October 2, 2013
Release Date: October 9, 2013

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

GRAINS DAYS FOR FREDERICK 4TH GRADERS

This week Frederick County Public Schools fourth grade students will join the University of Maryland Extension (UME) Frederick County staff for an exciting field trip experience at the Western MD Research and Education Center in Keedysville, MD. This fun and interactive hands-on program takes students through four stations where they can touch, taste, feel, and see grains from field to finish.

For UME staff and the students this is one of our favorite weeks. Students take a hayride around the farm viewing fields in production, valuing machinery and recognizing grains from field to table. Each child makes a grain jar of five grains grown on the farm to take home with them. They learn how animals depend upon grains that are produced on a farm by meeting various types of animals and discover how much grain the animal is fed to produce for our needs.

Eating is an integral part of the field trip to teach students about the health benefits of grains, especially whole grains, in the diet. Students sample steel cut oats and prepare and eat buckwheat pancakes and corn tortillas. Included are recipes so you can try this at home.

Why a day devoted specifically to grains? The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that half of our intake from the bread and cereal group come from whole grains. Numerous health organizations support increasing whole grains in the diet as research suggests it can help protect against heart disease, cancer, obesity, and diabetes. Additionally, whole grains provide complex carbohydrates, protein, soluble and insoluble fiber, antioxidants, iron, magnesium, zinc, folic acid, and the B vitamins – riboflavin, niacin, and thiamin. The health benefits come from the whole grain package and not just from the fiber or individual nutrients.

What exactly is a whole grain and how do I get them in my diet? Whole grain foods include all three parts of a grain kernel: the bran, germ, and endosperm. The type of grain kernel can vary. Popular choices include wheat, rice, corn, oats, barley, and buckwheat. Wheat represents the number one choice in the U.S., the staple of the American diet.

One simple way to increase your whole grains is to choose whole grain bread. Sounds simple but actually it’s not. Products labeled with the words “multi-grain,” “stone-ground,” “100% wheat,” “seven grain,” “pumpernickel,” “organic,” or “bran” may actually contain little or no...
whole grain. Color is not an indication of whole grain either. Bread is often brown because of added molasses, not because it contains whole grain. The way to be sure is to look for the words “whole wheat” or “whole grain” on the nutrition label list of ingredients.

There are lots of other delicious ways to get your whole grains besides eating bread and increasingly there are more products on the shelves. Here are some ideas for meals and snacks:

At breakfast select 100% whole grain cold cereals like shredded wheat, granola, raisin bran, toasted oats and wheat flakes. Make a morning parfait – with layers of crunchy cereal, fresh or canned fruit, and low-fat vanilla yogurt. For winter months when hot cereals are preferred, choose oatmeal, instant or regular, and partially whole grain Wheatena. While delicious to eat - grits, cream of wheat and cream of rice are not whole grain.

Pancakes and waffles make a welcome breakfast companion, so try substituting white whole wheat flour for half of the all-purpose white flour in your favorite recipe. Lighter in color and texture, but 100% whole wheat, the white whole wheat flour does little to alter taste while significantly increasing nutrients and fiber. Or for a change of taste, try our recipe for real buckwheat pancakes topped with apple butter. Where to buy buckwheat flour? Try the Common Market on Buckeystown Pike, Martin’s Farm Market in Myersville, Giant Eagle and possibly other local grocery stores.

For lunches, serve sandwiches on whole grain breads. Look for the whole grain stamp which identifies how much whole grain is a serving. The goal is to eat 48 grams or more of whole grains daily. For those who prefer wraps, look for whole grains tortillas found in the supermarket refrigerator section. If soup is on the menu, choose those with barley or wild rice, both which are whole grain products.

For dinner try a new side dish…mushroom and barley bake or rice salad (see recipes). Pasta lovers can try the new whole or partially whole grain pasta products. Experiment with brands to find what your family accepts. Some members may not embrace the taste of these new pastas and that’s okay. The goal is to eat whole grains not a specific food item. Food has to be eaten to be nutritious so be adventurous and add a new recipe or product to your repertoire.

Some snacks are naturally whole grain like popcorn, Triscuit and Rye Krisp crackers, and granola bars. When buying snack products read labels and the list of ingredients and don’t trust the name of the product to reflect the nutritional value. A multi-grain cracker can be a totally refined grain product. Again look for the voluntary whole grain stamp. Many snacks are high in fat so limit servings and select brands without trans fat. The 100 calorie packages are an easy way to control portion size.
For more recipes to make whole grains a priority in your diet try these cookbooks available in your local bookstore and Frederick County public libraries:

RICE SALAD

1 (6 oz.) package long grain wild rice mix
1/2 cup light mayonnaise
1/4 cup plain low-fat yogurt
1 cup sliced celery
1 cup tomato, cubed
1/2 cup cucumber, peeled & cubed
2 tablespoons parsley
1/8 teaspoon seasoned salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper
1/4 cup dry roasted peanuts

Cook rice according to package directions. Drain and cool. Combine all other ingredients except peanuts, and stir well. Add peanuts and serve.

BARLEY AND MUSHROOM BAKE

Vegetable cooking spray
2 teaspoons reduced-calorie margarine
2 cups thinly sliced fresh mushrooms
1 cup chopped onion
1 cup pearl barley, uncooked
2 1/2 cups hot water
1 1/2 teaspoons beef-flavored bouillon granules
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
Fresh parsley sprigs (optional)

Coat a large nonstick skillet with cooking spray; add margarine. Place over medium heat until margarine melts. Add mushrooms and onion; sauté until tender. Add barley, and sauté 4 to 5 minutes or until barley is lightly browned. Remove from heat.

Transfer barley mixture to a 1 1/2-quart baking dish coated with cooking spray. Stir in water, bouillon granules, salt, and pepper. Cover and bake at 350° for 1 hour and 15 minutes or until barley is tender and liquid is absorbed, stirring every 15 minutes. Remove from oven, and gently stir in chopped parsley. Garnish with fresh parsley sprigs, if desired. Yield: 8 (1/2 cup) servings, 100 calories, 1.3g Fat.
BUCKWHEAT PANCAKE MIX

2 cups buckwheat flour
2 cups whole wheat flour
4 Tablespoon sugar
4 teaspoons baking powder
2 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt

Combine all ingredients in medium bowl until well blended. Store in airtight container at room temperature up to 2 months. Makes about 4 cups.

BUCKWHEAT PANCAKES

1 cup buckwheat pancake mix (see recipe above)*
2 Tablespoon oil
1 cup milk
1 egg, slightly beaten

Grease griddle or skillet with butter or nonstick cooking spray unless it has a non-stick coating. Heat until hot.

Place pancake mix in medium bowl; make well in center.

Lightly beat the egg in a small bowl. Blend in oil and milk with wire whisk. Pour into well. Stir with wooden spoon just until blended (will have small lumps)

To make pancakes, drop 1/4 cup of batter onto hot griddle. Cook 3-4 minutes or until bubbles appear and break on the surface of the pancakes. Turn pancakes with spatula. Cook 2-3 minutes or until bottoms are browns. (To check for doneness, gently lift bottom of pancake with spatula)

Serve immediately. Makes about 12 large pancakes.

For more information about the University of Maryland Extension Frederick County Office check out our website http://extension.umd.edu/frederick-county. University of Maryland Extension programs are open to all persons and will not discriminate against anyone because of race, age, sex, color, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, religion, ancestry, or national origin, marital status, genetic information, or political affiliation, or gender identity and expression.

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

DHR:Is