No time to Cook this Summer? Here are some ideas to save some time!

Do you seem to lose track of time? Does it always seem as if you never have enough time when you get home at night to cook dinner? If you answered yes, then some of these easy ideas could help you in the kitchen.

If you are looking to prepare a grain product for dinner try some of the following......

- Instant Brown Rice: a whole grain that cooks in 5 minutes. Save money by making large batches of brown rice and freezing it in small quantities.
- No Boil Lasagna, Spaghetti: these items save you time.
- Small Pasta Shapes: rotini, small shells, macaroni, penne pastas cook very quickly as one dish meals in the skillet or microwave without needing to be boiled and drained first.
- Tortillas: corn and flour are great flatbreads to use to make sandwiches, wraps, pizzas and even for dessert. Bake corn tortillas to eat as a snack.

What about those delicious fruits and vegetables?

- Fresh: natures best snack that comes in its own wrapper.
- Frozen: frozen fruits can be used as a great dessert in hot summer months.
- Dried: dried fruits add pizzazz to salads, rice and pasta dishes.
- Fresh Vegetables: some are so easy to prepare such as zucchini, broccoli or cauliflower.
- Canned Tomatoes: with no added salt. These products are very convenient because they add many flavors.

Dairy is something easy to add to your meal.

- Nonfat plain yogurt: it is a great topper. Use nonfat, vanilla flavored yogurt as a salad dressing for fruit and vegetable salads or as a dessert sauce.
- Fat free or low fat grated cheese: these products are improved; for best results only bake or microwave these cheeses for a minute or they will become tough.
- Parmesan cheese: this cheese gives you a lot of flavor in a small amount.

Protein can be a fast staple in your meal.

- Canned Beans: use a variety of different ones to add a punch of vitamins and minerals to your dish.
- Split peas/lentils: these cook quickly without needing to be soaked first.
FCE Picnic
When: July 22
Where: Hyder Burks Ag Pavilion
Time: 11:00 a.m. begin program

Those wishing to sell items at the Annual Meeting there will be a $10 non-refundable booth rental fee due.

Hot Summer with Cool Meals
With hot temperatures outside you might not want to turn on extra heat in your house by using your oven. There are many meals that you can prepare for your family that does not require cooking. Try one of the meals below......

- Try a cool soup: there are soups that are tasty and they do not have to be heated. Such as cold cherry soup, gazpacho. These cool soups can add vegetables to your diet and help you cool down on those hot summer days.
- Salads: this can be a simple refreshing end to a hot, hard worked day. Stock up on different kinds of greens, colorful vegetables such as carrots, green peppers, tomatoes, avocados and top your salad off with fresh fruits like apples, pineapple and strawberries.
- Sandwich wraps: Instead of using your usual bread try using a tomato, whole wheat or spinach tortilla. It will add a little spice to your sandwich.

Have a great summer!

Michelle Parrott
Extension Agent
Putnam County

Kindergarten School Supplies
We will be collecting Kindergarten School Supplies at the FCE Picnic and through the month of August. This is a county wide fce project. I will pick the supplies up at the picnic or you can bring them by my office beginning in July.

Central Region Annual Meeting
When: September 11, 2014
Where: Rutherford County Community Center (behind Extension Office)
Cost: $20.00 includes meal

Registration available at FCE County Picnic