**PROGRAM SUMMARY:** University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service SNAP-Ed Program developed Arkansas Foods (ArFoods) to highlight locally grown foods. ArFoods consists of nutrition education posters, newsletters, and taste-testing activities that can be used alone or in conjunction with evidence-based curriculum. During Farm to School month 2021, ArFoods was used in school gardens. “ArFoods in the Garden” pilot project consisted of 34 individual events in 4 schools reaching 713 youth. Nutrition education posters featuring spinach were printed on corrugated plastic and used as crop markers. MyPlate resources were used, with taste tests and physical activity breaks. The physical activity breaks included a blender bike students rode to make their own smoothies and “spinach yoga,” where students started as seeds, grew tall and strong, and swayed in the wind. Posters were displayed in cafeterias, and parent newsletters were sent home with students.

**OBJECTIVE:** To implement a nutrition, gardening-based pilot project in SNAP-Ed eligible schools that incorporates direct education, indirect education, and PSE.

**TARGET AUDIENCE:** K-5th grade students, teachers in 4 SNAP-Ed eligible schools.

**USE OF THEORY OR RESEARCH:** Studies show garden-based nutrition education combined with healthy food marketing has potential to improve children’s diet quality and is associated with more positive food choices.

**CONCLUSIONS:** This pilot project was an example of how multiple delivery methods (direct education, indirect education, PSE) can be incorporated into SNAP-Ed approaches. The project was successful in increasing students’ and teachers’ willingness to try new healthy foods and/or be more physically active.

**EVALUATION METHODS:** Post teacher survey used to assess value and effectiveness of pilot project, changes in eating habits of students and teachers, and PSE changes adopted. Students surveyed about whether they would try spinach again.

**RESULTS:** All teachers (n=6) reported program was very valuable to their students; their students seemed more willing to try new foods. Among student respondents (n=288), 80.9% indicated they would try spinach again. Among teachers, five (83%) reported because of program they were motivated to try new foods, eat healthier, and/or be more physically active; four (67%) reported making changes in classrooms.

**QUOTES:**

“Students really enjoyed the smoothie. I had many parents asking for the recipe to try at home.” –teacher

“Spinach is a vegetable.”

“ArFoods in the Garden: A SNAP-ED EDUCATIONAL/PSE STRATEGY

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