

What's on your plate tonight?

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Currently, the rolling landscapes of southern Ohio are filled with lush, green fields of crops that create a picturesque scenery for those who stop to enjoy the view. The same can be said for those who stop to enjoy the local products of agricultural producers as their plate will be filled with fresh, flavorful food. Local produce and meats have numerous benefits for both the consumer and agricultural producer. These benefits include economic stimulus, environmental, health, and quality of life benefits.

Did you know that the average family of three spends \$9,000.00 annually on food? According to Brian Raison, from Ohio State University Extension, if the average family of three spent just 10 percent of their money on local foods, it would cause an economic impact of \$900 to go to local producers. More consumers of local foods would lead to a greater economic impact for local agricultural producers. Currently, agricultural markets are in a challenging place for many farmers in the United States. Diversification into multiple commodities is one way to help alleviate some of the financial stress caused by lower commodity prices, but there also needs to be a strong local market for these products.

Local foods don't travel thousands of miles to be marketed, and therefore do not have as many negative environmental impacts. "Food imported from far away is older and has traveled on trucks or planes, and sat in warehouses" before it gets to the consumer (Grubinger, 2010, p. 2). Due to the decreased travel time, the food is fresher, contains more nutrients, and is generally more colorful (Grubinger, 2010; Raison, 2014).

Additionally, local foods have positive health benefits. Going for a walk at a u-pick farm, eating fresh produce, and preparing meals at home with family all have added physical and mental health benefits. Going to local farm businesses can be a social experience. Meeting new people, trying new things, and learning about local food production can be a great opportunity for people of any age to become more active in the community.

What are some local foods and where can you find them? Great question! Apples, peaches, sweet corn, strawberries, lettuce, tomatoes, meat, and milk, among others, are all produced locally and available for your table (some things may only be available seasonally). There are multiple farm stands, farmers markets, orchards, and u-pick farms you can visit to purchase these (and more) local products. If you don't want to go through the process of making a pie or salad with fresh fruit, there are bakeries and restaurants in Highland County that are using local products on their menu. So, try something new tonight and eat locally.

For more information about local foods contact the Highland County Extension Office at 937-393-1918.

References:

Grubinger, V. (2010, April). Ten Reasons to Buy Local Food. Retrieved from <https://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/factsheets/buylocal.html>

Raison, B. (2014, October 17). Local Food. *TEDxDayton*. Retrieved from <https://u.osu.edu/raison/local-food/>

Upcoming Events

The next **Monthly Extension Program** will be held on August 27, 2018, at the Pondo Center in Hillsboro, Ohio. The guest speaker will be Dr. Scott Shearer, who will discuss Big Data and UAVs in Production Agriculture. Advanced registration is required as lunch will be included in the registration fee. Tickets are available for purchase at the Highland County Extension Office at 937-393-1918. The cost of registration is \$20.00. The deadline to purchase a ticket in advance is August 23, 2018. For more information contact Brooke Beam at 937-393-1918 or beam.49@osu.edu.

Beef Quality Assurance Trainings:

- Tuesday, August 28, 2018, 6:30 P.M., Union Stockyards, Hillsboro
- Thursday, September 13, 2018, 6:30 P.M., Producers Stockyards, Hillsboro
- Thursday, October 25, 2018, 6:30 P.M., Producers Stockyards, Hillsboro

Call your local Ohio State University Extension Office to register for the date and location of the BQA training of your choice. The Highland County Extension Office can be reached at 937-393-1918.

Tickets for the 2018 **Farm Science Review** are now available at the Highland County Extension Office. Tickets purchased at the Highland County Extension Office are \$7, tickets will be \$10 at the gate. Children 5 and under are free.

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