

PSU showcases Aquaponics project on campus

Project creates sustainable, healthy food

By Chris Warner Apr 26, 2019 Updated Dec 12, 2022



Hydroponics involves growing plants in water instead of soil, and a project at Pittsburg State University has turned that into aquaponics by adding another element.

“It started out as a hydroponics operation so, it’s basically growing lettuce primarily, but other food through water rather than soil, with the aquaponics, that incorporates fish into the system so it’s more of a closed loop.” Erin Kruse is one of two students giving tours at Pitt State to showcase their new aquaponics project.

Aquaponics, as Kruse mentioned, incorporates fish, in this case, tilapia, into the hydroponics system. Kruse says “So the fish actually generate the nutrients for the plants and then the plants actually clean the water for the fish.”

And it’s this unique system that officials like Matt O’Malley with Live Well Crawford County, are excited to see. O’Malley says “We are hoping to increase access to healthy foods for everyone in the county and thought this could be a really neat way to get that in communities that might not be able to do a garden project or something like that.”

Kruse says the Students 4 Sustainability group, agree. “We really think, as students for sustainability, that local food production, sustainable food production is something that’s always going to be paramount, especially in rural communities.”

For O’Malley, he says he’s looking at an even bigger picture. O’Malley says “We like to dream big and how cool would it be if every high school in Crawford County had an aquaponics system and they grew their own lettuce for their own school lunch salad bar, and so that’s what we’re kinda dreaming about with this project.”

The project is still in it’s early stages but Kruse says they hope to see it continue to grow and expand to serve the county.

The project was originally started by another group on campus before the students for sustainability group took over.