

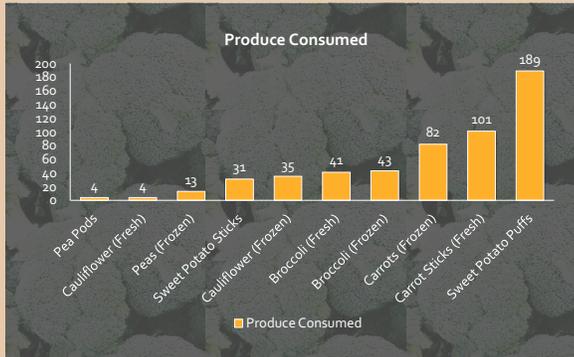


Surveying Students and Staff on Food Likes and Dislikes

Knowing what foods students like best and least can help guide the food services staff in preparing foods that are most likely to be eaten.

What schools are doing

Shirley Hills Primary School - Westonka



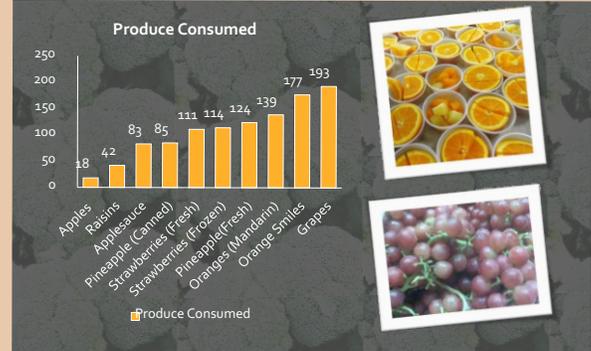
Vegetables – Customer Favorites

Students at Shirley Hills Primary School participated in a pilot test. In the first week, fruit choices were offered then vegetable choices were offered in the second week. Each day students selected fresh produce and/or its canned/frozen counterpart. For example, students were offered fresh raw cauliflower and/or cooked cauliflower, fresh sliced apples and canned, lite syrup sliced apples. Detailed data were collected covering cost, waste, and customer preference. It is important to know that fruit and vegetable choices were cupped individually.

Overwhelming results indicated that if students are given a choice of fruit and vegetables, there is a direct correlation between selection and food consumption. In addition, cutting the fruits and vegetables and cupping the product individually also resulted in additional consumption. Hence, menu offering choices are adjusted daily with the result that there is more acceptable selection and less waste.

Pilot test results also led to a media blitz to families, students and staff with the following tag lines:

- Food and Nutrition Services: *Simple, Fresh, Healthy*
- Because just getting food on the tray is not enough
- Empowering choices equates to actual consumption



Fruit – Customer Favorites

-School Meals: *We think food so students can think in the classroom*

With the new USDA requirements regarding the serving of more fruits and vegetables, a study like this one could be of great assistance to the food services staff determining which type of fruits and vegetables have the greatest chance of being eaten and not ending up in the waste bin. In the pilot test it is apparent which types of fruits and vegetables are the most popular and which ones are the least popular.

Another assessment method might be for a school to keep track of how much waste is generated when serving a specific vegetable either raw, cooked, frozen or canned. Such a project could prove to be a great learning experience for students if they participate in weighing and recording the results.

Results of Pilot Test

- Customers selected both fresh, frozen and canned produce.
- Higher consumption of fruits and vegetables
- USDA product (light syrup) - Customers do consume these products (exception: peas least favorite).

Critical Components:

- Giving customers a choice and time to make that choice
- Costs vary greatly (market pricing, seasonal produce)
- Nutrition Education: Home and School (some students were unfamiliar with strawberries)

- While waste was a factor, customers were more willing to try an item when given a choice in selecting. Note: Customers were encouraged to select both the fresh, frozen, and canned items.

Note: Since the time of this pilot test, Westonka has replaced the “cupping” of fruits and veggies with a fresh fruit and veggie serving table. The concept equates to the same outcome... students have a choice and they eat more.

Resources

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