July 13, 2012  
Release Date: July 18, 2012  

Deborah Rhoades, M.A., R.D  
Extension Educator, Family & Consumer Sciences  

YOUR CHOICE MATTERS SO TAKE THE BUY LOCAL CHALLENGE  

I hope you are enjoying these long summer days and all the fabulous produce. Recently I had my favorite summer delight, thanks to Eastern Shore farmers, where the harvest season starts a bit earlier. It was a tomato sandwich on white bread with mayo. Yummy…..my mouth waters just writing about it. For dessert I had a cold slice of watermelon and was in pure heaven!

Marylanders are extremely fortunate to have farms all throughout the state, especially Frederick County, which accounts for 10 percent of Maryland’s total farmland and produces $127 million of products annually. According to the Maryland Buy Local website, “There's never been a more critical time to support your farming neighbors. If every household purchased just $12 worth of farm products for eight weeks (basically the summer season), over $200 million would be put back into the pockets of our farmers.” Environmentally it is a smart choice reducing your carbon footprint since food does not have to travel for distribution.

Support your local economy but participating in Maryland’s Buy Local Challenge Week, July 21-29. Go on-line at http://www.buy-local-challenge.com/index.asp and join fellow citizens to make the pledge to eat at least one thing from a local farm every day during the week. To locate farms, pick up a copy of the 2012 Frederick County Farm Guide at the Tourism Office, Extension Office or access electronically at www.discoverfrederickmd.com I personally keep a copy in my car glove compartment so I can plan my shopping while out working in the county.

Very recently, Grace Community Church Farmers Market began accepting Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, traditionally known as food stamps. This gets fresh produce to families that need it most and sends income to Frederick farmers. The market doubles the benefit to women and children receiving SNAP and WIC, an altruistic gesture to help our neighbors.

To support the event Governor O’Malley will hold the 5th annual Buy Local Cookout, held Thursday, July 19, at the Government House in Annapolis. Attendance is by invitation only. Recipes from two local Frederick farms have been selected to participate in the cookout. All recipe submissions, along with wine pairing recommendations from the Maryland Wine
Association, will be published online http://www.buy-local-challenge.com beginning July 19, so be sure to download for your recipe file.

For more information about the University of Maryland Extension Frederick County Office check out our website http://Frederick.umd.edu/ The University of Maryland Extension programs are open to all citizens without regard to race, color, gender, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, or national origin.

Deborah Rhoades, MA, RD, LDN, is a licensed Registered Dietitian and Extension Educator in Family and Consumer Sciences.

DHR:ls