
TITLE: Community nutrition and health: What's agriculture got to do with it?

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PRESENTER(S): Lauren Gwin, Clare Sullivan, Robin Maille

STUDENT SUBMISSION: No

TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: Public health professionals who are interested in the problems and potential associated with the "supply side" of food systems, i.e., agriculture and food production, at the community and regional level.

ABSTRACT: Improving individual and community health related to diet and nutrition requires change on many levels, including how food is grown, transformed, transported, and sold. The "supply side" of food is unique to each region, depending on land capability and food production infrastructure. Central and Eastern Oregon are characterized agriculturally as extensive crop-dominant regions with tough growing conditions. Local healthy fruit and vegetables are more difficult to come by as compared to Western Oregon. Efforts are underway to overcome these conditions and increase the availability of fresh, healthy food. Transforming food systems in this way requires close community partnerships and a broad range of expertise and skills, including practitioners and professionals on the supply side of food systems. In this session, we will use Oregon state and county level data to describe Oregon agriculture and food production in the context of public health. We will present two Oregon case studies that demonstrate the value of this approach, linking sustainable food production systems, farm viability, and community nutrition and food security. In the third part of the session, we will compare the challenges, opportunities, and interdisciplinary partnerships in the two regions and engage the audience in this discussion.

OBJECTIVE(S): Describe in general terms how a region's agricultural production capacity, both natural conditions and human resources, are related to community nutrition and food security. Discuss how the characteristics, capacity, and success of local food production enterprises are tied directly to nutrition and health at individual and community levels. Name at least one example of a trend that can push growers to try new crops.

PANEL MODERATOR: Lauren Gwin, Oregon State University Center for Small Farms & Community Food Systems

PANEL ABSTRACT 1: Case 1: Central Oregon is characterized by a 70-100 day growing season, drastic swings in temperature, sandy soils, and pasture and forages as the dominant crops. Despite the challenging growing conditions, there is fresh-market produce grown in Central Oregon, and there is strong demand for produce from the community. While some vegetables are grown very well in the region, there is almost no fruit being produced. Growers and Extension personnel report that farmers' market patrons with federal nutrition assistance benefit vouchers want to use their vouchers to purchase berries. In response to this demand, research will begin in 2019 to investigate new cropping techniques to improve raspberry and strawberry production in Central Oregon. Berry production with and without season extension (high tunnels) will be evaluated for berry yield, consistency, and quality across six farms. Production efficiencies that create competitive pricing will be a focus, thereby increasing quantity AND access. Increased access for voucher recipients will be evaluated in partnership with SNAP and WIC providers. This project aims to determine whether berry production in Central OR is an economically

viable enterprise, and if high tunnels are a justified method for increasing access to fresh, healthy produce.

PRESENTER 1: Clare Sullivan, OSU Extension Small Farms/Food Systems

PANEL ABSTRACT 2: The 2017 Union & Baker County Community Food Assessment (CFA) made several recommendations for improvements to the supply side of agriculture. They included improving the capabilities of the Baker City community garden, developing gleaning and preservation programs, and encouraging school districts to buy locally produced foods for school lunches using Farm to School grants. Schools are accessing more Farm to School funds to purchase local foods and making the connection for kids to see how their food is grown. The Baker City Community Garden installed a new garden shed and made other site improvements making the garden more productive and user friendly. In addition, they are partnering with the Baker City Farmers Market to host several fermentation classes this summer. Another CFA finding was that the regional food bank needs to expand cold storage capacity for local products. An AmeriCorps Rare Member will begin work this fall to help raise interest and funds for this expansion. Beer tourism has become very popular and we are producing malt barley in Eastern Oregon that is being used by several local breweries to create a flavor unique to our region. Stronger local economies provide jobs that allow families to be more food secure.

PRESENTER 2: Robin Maille, OSU Extension Family & Community Health

PANEL ABSTRACT 3: Led by the session moderator and discussant, we will compare the challenges and opportunities in the two regions and the multi-disciplinary partnerships that are currently in place linking sustainable agriculture and community nutrition and health. We will engage the audience in this discussion, asking for their experiences and questions related to the supply side of food systems.

PRESENTER 3: Lauren Gwin, OSU Center for Small Farms & Community Food Systems

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