

## **Food insecurity is an issue in Ohio**

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How many readers know about food insecurity? It's defined as existing when individuals and families lack access to enough food for an active, healthy life.

In the U.S. 14.3% of all households experience food insecurity at some point during the year.

Have you heard this before: "we feed the world."? If that is the case, then why are 1 in 9 people in the world malnourished?

Less than 1% of American agricultural exports go to the countries with the highest levels of undernourishment.

And in terms of per capita food availability in 2015, the number was 2940 kcal/person/day. Yet we still have malnourished citizens in the U.S.

We were very fortunate to have Dr. Casey Hoy, Kellogg Endowed Chair in Agricultural Ecosystems Management from OSU as our keynote speaker at the recent Food Summit in Clark County.

He provided these statistics regarding food insecurity between 2013-2015; the focus of the session was urban agriculture and ways we all need to work together in our communities to address this issue.

Ohio's food insecurity of 16.1% overall is above the U.S. average of 12.7%. That's one in six households are food insecure. We have 6.6% of our households experiencing very low food insecurity and one in four children food insecure.

Yet we feed the world.

Casey is working with a team of scientists and is leading the interdisciplinary work for the agroecosystems management program. The effort looks to seek balance between prosperous farms, sustainable communities and healthy environments.

This effort is part of the OSU Food Innovation Center that looks at collaboration for a healthier, hunger-free world.

Some of this work involves maximizing efficiencies in food production, examining how to keep food safe, and taking the lead on reducing the billions of pounds of food wasted annually.

OSU Extension staff are also a part of this effort to combat food insecurity. Many counties have community garden programs and are also involved in urban agriculture. Many counties offer a variety of classes that teach people how to grow and preserve vegetables in their own yards.

If you want to learn more about programs in your county that address food insecurity, contact your local Extension office. The county office web pages are [county.osu.edu](http://county.osu.edu) (e.g. [clark.osu.edu](http://clark.osu.edu)).

In addition, I am super excited to announce that Clark County has established a Food Council to address many of these issues. We have identified critical areas of emphasis in terms of local food: food access, education, business development and marketing.

Many of our counties in the Miami Valley area have food councils addressing these issues. I urge you to become involved if you are a gardener. Think about what you can do to help.