Impact of Food Demonstrations at local Farmers Markets and Food Pantries

Pauline Stokes, FCS SNAP-Ed Agent
Ann Vargo, FCS SNAP-Ed Agent
Welcome to the Family Nutrition Program!

- We serve low-income Virginians by supporting them to make healthy choices.
- We teach basic nutrition, budget food shopping, and food safety to both youth and adults across the state.
- We are a program of the Virginia Cooperative Extension.
What is Virginia Cooperative Extension?

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) is the educational outreach of Virginia’s land grant universities.

Virginia State University
Petersburg

Virginia Tech
Blacksburg
Mission
VCE/FNP

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) enables people to improve their lives by providing research-based educational resources through a network of on-campus and local extension offices, extension educators and extension volunteers.

The mission of FNP is to teach limited-resource families and youth to make healthier food choices and become better managers of available food resources for optimal health and growth.
Trying Something New

• How do we get patrons to try fruits and vegetables unfamiliar to them?

• Food Demonstrations!

• Gives patrons the opportunity to:
  • Taste something new
  • Try easy recipes
  • Learn easy cooking methods
  • Increase fruits and vegetables in their diet!
What is a Food Demonstration

• Shows people...
  • how to prepare a recipe using a cooking technique.
  • How to cook an unusual/unfamiliar food product.
  • Promotes produce from local farmers.
  • Helps move produce from shelf to table.
Where can Food Demonstrations be done.

- Farmers Markets/Community Fairs
- Food Pantries
- Community Gardens
- Grocery Stores
- During Cooking/Nutrition Classes
- On local TV cooking shows
The Basics of a Successful Demo

• Plan what you want to promote.
• Promote produce that’s on hand or in season
• Choose easy/simple recipes.
• Practice cooking the recipe at home and be comfortable with your presentation.
• Use a recipe but encourage people to flavor their own tastes- reduce salt/add spice.
• Be considerate of patrons with very limited food pantries and means to cook.
The Basics of a Successful Demo

• Involve your patrons who want to assist.

• Make your presentation colorful, clean and inviting.

• Follow food safety/food allergy guidelines

• Evaluation
Relationship Building

• Engage in conversations while you demo.
• Listen! (can help you plan future demos)
• Add a nutrition message or a lesson but keep it brief
• Thank patrons for participating in food demonstration
• Introduce/direct patrons to local producers
• Do it again – Build a relationship!
What’s the impact?

• Access to Healthy, affordable food- from the pantry to the bag to the table

• Patrons trying new foods

• Preparation can be easy!

• Fresh can taste good- spices instead of salt

• Buying/eating local sustains communities-win win

• Strengthen relationships between farmers and customers – build knowledge of where food originates
For more information

Pauline Stokes, FCS SNAP-Ed Agent,
pstokes@vt.edu
434/392-4246

Ann Vargo, FCS SNAP-Ed Agent
avargo@vt.edu
804/433-2556