Enhancing Local Food Systems in Kansas

You might recall reading last fall about the $750,000 grant awarded to Kansas State University to spur local food systems. This article explains how you can stay up-to-date on, or get involved in, these endeavors.

What Is the Food System?

The food system is everything that is part of ensuring people have the food they need to survive and thrive - from production to processing, distribution, consumption, and food waste management - if it involves food in some way, it is part of the food system. A functioning local food system integrates the five sectors to serve the values of enhancing the environmental, economic, social, and nutritional health of a particular place and its inhabitants.

Kansas Local and Regional Food Systems

Many communities, counties, and regions in Kansas have already started conversations around supporting and developing their local and regional food systems. Some communities have formed councils or groups to discuss local food and farm opportunities. Other communities have completed food system assessments or plans.

Below is a link to a report that shares goals, needs, challenges, and opportunities for the food system specific to North Central Kansas: https://www.ncrpc.org/nckfoodcouncil/

Kansas Local Food Community Roundtables

If you are interested in improving local food resources in your community, please join us! The Kansas Local Foods program is planning 10+ roundtable sessions around Kansas to share experiences and provide feedback on your community’s goals and needs. So, if you are involved with local grocery stores, restaurants, food distribution, school food service, etc., please join the conversation.

The River Valley District will be hosting one of these roundtables in Clay Center on November 6th from 6:00 to 7:30 PM. Dinner will be provided. RSVP by calling the Clay County Extension Office at 785-632-5335.

Another Way to Get Involved: Quarterly Virtual Town Halls

Quarterly local food town halls are held virtually on Zoom and are open to anyone across the state of Kansas who is interested in learning more about local food projects, organizations, and opportunities across the state. The town halls are held at 11 a.m. on the fourth Wednesday of January, April, July, and October. The town halls are also recorded and archived. Our next town hall will be October 18, 2023. Register (and/or watch the archived videos) here: https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/kansaslocalfoods/get-involved/town-halls.html

Questions can be directed to Kaitlin Moore, Nutrition, Food Safety & Health Agent at 785-243-8185 or Wade Reh, Director & Community Vitality Agent at 785-632-5335.

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