

Making connections between farm and urban consumers



Judy Krall says children should be exposed to more information about agriculture.

Everyone eats, but few of us know much about how our food is produced. It's that lack of knowledge that has people like Judy Krall concerned.

Krall was raised on a Chatham-Kent farm but has been living in the Petrolia area for about the last 25 years, where she and her husband Doug Krall are egg producers.

A director of the Petrolia and Enniskillen Agricultural Society, a graduate of the University of Guelph, and a trustee with the Lambton-Kent District School Board, Krall is trying to fight against the lack of knowledge about agriculture, with a program aimed at elementary school children called Ag in the Classroom.

The program has been operating in schools all over Chatham-Kent and Lambton County for about 15 years.

Krall says there is at least a two-generation gap of people being away from the farming lifestyle that was at one time so dominant.

She said that when she goes into a school and asks how many kids live on a farm, almost no one raises their hand. If she asks if their grandparents live on a farm, only a few hands are raised.

Organizers have created kits for classes of young children on subjects including farm animals, plants, soil and ecosystems. Kids are also taught how to plan and prepare healthy meals using Canada's Food Guide.

They also try to get children to learn more about farm animals with visits to the animal farm at Canatara Park in Sarnia and give them demonstrations about how simple machines make farm work easier.

"People have a huge disconnection to farming," said Krall.

She also said they're trying to educate the public about how serious farmers are about protecting the environment and how they are good stewards of the land.

— Don Robinet