

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for April 26, 2021
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk about what we can do to practically reduce food waste and look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

A few weeks ago, my colleague Alisha Barton, Family and Consumer Sciences educator in Miami County, wrote an article for the Live Healthy Live Well Blog about refrigerators. At first that may not sound like a super exciting topic, but I learned some great tips that I would like to pass along to you today.

One-third of the world's food is wasted. Approximately 40 to 50 percent of this food waste happens at the consumer level. That means that here in the US, the average person wastes 238 pounds of food per year or about 21 percent of the food they buy. And that means a loss of real money- an average of \$1,800 annually. Fresh fruits and vegetables account for the largest of these losses. Consider these tips to help optimize your fridge and fresh food storage:

Prep: Doing a few minutes of prep work after grocery shopping can save time later and ensure your fresh produce gets used. Cut carrots, broccoli, celery, and other vegetables. You will be grateful this is done when you are reaching for a snack. Having these prepped also makes them a quick option to add to meals. Also, unused fruits and vegetables that have been prepped can be added to a freezer-safe container and frozen before they spoil.

Clean: Set aside time each week to clean and take an inventory of your fridge and freezer. This task can be done in 30 minutes. Take time to throw away expired food and leftovers while wiping spills and cleaning surfaces. Take stock of what needs to be used and plan for the next week. Use this cleaning to check the temperature of your fridge and freezer. Your refrigerator should be at or below 40°F. The freezer temperature should be set at 0°F. Checking these temperatures regularly can help ensure your food stays fresh longer.

How to Use a Crisper Drawer: According to Iowa State University Extension, crisper drawers serve an important role in your refrigerator. If used correctly those drawers can extend the life of fruits and vegetables. There are two kinds of crispers: low-humidity and high-humidity. Low-humidity drawers introduce some airflow into the drawer while high-humidity drawers are

enclosed. Put fruits that tend to rot in the low-humidity drawer and produce that tends to wilt in the high-humidity drawer. The general rule is fruits like low humidity and vegetables like high humidity with a few exceptions.

Try Not to Over Shop: Bright colored produce in the grocery store can be appealing, as it should be. Have a plan of what you will need for the week to know how much of an item that you will use and avoid buying more than you need. Cleaning and taking regular stock of what is in your fridge and freezer will help avoid overbuying.

Compost: If you do end up with spoiled produce, compost it rather than adding it to your garbage. There are many options for composting, and it is a pretty easy process. You can learn more at go.osu.edu/compostathome.

Barton shares, “You know your fridge and your habits more than anyone else. Consider your habits and the foods you enjoy while you figure out a system that works for you. If you are storing food safely there is no right way to stock and maintain your fridge.”

Now let’s take a look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension. The ServSafe® Manager Food Safety Training series will be offered on Thursdays, July 8, 15, and 22 from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., with the proctored exam July 29 at 9:00 a.m. The ServSafe® Manager training meets Ohio Department of Health Manager Certification in Food Protection requirements. This training enhances understanding of major food safety principles, including factors leading to contamination of food, time and temperature abuse, cross-contamination, and personal hygiene. A separate ServSafe® Person-in-Charge certification training will be Monday, August 2 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Pre-registration is required at coshocton.osu.edu.

The “East Ohio Women in Agriculture Program Series” continues next Thursday, May 13 with “Veterinarians: Building a Relationship & Knowing When to Call.” A total of 10 webinars and 3 field days are being held through July on a variety of financial, production, and home-related topics to help women in agriculture. Visit our website to register for one or more of these free programs or to find a link to recorded programs as well.

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!