Rural Action’s mission is to foster social, economic, and environmental justice in Appalachian Ohio through asset-based development. Program areas include sustainable agriculture, sustainable forestry, environmental education, waste and recycling, and watershed restoration.

(Above) A busy community potluck at the Chesterhill Produce Auction, a rural food hub managed by Rural Action providing income opportunities to Appalachian Ohio farmers.
Rural Action Sustainable Agriculture

Program Goal: Increasing local food production and consumption as an economic driver in Appalachian Ohio. This work falls into key project areas as part of value chain creation and coordination. These projects include:

- Farm-to-Institution
- Consumer Education
- Farmer Education
- Marketing Support
- Food Access
Rural Action has worked on Farm to School programs since 2004. This work includes:

- Local food purchasing and distribution
- Processing and culinary training
- Networking with farms and schools
- Aggregation
- Education
Challenges and Our Answers

- Schools don’t have time for fresh, local food preparation
  Answer: Hocking College culinary students prepare local product

- Culinary students need real experience with seasonal products
  Answer: Hocking College culinary students prepare local product

- Small producers can’t meet demand on their own
  Answer: Local products aggregated; producers connected to markets

- Schools don’t have time to source local products
  Answer: Order buyer coordinates and purchases school orders

- Price for fresh products
  Answer: Wholesale prices and product selection available

- School menus do not always follow seasonal availability
  Answer: Create seasonal calendars and match to school calendars
Resulting Pilot Project

• With funding from the Central Appalachian Network, Rural Action is partnering with Hocking College’s Chef Katie McGushin, Federal Hocking Schools, Athens City Schools, and local farmers, including the Chesterhill Produce Auction, to purchase, prepare and deliver seasonally available local food to school cafeterias.
How It Works

Farm to Institution to School

a sustainable new partnership by Rural Action bringing fresh produce from local farmers to Hocking College for preparation by students, then to local schools for service in the cafeteria!
Producer Training
Traceability
Processing
Distribution
Consumption
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