Food Access in Kentucky

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Overview of talk

- Defining the food environment and strategies for maintaining a healthy food environment

- Connection between local food, access, and our great state of Kentucky

- Current affairs in regards to access in Kentucky
Categorizing Food Environment

- **Food Store Environment**: including grocery stores, supermarkets, convenience stores, snack bars, specialty food stores, farmers' markets, bodegas, and food banks.
- **Home Food Environment**: including food available within the home.
- **Macro Food Environment**: including the food supply.
- **Public Facility Food Environment**: including cafeterias, vending machines, and snack shops in recreation centers, health care facilities, and other public venues.
- **Restaurant Food Environment**: including fast food and full-service restaurants.
- **School Food Environment**: including cafeterias, vending machines, and snack shops in daycare settings, schools, and/or colleges.
- **Worksite Food Environment**: including cafeterias, vending machines, and snack shops.

Source: National Cancer Institute
The food environment within the framework of health

- Home
- Work sites
- School, after school
- Child care
- Neighborhoods and communities
- Restaurants and fast food outlets
- Supermarkets
- Convenience and corner stores

- Access
- Availability
- Barriers
- Opportunities

- Practices
- Legislative, regulatory, or policy actions

- Societal and cultural norms and values
- Food and beverage industry
- Food marketing and media
- Food and agriculture policies
- Economic systems
- Food production and distribution systems
- Government and political structures and policies
- Food assistance programs
- Health care systems
- Land use and transportation

- Cognitions (e.g., attitudes, preferences, knowledge, values)
- Skills and behaviors
- Lifestyle
- Biological (e.g., genes, gender, age)
- Demographics (e.g., income, race/ethnicity)

- Outcome expectations
- Motivations
- Self-efficacy
- Behavioral capability

- Role modeling
- Social support
- Social norms

- Family
- Friends
- Peers

Background of food environment and health

- Several studies have found the connection between access to various food venues and intake of fruits and vegetables.
- Certain studies have found that access to fast-food restaurants and gas stations consume more sugar-sweetened beverages and have higher body mass index.
- Yet, other studies have found no associations with access.

Sources: Zenk, S et al, Moorland, K et al, Odums–Young, Boone–Heinonen,
There are limited studies connecting the idea of providing a grocery store within a neighborhood would improve intake.

Research has begun to suggest that a cumulative effect of providing various types of venues may improve dietary intake.
Strategies for Creating and Maintaining a Healthy Food Environment

- Land Use Planning and Urban/Peri-Urban Agriculture
- Farmland Protection
- Food Policy Councils
- Retail Food Stores: Grocery Stores and Supermarkets and Small Retail Locations
- Community Gardens
- Farmers Markets, Community Supported Agriculture, and Local Food Distribution
- Transportation and Food Access
- Farm-To-Institution and Food Services
The connection to Kentucky
Connection between access and health for Kentuckians

- 37% of children in Kentucky are overweight or obese
- 31% of adults in Kentucky are overweight or obese
- 878,000 people participate in supplemental nutrition assistance program
Connection between access and health for Kentuckians

- Those families and residents most in need for food do not always have access to healthy food items or local food sources.
- Those who may want to buy local and buy healthy may have to travel far.
- Those who may need to make healthier food purchases may not have the option.
Local Food in Kentucky

- $15 million in farmers’ market sales
- 147 farmers’ markets in Kentucky
- $4–5 million on-farm retailing
- $5–7 million in local wine and tourism sales
- $7–10 million from Restaurant Reward program (farm to restaurant)
- $50 million (very hard to measure) farm to grocery sales
  - Not including Ale–8, AllTech, Smuckers, Tyons, Perdue
Using average food expenditure measures from 2011 USDA statistics:

- Total at home food bill in the Louisville area is $5.4 billion annually.
- About 19% is spent on fruits and vegetables.
What we have learned in Kentucky about the connection between access and health
How access to various food venues may be related to diet

- First – assessed what types of food venues were available in 14 counties in KY
- Second – assessed the neighborhood deprivation of those counties
  - Do counties who have higher unemployment, lower education, lower household income also have less access?
What we want is the dark green. Low deprivation and many healthy stores.

What we have is high deprivation but also high healthy stores.
What type of stores do people have access to in rural communities?

- Walmart
- Gas stations
Access among low-income populations
Access is not equal

- 57 counties in KY
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants were assessed with dietary intake
- Mapping of what is available in those counties where SNAP residents live
Access to different food venues may help
Access to local food sources

- In one recent study among farmers’ markets customers and those living in counties with farmers’ markets we find that:
  - Those who shop at a farmers’ market consume more fruits and vegetables.
  - Those who shop at a farmers’ market 88% also shop at a supercenter and 95% also shop at a grocery store.
  - The average person spends between $17–$25 per trip at the farmers’ market.
In a similar study done in Fayette county we found that:

- Those shopping at a farmers’ market consume more fruits and vegetables
- Frequently shopping at a farmer’s market was also associated with consuming more fruits and vegetables
Summary

- Rural areas have access to some venues that sell healthy food and some venues with less healthy food.
- Among low-income residents less access to less healthy food venues is associated with improved dietary intake.
- Among all residents the behavior of shopping at farmers’ market or access to this venue is associated with improved dietary intake.
Federal Suggestions

- Farmers’ markets may be one strategy that holds promise within the whole food environment picture.
- Improving access to various types of food venues (retail, grocery) may improve intake.
- Linking to local farmers’ to improve access within stores may be promising.
Thank you

Questions