that local foods is a timely topic throughout the entire year in Ohio. As a follow up to the Ohio Local Foods Week 2015, the Local Foods Signature Program will use the Ohio Local Foods Week Facebook page to share updates throughout the year and promote other specific events such as Ohio Apple Crunch Day in October with Farm to School leaders. In addition, resources from Ohio Local Foods Week were adapted to partner with 4-H and a 2015 Innovative Grant titled, *Adding a Youth Flavor to Extension's Signature Programs*.

The Local Foods Signature Program has two co-leaders, one from Family and Consumer Sciences and one from Agriculture and Natural Resources. One of the many benefits of this co-leadership is the opportunity to be aware of and highlight resources, contacts and research from more than one point of view. The topic of local foods is very interdisciplinary and crosses all four Extension program areas. This offers great opportunity to grow Ohio Local Foods Week in the future.

Facebook photo and post, August 11, 2015 by J.K.

Supporting [Ohio Local Foods Week](#) with our weekly trip to the [Downtown Lima Farmers' Market](#) to spend some [StampStampede](#) cash on gorgeous goodies from [The Bent Spoon Lima](#), [Merrill Marie Soapworks](#), [Coffe Amor](#), [B & L Produce Farm](#), [Eileen's Natural Soap](#), [The Sweet Note](#), & many more [smile emoticon](#) #olfw15 #itmatterswhereyougrowit #stampstampede #stampmoretipmore #getmoneyout #olfw15



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