FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES

Candace Heer
Family & Consumer Sciences Educator
(heer.7@osu.edu)

Lisa Sippel
Program Assistant, SNAP-Ed
(sippel.9@osu.edu)

Hello Morrow County Residents!

In the Family and Consumer Sciences section of the Scarlet & Gray News we are focusing on... as a consumer to buy or not to buy, saving yourself some money and how to get the most out of your purchase or what you have on the shelf.

Read the science-based articles including Lisa's "polite bites" and make plans to attend one or more of the home food preservation events starting in April. Even if you are not familiar with food preservation or are an experienced preserver of food attending an event provides an opportunity for us all to come together to share and learn. Let me know your thoughts and questions. Give me a call, send me an email, leave me a voicemail, or just stop in the office for a visit.

In Wellness,

Candace

Your Family and Consumer Sciences Educator (Home Economics)
419-947-1070 • heer.7@osu.edu

SNAP-Ed Polite Bites!

By Lisa Sippel,
SNAP-Ed Program Assistant

March is National Nutrition Month (NNM) in the United States! It is a month dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of nutrition and promoting healthy eating habits. As we move from spring to summer and look forward to those fresh fruits and vegetables from our gardens, let's look at what we might have in our pantry that can help us reach our dietary goals and not break the bank!

Did you know that Fresh, Frozen, and canned vegetables are all nutritious? Here is some helpful information to help you choose which are best for you!

Fresh

- You can examine the smell and appearance before buying.
- The taste of fresh produce is at its peak when purchased in season.
- Items often cost less when purchased in season but are more expensive when not in season.
- Fresh produce has a short shelf life.

Canned

- Canned produce is picked and canned at peak freshness, meaning they are just as nutritious and flavorful as fresh produce.
- Canned produce has a shelf life of two to four years.
- Canned items are often the budget-friendly option when buying fruits and veggies.
- You can purchase canned vegetables low in fat and sodium.
- You can choose fruit canned in 100 percent natural juice without added sugars.

Frozen

- Items are frozen at peak freshness, meaning they are similar in color and flavor to fresh produce.
- Frozen produce has a long freezer life, around 10 months.
- Buying frozen produce is an affordable option, especially when buying out-of-season fruits and veggies.

Anytime you see a sale on something canned or frozen that you like, it's a great time to grab a few extra for the cabinet or freezer. Happy Spring!

Tips to curb impulse buying

By Emily Marrison,
OSU Extension Family & Consumer Sciences Educator,
Coshocton County

Research shows that the average American adult spends $314 a month in impulse spending. Maybe that doesn't seem too bad, but that equals $3,768 a year. And if you extrapolate that over a lifetime, it's a whopping $226,080!

The Utah State University Extension Empowering Financial Wellness Program has some great suggestions to curb unplanned spending. Because our spending is often tied to our emotions, they ask you to consider these questions before making an unplanned purchase.

- Do I need this item or do I just want to change the way I feel right now?
- What feeling am I looking to get out of this purchase? Is there another way to get this same feeling without shopping or spending money?

Another strategy is to pay attention to advertising techniques that make us want to buy. Our culture has a whole evening dedicated to watching new attempts for companies to convince us we need certain products. I guess there will be a football game going on too.

A single 30-second commercial in the most recent Super Bowl game cost advertisers about $7 million. Last year, companies spent around $60.6 billion on TV advertising in the United States. It's a huge number, but less than the $87 billion that was spent on social media outlets.

Here is some advice from USU Extension of ways to reduce your opportunities for impulse buying online.

- Make it inconvenient. Disconnect your card/payment method from your smart devices, so you must physically input payment information before making the purchase. Adding more steps to the process may help deter you from making the unplanned purchase.
- Is it Kohl's cash, or a similar discount loop, that sucks you in? Delete apps and unsubscribe from emails of companies you are most susceptible to impulse buying. Though more men than women shop online overall, more women get to shopping sites through targeted marketing emails and with coupons.
- Do you recognize when you are hungry, bored, or emotional? These are time when you are most susceptible to impulse buying and should avoid watching social media. Find

Continued on page 11

FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES

How to safely store eggs and find alternatives amid rising prices

By Tracy Turner
Contributing writers:
Ahmed Yousef, Chen-Ti Chen, Jared Grant

With egg prices soaring due to supply chain disruptions and avian flu impacts, many consumers are looking for ways to stretch their egg supply while ensuring food safety. Experts at The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) offer key insights into safe egg storage, viable substitutes, and the economic factors behind the price hikes.

Maximizing egg shelf life

Proper storage is essential to keeping eggs fresh for as long as possible. According to Ahmed E. Yousef, the Virginia Hutchison Bazler and Frank E. Bazler Chair in Food Science, refrigeration is critical.

"In grocery stores, eggs are kept refrigerated, and they should remain refrigerated at home," Yousef said. "Eggs can be stored beyond their 'best by' or 'sell by' dates, as those dates refer to quality, not safety."

For those looking to store eggs even longer, freezing is an option — but with a catch.

"Eggs should not be frozen in their shells, as the liquid inside expands and can crack the shell," Yousef said. "Instead, eggs should be cracked, the whites and yolks mixed, and then stored in an airtight container in the freezer. Properly stored frozen eggs can last up to a year."

Consumers can also check an egg's freshness by placing it in a bowl of water. "Fresh eggs sink, while older eggs, which develop a larger air pocket inside, tend to float," Yousef said. "Mold or unusual odors are clear indicators that eggs should be discarded."

Finding egg alternatives

As prices remain high, some consumers are turning to egg substitutes, especially for baking.

"There are egg alternatives on the market for consumers who are vegan or have egg allergies," Yousef said. "These substitutes, often made from soybeans or chickpeas, can replace eggs in certain recipes, though they don't fully replicate the structure of a whole egg."

For home bakers, common substitutes include mashed bananas, applesauce, or a mixture of flaxseed and water. While these work well for binding ingredients in baked goods, they may not provide the same texture or nutritional benefits as eggs.

Why are egg prices rising?

The recent surge in egg prices is driven by a combination of supply shortages, rising production costs, and seasonal demand. Avian influenza has also impacted commercial laying flocks.

"When an outbreak occurs, entire flocks must be culled to prevent the disease from spreading," said Chen-Ti Chen, CFAES assistant professor of agricultural, environmental, and development economics. "Given the regional concentration of egg production, a single outbreak can disrupt supply chains for multiple farms, limiting producers' ability to replenish egg supplies and respond to price fluctuations."

At the same time, increased costs for feed, labor, electricity, packaging, and transportation continue to push prices higher post-pandemic. Seasonal trends also add to the volatility, as consumer demand spikes during the winter holidays. Extreme weather events, such as hurricanes and wildfires, are further complicating the issue.

"The combination of rising production costs, disease outbreaks, and peak seasonal demand creates the perfect recipe for higher egg prices," Chen said.

The impact on consumers and producers

Consumers are feeling the strain on their grocery budgets, with some cutting back on egg purchases or seeking alternatives. However, demand for eggs remains relatively stable, as they are a staple in many households.

"Consumers typically have an inelastic demand for eggs, meaning they may continue to buy them even if prices rise," said Jared Grant, CFAES assistant professor of agricultural, environmental, and development economics. "Some may adjust by buying eggs of a different grades or sizes to save money."

Restaurants and food service businesses are also grappling with price hikes, often passing costs on to customers. Meanwhile, egg producers — both small and large — face ongoing challenges in managing flock sizes and navigating unpredictable price swings.

How CFAES is supporting the industry

CFAES is actively working to assist both farmers and consumers in navigating the ongoing egg shortage. The college offers research and outreach programs on biosecurity measures to prevent the spread of avian influenza. It also provides resources through Ohio State University Extension and Ohioline, including guidance on poultry care, backyard flocks, and food budgeting strategies.

OSU Extension is the outreach arm of CFAES, and Ohioline is Extension's free online information resource, available at ohioline.osu.edu.

As egg prices remain high into 2025, experts suggest consumers stay informed about price trends and consider alternative purchasing strategies. In the meantime, proper storage and smart substitutions can help stretch every egg to its fullest potential.

Impulse buying

Continued from page 10

another way to occupy your time, like hobbies or spending time with others.

Be aware that stores have been refining their tactics for decades to get consumers to buy more and spend more while in their store. Why is the milk in the furthest location? It may be the one item on your list, but you must walk by hundreds or even thousands of items before you get the milk and get to the check-out.

• Have a list and go directly to where those items would be found in the store. I categorize my grocery list by location to try to limit wandering the aisles.

• Are there only a few items on your list? Use a basket rather than a cart. I'm also a fan of taking in my own reuseable bag to gather the few items I need on a quick trip. Or I take nothing at all and only buy what I can carry to the check-out.

• Give yourself controlled freedom. My husband uses the "one item impulse buy" rule. This was something I started long ago with my young children at the grocery store. It was motivation to stay well-behaved on our trip. There was always a dollar limit, usually under $2. It was worth it for peace and sanity. Now it is usually reserved for a single junk food item.

I encourage you to pick a tip to try this week. You can find lots of financial wellness resources at extension.usu.edu/finance/ .

Today I'll leave you with this Swedish Proverb, "He who buys what he does not need, steals from himself."

OSU EXTENSION CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL 2025

3 Morrow County Cattlemen's Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room
3 **Registration Due:** Career Exploration Workshop
10 Morrow County Pork Producers Meeting, 7 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room
12 Career Exploration Workshop, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Tri-Rivers Career Center, Marion
14 Tropical Hibiscus Selection & Care, Mt. Gilead Library, 6 p.m.
15 **4-H Enrollments Due (Past Members & Volunteers)**
17 Horse and Pony Committee, 7:30 pm, Ag Credit Building Conference Room
17 Local Meat – Purchasing & Working with the Butcher Shop, 6 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room
22 Freeze Drying Fundamentals, 6:30 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room
24 Sr. Fair Board, 7 p.m., Fairgrounds
29 Quality Assurance for 1st and 2nd year members ages 8-13, with parent; RSVP Required, 6:30 p.m., Youth Building Fairgrounds
30 **Last Day for New Member 4-H Project Enrollments and all others corrections made!!**

MAY 2025

1 Morrow County Cattlemen's Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room
5 Jr. Fair Board, 7 p.m., Fairgrounds
6 Raised Bed Gardening, 6:30 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room
8 Quality Assurance, 6:15 p.m., Fairgrounds
8 Morrow County Pork Producers Meeting, 7 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room
13 Quality Assurance, 6:15 p.m., Fairgrounds
15 EquiSTEP In-Person Program, 6-7:30 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room
15 Horse and Pony Committee, 7:30 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room
20 Entering Flowers, Vegetables & Canned Goods in the Fair, 6:30 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room
21 Steps to Safe Grilling, 6:30 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room – **Must Pre-Register**
21 Quality Assurance, 6:15 p.m., Fairgrounds
22 Sr. Fair board, 7 p.m., Fairgrounds
26 Happy Memorial Day - Office Closed
27 4-H CARTEENS, Ag Credit Building Conference Room, 5:30 p.m.
27 Selection & Care of Annuals for Season Long Success, Cardington Lincoln Library, 6 p.m.
29 Annual Food Preservation Open House with Canner Inspection and Dial Gauge Testing, 1-6:30 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room

JUNE 2025

1 Possession Of All Livestock Projects!!
1 Horse Forms Due in 4HOnline Enrollment
2 Jr. Fair board, 7 p.m., Fairgrounds
7 Jr. Fair Feeder Calf Mandatory Weigh-in, tagging, 7-11 a.m., Fairgrounds Large Arena
11 Freeze Drying Fundamentals, 1 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room
12 Morrow County Pork Producers Meeting, 7 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room
15 **Jr. Fair Entries Due Midnight!!!**
17 Early Judging Project Registration
17 Home Food Preservation: Basics for Canning Fruit, 4:30 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room
18 Home Food Preservation: Basics for Canning Vegetables, 6:30 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room
19 **Registration Due:** Illustrated Talks or Demonstration
19 **Registration Due:** Marketing Contest
19 **Registration Due:** Public Speaking - LEGO Edition
19 **Registration Due:** Job Interview Contest
19 Horse and Pony Committee, 8 pm, Ag Credit Building Conference Room
23 Early 4-H Project Judging, 6 p.m., Please RSVP by June 17th – Location TBA
23 Illustrated Talks or Demonstration, 6 p.m., Ag Credit Building
23 Public Speaking - LEGO Edition, 6 p.m., Ag Credit Building
23 Marketing Contest projects due
23 Job Interview Contest, 6 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room
24 Using Cut Flowers to Make Creative Arrangements – Perry Cook Memorial Library, 6 p.m.
26 Organic & Natural Gardening Practices, 6:30 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room
26-27 4-H STEM Camp
26 Sr. Fair board, 7 p.m., Fairgrounds