

# Green Choices for Selecting, Preparing and Serving Meals

Janet K. Stephens, Multi-county Extension Specialist

Leader's Guide

## Suggested Introduction:

As consumers we can become more conscious of the choices we make with food and how these choices affect our environment, energy costs, and future resources. The decisions we make about food – from the trip to the grocery store, to our kitchens, to how we prepare and serve the food, and what happens to leftovers – affect not only our nutritional well-being, but also our environmental and economic well-being. Our discussions will help you consider the options of time, convenience, and resources that are available to consumers.

## Educational Goals

By the end of this program, participants will:

- be more aware of how food decisions affect the environment
- be better able to consider decisions involving the environment and energy costs
- have a better understanding of the balance of choices that fit their current lifestyle
- consider implementing some procedures that practice “green choices.”

## Suggested Presentation Guide:

- Read the Fact Sheet MF2883, *Green Choices for Selecting, Preparing and Serving Meals*.
- Begin with an icebreaker. Ask: “When you hear the word *green*, what do you think?”
- Review the definitions of terms *organic*, *natural*, and *fair trade*. Obtain samples of labels and discuss the terminology on them.
- Bring examples of different types of recyclable products to share.
- Find out what foods are produced and marketed in your area as locally grown.

- Buy examples of “green” cleaning products to show the participants. Discuss using safer products and using less of a product to do the job.

## Suggested Activities:

- Discuss your community’s recycling plan. If there is none, or if it could be expanded, consider who you should contact about these concerns (county or city commissioners, waste disposal company, etc).
- Share various types of cloth shopping bags as examples to choose instead of plastic or paper.
- If your community has a farmers market, have a local representative talk to your group about their offerings, schedule, and requirements.
- Have a kitchen gadget swap, to trade unused equipment among participants. Or have a group rummage sale.
- Visit an appliance store and ask a salesperson to discuss energy-saving appliances with your group.
- Serve the day’s refreshments on reusable dinnerware.
- Have each participant share a “green” tip they practice at home.
- Ask each participant to make a “green” resolution, then write it down. Collect these and check their progress in 6 months.
- Have a “recycling” meeting. Gather your recyclables and make a group trip to the recycling center. Or offer to take the items for members who cannot do that on their own.
- Talk to local grocery stores about some of their practices. Express your desires for more environmentally friendly choices (eggs in cardboard cartons, degradable plastic bags, etc.).

- Many people subscribe to several magazines – some for the recipes and food ideas. Swap magazines with others in the group or use on-line sites for recipe ideas. Recycle the magazines.

## Other Resources:

K-State Research and Extension FCS lesson, *It's Easy to Be Green*, MF2886.

*thegreenguide.com* (recommended by the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences)

*Living Sustainably: Its Your Choice* – Oregon State University

American Moving and Storage Association

*57 Ways to Protect Your Home Environment and Yourself* – North Central Regional Extension Publication 583

*missourifamilies.org* – Missouri University Extension

Intentional Harmony program

*smarthopping.org* – Consumer Reports

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## Participant Survey

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Your County/District \_\_\_\_\_  
Are you:      Male                  Female  
Age Category:    teen                          20-40                          41-65                          65 and over

As a result of this program, I learned more about making ecological decisions with food.  
No                  yes, a little                  yes, some                  yes, a lot

Please specify what you learned that you did not know or that surprised you:

How often do you think you will use the information in this program?  
Never                  once a year                  once a month                  once a week                  daily

How important to you is the information you received today?  
Not at all                  somewhat                  very

After today, how likely are you to practice one of the suggestions for making an more ecologically responsible choice with food buying, serving, or cleanup?

Before today, how likely were you to practice one of the suggestions for making a more ecologically responsible choice with food buying, serving, or cleanup?

Which practice will you adopt?

Please write any additional comments here:

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