

## Abstract

**Objective:** Form a collaboration for food systems programming that brings together Extension educators from “farm gate” to “consumer plate.”

**Target Audience:** Extension professionals working with consumers, youth, agricultural producers, food service, and food processors.

**Theory, Prior Research, Rationale:** Today’s consumer faces many decisions influencing food choices. However, 98% of Americans are several generations removed from direct farming, according to former United States Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack. As a result, they are less familiar with how our food systems work.

**Description:** In response to consumer concerns (i.e., food safety, GMOs, pesticides, etc.), we formed a statewide interdisciplinary team of Agriculture, Family/Consumer Science, Food Science, and 4-H professionals to work together to reach consumers from “farm gate” to “consumer plate.” The steps, which are continually evolving, included (1) Dividing into teams [production agriculture, food processing, youth, and consumers/food service] who met together and separately, electronically and face-to-face; (2) Establishing a listserv and web-based location to share information; (3) Creating a logic model; (4) Conducting a statewide survey to determine program priorities; (5) Identifying areas to work together; and (6) Developing core questions all teams could use in clientele surveys.

**Evaluation:** Quantitative and qualitative data support this approach: (1) The survey [n=1,208] identified food safety as our state’s top priority and gave us a common emphasis; (2) Staff in different disciplines collaborated in developing programs, articles, and social media; and (3) The core set of questions used with all clientele helped aggregate data.

**Conclusions and Implications:** This statewide collaboration model could be replicated and implemented by others in Extension for greater outreach in food systems education.

*Funded through normal office operating expenses.*



View a 3-minute video of team accomplishments at: [bit.ly/extension-impact](http://bit.ly/extension-impact)

## 2017 Nebraska Extension Collaboration Highlights from “Farm Gate” to “Consumer Plate”

*Foodborne illness stood out as a common concern of Nebraskans with over half (53%) very concerned (go.unl.edu/Nebraska-food-report). These survey findings were used throughout 2017 to guide program planning and activities. As a result ...*

### CONSUMERS / FOOD SERVICE



- **1,806** foodservice staff participated in food safety training to become a ServSafe Manager (741) or ServSafe Food Handler (981 English/ 84 Spanish).
- "Barf Bucket" training, a nationally recognized program, trained **434** childcare centers/home providers to prevent spread of *Norovirus* infection.
- **216,000+** individuals accessed web materials to teach/learn about food labeling, when food is still acceptable to eat, and how to reduce food waste.
- Home canning classes helped **200** consumers use safe produce handling, updated processes, lab tested recipes, and correct storage guidelines.

### YOUTH



- **“Ag literacy is a great way for our students to see the connection of how science and Nebraska agriculture impacts their everyday life.”**—Teacher
- Over **26,000** youth learned about agriculture through ag literacy programs such as Ag Festivals, Animals Inside & Out, Embryology, Dairy Ambassadors, and Local Beef.
- Raising Nebraska, an interactive agriculture experience on the State Fair grounds, connected over **356,000** of youth and adult consumers to Nebraska agriculture through field trips, tours, State Fair, and more.
- **3,600+** Nebraska youth were certified in Livestock Quality Assurance to implement good production practices ensuring animal care and well-being.

### PRODUCTION AG



- Annually, **2,850+** livestock producers increase their knowledge of animal care, well-being, health, antimicrobial stewardship, food safety, and product quality topics/practices through Beef and Pork Quality Assurance training.
- **160** Nebraska dairies increased their knowledge of animal care and practices which assure food safety, quality, and value of milk produced in the state.
- **1,000+** farmers attend Crop Field Days to learn latest production practices.
- **200** sheep and goat producers certified in proper healthcare techniques.
- **60** fruit and vegetable growers were trained on the latest Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) guidelines.

### FOOD PROCESSING



- Training and certifications were provided to the food processing industry to support them in meeting regulatory standards, improving food quality, and ensuring food safety.
- **126** professionals in all food sectors qualified for certification in 5 programs:
- Better Process School and Acidified Better Process School
- Food Safety Preventive Controls Alliance Qualified Individual Certification
- Food Microbiology Workshop
- Food Processing Management Certificate



**Working together, we could report: “Over 42,000 youth and adults statewide made changes and/or reinforced knowledge of food safety practices from food production to food consumption.”**