Food Security and Improved Health  
- Rural and Urban Impacts  

Linda Kirk Fox
Food Security and Improved Health – Rural and Urban Impacts

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Cooperative Extension’s role

• America’s desire to have a healthy population requires a healthful and varied diet along with physical activity to help people maintain a healthy body weight, enhance general wellbeing, avoid obesity, and reduce the risk for a number of diseases – heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, and osteoporosis.
Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program - EFNEP

• Since 1969, EFNEP operates through the 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions in every state, the District of Columbia, and in the six U.S. territories.

• Using a research-based, interactive approach, peer educators from the communities they support enrolled over ½ million limited-resource families and youth each year.

• More than 80 percent of EFNEP families report living at or below 100 percent of poverty, and nearly 70 percent indicate being of minority status.

• This is important because poor health disproportionately affects minority and limited-resource audiences.
EFNEP: Results

• Improved health and well-being of limited resource families and youth. Additionally, EFNEP leads to public savings.

• Research shows that better health is associated with reduced health care costs, less absenteeism from work, and less dependence on emergency food assistance.
How do our diets compare to recommended intake?

**Usual intake as a percent of goal or limit**

**Eat more of these:**
- Whole grains: 15%
- Vegetables: 59%
- Fruits: 42%
- Dairy: 52%
- Seafood: 44%
- Oils: 61%
- Fiber: 40%
- Potassium: 56%
- Vitamin D: 28%
- Calcium: 75%

**Goal**

**Eat less of these:**
- Calories from SoFAS*: 280%
- Refined grains
- Sodium: 149%
- Saturated fat: 110%

**Limit**
Nutrition Highlights FY 11

• A goal is to help clients recognize the importance of each food group and consume foods from each group.

• The percent of clients eating the recommended number of servings from MyPyramid was less than 1% at baseline.
Nutrition Practices

• 94% improved diet
• 89% more often thought about healthy food choices when making food decisions
• 57% more often used the Nutrition Facts label
• 36% reported their children more often ate breakfast
Saving Money on Food...

- Families decreased the amount of money spent on food by $9.45/month
- Families enrolled in a food assistance program
How did they do it? Planning!

• Overall, 78% improved one or more of their food resource management practices
• 49% more often planned meals
• 42% more often compared prices
Who we reach...

4-H
- Youth 5 – 19 years
- Family

EFNEP
- Eligible Families and Youth and SNAP (Food Stamp) recipients

- Trained Youth Development Educators
- Volunteer Development

- Trained Nutrition Educators
- Volunteer Development
What we do...

4-H
- Youth development
- Fitness
- Health Rocks!
- Agriculture/Gardening
- STEM or Science
- Leadership / Citizenship
- Family Involvement

EFNEP
- Nutrition Education
- Physical Activity
- Food Resource management
- Life skills – Cooking, Meal planning, Garden enhanced nutrition
- Family Involvement
Georgia’s Childhood Overweight Prevention Project, FY11

• ~100 4-H staff members providing nutrition education in about 75 counties.

• “4-H Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyles”
EFNEP Youth Outreach 2011

• 20,513 youth reached through the EFNEP COPP initiative.
• Over 14,000 youth were evaluated using the Post/Pre Clicker evaluation method.
COPP Results

- Youth increased physical activity
- Decreased high-sugar beverages
- Increased fruits, vegetables
- Gained knowledge on serving sizes
- Greater understanding of how to eat a healthy diet
The Obesity Initiative at the University of Georgia, launched in January 2012, will address adult and childhood obesity and its related diseases. Advances in research and efforts in outreach aim to improve the health of Georgia’s citizens and decrease the cost of health care in the state.
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education (SNAP-Ed)

• USDA SNAP-Ed is a financial commitment by the federal government to leverage universities and multiple partners at the local level to increase opportunities and reduce barriers to education, nutritious and affordable food.

• Wisconsin led CES, piloted in 7 states in 1992, now with 56 LGUs participating.
SNAP-Ed Partners

- USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and state implementing agencies
- SNAP-Ed Connection web site
- Land-grant universities and Cooperative Extension
- Other SNAP-Ed contractors
- Economic Research Services (ERS)
SNAP-Ed

- Over $375 million annually through 52 state agencies
- Roughly one half from culturally diverse groups
- Priority audience is low income, e.g., at 120 percent of poverty or attend schools at or 50 percent free/reduced lunch standard
Working together FNS and CES

• Coordinated Action
• Promising practices
• Benchmarking outcomes
• National forum
• Centralized resources
• Prioritizing and program foci
Cooperative Extension as a catalyst

Socio-ecological Framework

Adapted from Story M et al., *Annu Rev Public Health* 2008;29:253-272