



Contact: Mandy Gross | FAPC Communications | 405-744-0442 | mandy.gross@okstate.edu

Celebrate Bake & Take Month in March

By Mandy Gross, FAPC Manager of Communications Services

(Stillwater, Okla. – March 9, 2010) Oklahoma State University's Robert M. Kerr Food & Agricultural Products Center is teaming up with the Oklahoma Wheat Commission to promote and celebrate Bake and Take Month during March.

The purpose of the Bake and Take promotion is to encourage participants to bake a product made from wheat and take it to a neighbor, friend or relative, said Renee Albers-Nelson, milling and baking specialist for the FAPC.

"The Bake and Take promotion is a wonderful way to get our young people to experience the joys of baking and understanding the importance of the cereal grain and wheat, grown in our state," Nelson said.

The FAPC and Oklahoma Wheat Commission are working with 4-H to help promote Bake & Take by encouraging 4-H members to participate.

The FAPC and Oklahoma Wheat Commission have worked with 4-H the last two years in promoting this event, and it has worked well, Nelson said.

"Both years, we directed our focus towards 4-H, since this group is strong in community service and agriculture," Nelson said. "As we promoted Bake & Take, we encouraged participants to purchase Oklahoma-milled flour."

Last year, Chrissy Whitten, 4-H Extension educator in Tulsa County, helped to promote Bake & Take in her county and plans to participate again this March.

She said Bake & Take has been beneficial in getting the 4-H families to spend time together in the kitchen.

"Many of our volunteers and 4-Hers had a wonderful feeling of giving when they presented their baked goods to family, neighbors and friends," Whitten said. "We have reaped so many life skills during this project, such as caring, sharing, responsibility, community service and more. The list goes on and on for the benefits you gain from doing this project."

In addition, Whitten and the Tulsa County Extension Office set up a booth during last year's Farm Week at the Tulsa Zoo during March to educate the public about wheat production. The FAPC and Oklahoma Wheat Commission also distributed free chocolate chip cookies from Upper Red Fork in Hunter Okla., and loaves of bread at the booth.



“At Farm Week, we were able to educate the general public about the benefits of wheat,” Whitten said. “Many zoo spectators were amazed at how delicious and nutritious whole wheat is for them. We had many surprised takers on the bread and cookie samples, and we were excited to find out that some of our visitors participated in baking and sharing, which says a lot about the project.”

Plans are being made to have another booth during Farm Week at the Tulsa Zoo on March 13-21, 2010, to promote the Bake & Take program.

The OSU Collegiate 4-H Club also participated in Bake & Take last year and plans to continue the promotion.

The club baked dozens of chocolate chip and molasses cookies. Some of the cookies were delivered to OSU President Burns Hargis and his office, and the remainder was sent to an adopted U.S soldier.

Mike Schulte, executive director for the Oklahoma Wheat Commission, said he is excited about promoting Bake and Take in Oklahoma. The Oklahoma Wheat Commission tries to promote the benefits of whole grains whenever possible.

“The Oklahoma Wheat Commission will be working with Farm to School programs throughout Oklahoma during the month of March trying to promote whole grains in local schools,” Schulte said. “We feel if we can educate parents and students about whole wheat products the benefits are many. It is always good to increase domestic markets for Oklahoma wheat producers while also creating better health opportunities for the people in our great state.”

Bake and Take began in 1972 by the Kansas Wheathearts, an auxiliary organization of the Kansas Association of Wheat Growers, as a community service event to celebrate the wheat harvest in Sumner County, Kan. Even though the Kansas Wheathearts disbanded in 2001, Kansas Wheat continues these efforts today.

For more information about Bake & Take or how you can help promote Bake & Take, contact Nelson by calling 405-744-6071 or e-mailing renee.albers_nelson@okstate.edu.

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