Agricultural Production and Food Systems

P1 Evaluating Food Waste Knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviors in College Students at a Midwestern University

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Background: An estimated 40% of food produced in the United States is wasted, and approximately 90 billion pounds are discarded by consumers annually. Food waste threatens the environment and contributes to food insecurity. Identifying methods to reduce personal food waste represents a potential strategy to actively engage in behaviors that positively impact the food system and environment.

Objective: Explore current knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to food waste in college students. Results will provide details to assist in developing interventions to mitigate consumer food waste.

Study Design, Setting, Participants: A survey was released to 30,773 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in a midwestern university. Questions addressed knowledge and attitudes associated with food waste, concern for environmental consequences, transtheoretical model stage, and application of mitigation behaviors.

Measurable Outcome/Analysis: A response rate of 6.3% provided a total of 1,931 responses for analysis. Recruitment was done via email, and data were collected via Qualtrics. A descriptive analysis was conducted to identify initial characteristics of this population.

Results: Evaluating the stage of change for reducing personal food waste showed 8% of respondents in precontemplation, 30% in contemplation, 4% in preparation, 57% in action and maintenance, and 1% in relapse. However, on a 5-point Likert scale from not at all knowledgeable (1) to very knowledgeable (5), 64% designated they were only slightly (2) or somewhat knowledgeable (3) about ways to reduce food waste.

Conclusion: Evidence suggests that this audience is open to change, yet do not have sufficient knowledge regarding ways to reduce food waste. Thus, guidance may be warranted to help them acquire the information and skills to be successful. Understanding these barriers and attitudes will allow for the development of specific, tailored approaches to waste reduction that acknowledge where students are and carve a path toward a more sustainable food behavior.

Funding: None.

P2 Farmers Feeding Utah: An Innovative Approach to Increasing Healthy Food Access and Supporting Local Agriculture

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Objective: Farmers Feeding Utah (FFU) aims to help Utah farmers and families who have been impacted by COVID-19. FFU temporarily improves participants' food security, increases the availability of fresh, local food in pantries, and provides product outlets for farmers.

Use of Theory or Research: Utah has seen a 300% increase in the need for food assistance since the onset of COVID-19 in March 2020. Additionally, processing shortages and market losses have left many Utah farmers without a market for their products. FFU provides a food system change that connects families in need to fresh, local food.

Target Audience: FFU is targeted towards food insecure families and struggling farmers. Families experiencing intergenerational poverty are given priority at the food distribution events. Locations for FFU events are identified by need, based on increases in unemployment and SNAP enrollment.

Program Description: FFU is a partnership between the Miracle of Agriculture Foundation, Utah Farm Bureau, and Utah's SNAP-Ed program, Create Better Health. Individual and corporate donations are collected to purchase nutrient-dense, locally produced foods to distribute to those in need.

Evaluation Methods: FFU collects outcome data at the distribution events, including the household size of those reached and effective marketing strategies. Additionally, the number of farmers and food pantries supported by the program and pounds of food donated are collected.

Results: To date, FFU has held 8 food distributions across the state of Utah, including in the Navajo Nation. Over 1.1 million pounds of food, including produce, meat, poultry, eggs, nuts, and live sheep, have been distributed to over 21,000 families and 25 food pantries. The program has supported 27 Utah farmers.

Conclusion: While FFU was developed in response to COVID-19, the need for food system changes to better connect individuals experiencing food insecurity with local products will remain beyond the pandemic. FFU is dedicated to finding sustainable solutions towards a more equitable regional food system.

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P3 Midwestern Regional Grocery Store Chain Canned and Frozen Vegetable Sales

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