

WVSU Extension Service addressing state's growing desire for specialty food choices

Institute, WV – West Virginia State University Extension Service's Agriculture & Natural Resources (ANR) program area is developing an initiative to educate West Virginia's citizens on the benefits of locally growing and producing more alternative and specialty foods for the people within the state.

According to ANR's research, while there are producers within the state that have specialty food items, a good number of consumers are turning to out-of-state sources to meet their dietary needs. The organization has developed a focus group to develop means of educating the public on the demand for alternative choices such as Halal, Kosher, and Vegetarian foods.

"The increase of diversity we have seen in West Virginia's population has created a need for a more diverse food selection," said Dr. Almeshia Brown, Extension Specialist for ANR. "We are reaching out statewide to consumers and producers who are interested in learning more about getting and keeping Halal, Kosher and Vegetarian products within West Virginia."

The goal of the initiative is to raise awareness of the need for alternative food options by educating the public via a series of articles, workshops, and seminars. This will hopefully result in an increase the amount of specialty foods grown and sold within the state, which is beneficial both to the state's economy as well as citizens' overall education about their dietary options.

For more information on the ethnic foods initiative at WVSU Extension Service, contact Dr. Almeshia Brown at (304) 204-4021.

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