

COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION  
SERVICE



College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment

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# EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE *Changing Lives*



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*The Wayne County School Garden produced 2,000 lb. of tomatoes for the school food service as well as broccoli, cantaloupes, cucumbers, peppers, cauliflower, eggplant, sweet corn, seedless watermelons, red potatoes and cabbage during 2014-2015.*

**When you  
support  
Extension,  
youth apply  
science  
principles  
to produce  
food and  
explore career  
opportunities.**

## **Wayne County Extension Initiated a Model School Farm**

*With expertise of commercial horticulture from Wayne County Extension, the Wayne County Schools have developed a three-acre project that teaches science, agriculture, health and nutrition while providing fresh vegetables and fruits for 3,000 students in their cafeterias.*



**“The school garden outcomes have not only provided close to a \$20,000 cost savings to food service, but more students are eating vegetables with the new salad bar that opened this year at our high school. From the cost savings, we were able to purchase a salad bar for the students.”**

*Karen Gibson, Food Service Director, Wayne County Schools*

Many youth today are unaware of how their food is grown. School cafeterias struggle to provide fresh nutritious, affordable locally grown vegetables for their food service. Youth are not consuming the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables, despite the school’s best efforts to serve them on their cafeteria lines.

The Wayne County Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Agent and Small Farm Assistant teamed up with the high school vocational agriculture teacher to address the lack of fresh locally grown food available to serve in the schools and to create a learning opportunity in science, agriculture, business, and life skills.

What began as a half-acre demonstration garden in 2011 has developed into three-acre garden on school property in walking distance to classrooms. Broccoli, grape tomatoes, slicing tomatoes, cantaloupes, cucumbers, peppers, cauliflower, eggplant, sweet corn, seedless watermelons, red potatoes and cabbage have been produced and used in the school food service program at a cost savings of over \$20,000.

Due to school not being in session during the summer, production was geared for fall semester harvest. The ANR agent’s experience in commercial vegetable production resulted in growing the transplants, transplanting in the garden, and timing production to have these vegetables and fruits ready to harvest when the fall semester began. The FFA/ Vocational Agriculture students helped harvest the produce. The Family and Consumer Sciences students helped process the sweet corn and get it ready for the cafeteria. What began as a high school project has developed into an educational learning experience for elementary and middle school students, too.

Elementary students, over 450, participated in plant life cycle learning as they planted and harvested broccoli to use on their pizzas. The high school students gained valuable experience and knowledge about how to weed, harvest, process and market their produce. The local school food service gained access to locally grown, affordable, popular food items for their menu. Students picked over 2,000 lbs. of grape



*Wayne County High School students harvest and process the corn to be used in the cafeterias.*



*Wayne County elementary and middle school students learned about plant science during an educational program in the garden presented by Extension professionals and Career and Technical Education teachers.*

tomatoes, valued at \$4,000, utilized by the school food service. Excess produce was sold at the farmer’s market as a fund raiser for FFA and donated to a local food pantry.

The garden has become a source of school and community pride. The Wayne County Farm to School Program was featured in *Farm World* magazine and honored at the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program national meeting as a model program.