WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for April 14, 2025
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk about cleaning out the pantry, and as always look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

I'm still not used to it. Yesterday evening I made the large grocery trip for the month. The main items were a restock of staples, poultry, and fresh produce. It was a full cart. Even after all these months of continuous price increases, the total at the cash register was still a shock.

According to NerdWallet, grocery prices have increased by 31% in the past 6 years. Climbing over 10% alone in 2022. It is not just happening at the grocery store. Data from the USDA Economic Research Service shows that between 2014-2024, prices for food eaten away from home (restaurants) increased by 50%.

When it comes to planning your monthly budget, are you living in reality? As I conduct financial coaching sessions, I find that most people are living in the past when considering their budget for groceries and eating out. The January 2025 estimates from USDA for a family of four eating mostly at home on a thrifty plan is $992 per month. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics suggested in late 2024 that grocery costs were $504 per month per average household unit. I am guessing that is because other data shows that people eat about half their food at home and half away from home. So, chances are the real number is around $900 a month on food.

Every time you throw food out, do you think about how much money you are wasting? What are you actively doing to make sure you are eating the food you have on hand? When is the last time you took inventory of what is on your pantry shelves and hiding in the freezer?

One of my favorite recipes to use up pantry ingredients is from the "Pantry Panic" 4-H project book. It is a simple blueprint for creating a casserole with the ingredients you have on hand.

You build the casserole based on what you have. Here are the basic ingredients to layer in a 9 X 13 pan or glass dish.:

(1 ½ to 2 cups) Protein Foods – like cooked or canned beans or meat

(1 ⅔ cups) Sauce – such as 1 can condensed soup + ⅓ cup liquid

(1 ½ to 2 cups) of Vegetables - either Canned vegetables that are drained; Fresh vegetables that are cooked; or Frozen vegetables that have been thawed

(1 ½ to 2 cups) - Cooked Pasta, Grain, or Other Starch - like Bread; Noodles; Potatoes; Rice; or Spaghetti

Add salt pepper or other herbs and species to taste.

Cover the dish with aluminum foil and bake it at 375˚F for approximately 30 minutes, until bubbly.

It is a delicious and convenient way to use the items you have on hand.

And now let's see what else is new from OSU Extension.

I will be teaching a hands-on Jams and Jellies class at the Coshocton County District Library on Monday, April 21 at 6:30 PM. Visit coshoctonlibrary.org to sign up for this free class.

Also, I have some great news to share about our Dining with Diabetes classes. Because we reached our class size limit for the series we are offering this month, we will be offering another series of classes this summer on Thursday evenings July 10 - 31. Find registration information on our Facebook page called Ohio State University Extension – Coshocton County.

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