Ratatouille Soup

| 1 small eggplant, peeled and cubed | 1 medium bell pepper, chopped |
| 2 teaspoons salt | 1 medium onion, chopped |
| 1 pound lean ground chuck | 1 tablespoon finely minced garlic (about 3 cloves) |
| 1 tablespoon canola oil | 1 14.5 ounce can low sodium beef broth |
| 1 medium zucchini, chopped | 1 24 ounce jar chunky garden style pasta sauce |
| 2 cups water | 1 teaspoon dried basil |
| 1 cup uncooked whole grain pasta |

Place the cubed eggplant in a colander. Toss with the salt and let set for 20-25 minutes. Thoroughly rinse in cold water and press as much water out of the eggplant as possible. Set aside. In a large heavy pot, brown the ground beef over medium heat until crumbly and no longer pink. Drain. Raise the heat to medium-high. Add the canola oil to the same pot. Return the beef to the pot. Add the zucchini, bell pepper, onion and garlic. Cook together for 5-7 minutes, until onion is translucent. Add the eggplant to the mixture and continue to cook for 5 minutes. Add the beef broth, pasta sauce, water and basil. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low, cover and simmer for 10 minutes. Add the pasta. Raise heat to medium. Bring to a slow boil and cook, stirring occasionally for 10-12 minutes, or until the pasta is tender.

Yield: 12, 1 cup servings

Nutritional Analysis: 210 calories, 10 g fat, 3 g saturated fat, 35 mg cholesterol, 680 mg sodium, 19 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 8 g sugar, 13 g protein

Buying Kentucky Proud is easy. Look for the label at your grocery store, farmers’ market, or roadside stand.

Kentucky Eggplant

SEASON: Late June to October.

NUTRITION FACTS: Eggplant contains small amounts of several important vitamins that are needed daily. It is very low in sodium and calories, with only 15 calories for a half cup serving.

SELECTION: Select firm, heavy eggplant with smooth, shiny, deep purple skin. Choose medium size eggplant, about 3 to 4 inches in diameter.

STORAGE: Store soon after harvest or purchase in the vegetable crisper in the refrigerator. Use within one week.

PREPARATION: Eggplant is a versatile vegetable and can be baked, broiled, grilled, fried, stuffed or used in a variety of casseroles in combination with other vegetables. It works well with tomatoes, garlic, onions, and cheese. One pound equals 3 cups diced. Eggplant should be peeled before preparation, unless it is very young and tender.

To broil or grill: Cut into three-fourth inch slices and brush with margarine or Italian dressing. Broil or grill for about 5 minutes on each side, until eggplant is tender and browned. Remove from heat and sprinkle with grated Parmesan cheese.

To season: Use marjoram, oregano, allspice, chili powder, curry powder, garlic, basil or rosemary.

KENTUCKY EGGPLANT

Kentucky Proud Project
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