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This is where food literacy comes in, for as P.H. Ec and family studies educator Diane O'Shea explains, food literacy is about more than just learning how to chop vegetables or boil water. It's also about getting back to the basics of food.

"It is a complex term that's not only about food preparation, food and kitchen safety, but an understanding of where food is coming from, how it is grown and how it is produced," said O'Shea.

O'Shea was awarded the Ontario Agri-Food Education's (OAFE) Teacher Award for Excellence in 2010 for her efforts to integrate agriculture into her classroom by engaging the students in food labs, teaching them how to make preserves, and even taking them on field trips to local farms to see first hand where their food came from.

"This award was a lovely honour," said O'Shea. "The OAFE have worked really hard to provide resources and education for teachers."

Parents try to be a teacher and role model for their children in all aspects of their life, but the truth is that when it comes to food, most parents have a bit of learning they need to do themselves first.

"I got a message recently where a colleague had just taught a 20 year old how to crack an egg," said O'Shea.

So much of the common sense about food that we grew up with has been lost to today's generation of fast food and take-out, forming a barrier between consumers and what they eat. They don't see the farmers hilling the potatoes, harvesting the corn or milking the cows. They only see what has already been packaged and prepared for them.

"We need to create a connection between agriculture and food, which many people are not aware exists," said Carver.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture is concerned enough about the need for food literacy that it made it part of its presentation to candidates in last spring's provincial election.

"Our food literacy goal is our '6 X 16 Program', taken from the National Food Strategy," says an OFA

position paper. "It is a measurable goal to ensure that by the age of 16 years, each Ontario teenager can plan and prepare six nutritious meals.

"OFA believes that the Ontario government must develop and implement curriculum enhancements to the elementary and secondary school systems to improve food literacy by a targeted and measurable amount on an annual basis (6 X 16).

"The Ontario government must work closely with the agri-food sector to provide enhanced school nutrition programs to remote and vulnerable communities across Ontario," the OFA paper concludes.

The push for food literacy is not something new, and it's not limited to Canada, either. O'Shea attended a council meeting for the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) in July, which shows just how far of a reach this issue had.

"There really is a world-wide interest in the push for food literacy," said O'Shea.

The world is full of delicious recipes, which will continue to go untested until everyone learns how to be confident in the kitchen. ▽