

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for October 19, 2020
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, and Healthy Relationships we'll talk about a weighty subject, world hunger, as well as some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

I've been thinking a lot about food lately. Not that this is out of the ordinary for me. But I've been thinking about it from a slightly different perspective.

It was a special week for The Ohio State University, because one of our very own professors and researchers was awarded the prestigious World Food Prize. This is like the Nobel Prize of the agricultural world. Dr. Rattan Lal is a soil scientist and has spent decades researching the best practices for conservation and soil health in agricultural practices around the world. His work has had huge implications for the amount of food that can be sustainably produced over time.

Also many around the globe celebrated World Food Day this past week. The day recognizes the establishment of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). This year marks the 75th year for the organization. One of the main goals of the FAO is to reduce world hunger. They established a goal several years ago to reach zero hunger in the world by 2030.

The numbers looked promising with decades of steady decline. But then in 2015, the numbers began to increase, and they have been increasing each year since. Current estimates show that nearly 690 million people are hungry, or 8.9 percent of the world population. If recent trends continue, the number of people affected by hunger would surpass 840 million by 2030.

Simply put, the world is not on track to achieve Zero Hunger by 2030. I wonder if this is because it is not a priority for people who can help. And is that because we don't care or don't know the facts? Hunger is a complex issue. It is not only about food production but also food access. Here are a few statistics from the FAO:

- The majority of the world's undernourished – 381 million – are still found in Asia. More than 250 million live in Africa, where the number of undernourished is growing faster than anywhere in the world.
- 144 million children under age 5 were affected by stunting in 2019, with three quarters living in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

- In 2019, 6.9 per cent (or 47 million) children under 5 were affected by wasting, or acute undernutrition, a condition caused by limited nutrient intake and infection.
- While there is currently enough food to feed the global population, more than 2 billion people don't have regular access to enough safe, nutritious food.

Do you value food? In a country where there is certainly some food insecurity (especially when it comes to healthy food options), we are also a country of food overabundance. We have so much. Frankly, too much. I believe that we are gluttonous in many aspects. We have far more than we need to sustain ourselves. Obesity rates in the United States continue to increase. According to the CDC, from 1999–2000 through 2017–2018, the prevalence of obesity increased from 30.5 percent to 42.4 percent, and the prevalence of severe obesity increased from 4.7 percent to 9.2 percent.

This means that worldwide, there is a 1 in 10 chance of being severely malnourished, but in the US there is a 1 in 10 chance of begin severely over nourished.

I think about the word “consumer” often because it is a part of my job title. I am afraid that we Americans are a culture of consumers that have forgotten what it takes to produce the food we eat. World Food Day is a chance to reflect on this imbalance in our world and question if we are doing everything we can to reduce hunger. Anne Frank is quoted with “Hunger is not a problem. It is an obscenity. How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”

Now we'll take a look at some upcoming opportunities from OSU Extension.

Food Preservation Office Hours continue this week with Canning Soup class tomorrow afternoon from 4:00 – 5:00 PM. Future topics include: Canning Meat, Poultry, and Game; Making Jerky; and I'll be co-teaching Making Sauerkraut during the last online class November 10. Each of these programs will have time at the end to ask any questions you have about food preservation. RSVP on our website coshocton.osu.edu.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy day!