

Long-Term Impact of the Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training

Introduction

Twelve states assessed a total of 96 Produce Safety Alliance Grower Trainings between September 2016 and May 2018. We evaluated the impact of the trainings approximately 12 months later.

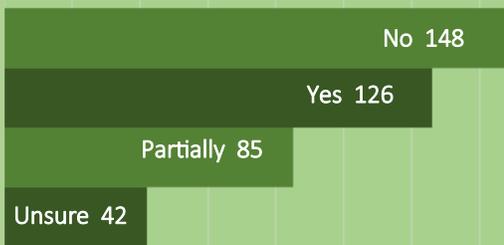
Methods

The survey was conducted electronically with those who use technology and sent by mail to those who do not.

Respondents

504 respondents
23% response rate

Most respondents were not required to comply with FSMA

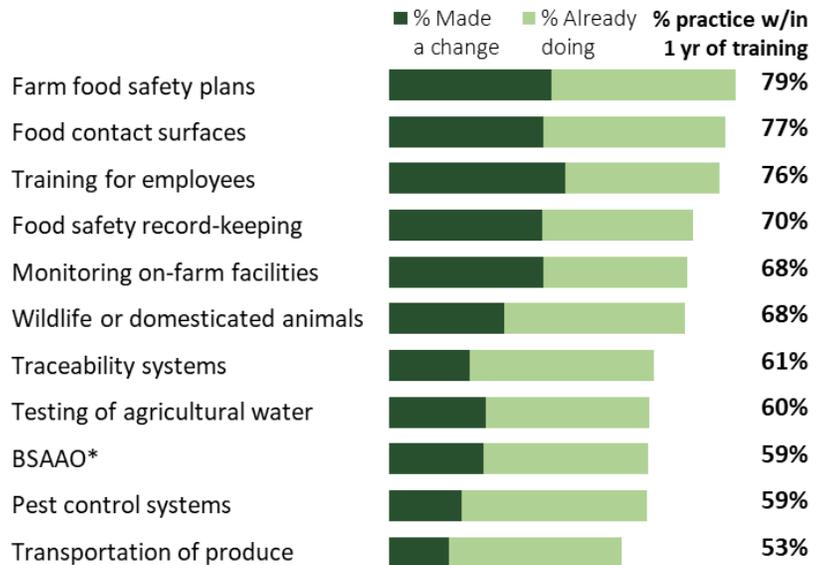


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Updated: June 2019

Results

73% of growers implemented or modified at least one food safety practice since attending the training (293 of 404 growers).



*Biological Soil Amendments of Animal Origin
% of growers (of 354)

28% of growers added or modified on-farm infrastructure or equipment to improve food safety practices (110 of 396 growers).



35 growers upgraded or added **hand-washing** stations.



21 added equipment to or changed their **wash/pack** line.



21 built new or upgraded existing **buildings or pack sheds**.



18 upgraded or added new **restrooms**.

Recommendations

Continue to offer food safety education. Disseminate information about FSMA whenever it is updated. Provide clarification on the requirements for water testing. Provide mock on-farm audits. Create templates of forms growers can use for records required by FSMA. Focus on outreach to small or underserved farmers and farm workers. Share resources on how to meet requirements of both FSMA and food safety certification, such as GAP. Provide food safety plan workshops and trainings on farms and online. Be available to answer questions.

Additional Resources

23% of respondents have referred others to NCR FSMA and/or its partners for information or resources related to food safety and/or FSMA.

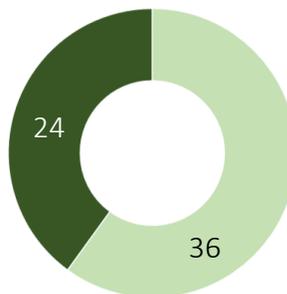
18% of respondents have sought out additional educational materials or training from NCR FSMA or its partners.

In contrast, 11 percent (55 of 504) of respondents have sought them from other sources, showing that respondents were more likely to seek out additional information from NCR FSMA and its partners than from other sources.

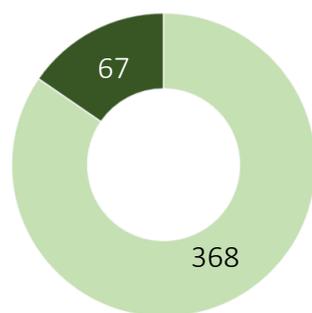


Non-growers

40% (24 of 60) of non-grower respondents indicated that they had implemented some sort of change related to food safety in their work since the training.



Grower Budgets



15% of respondents have increased their budget allocation for food safety and/or FSMA compliance.

Others expressed concern at the financial cost. For example, one said, “[FSMA] is a real headache with no return of revenue for midsize and small farms.” This may indicate a need to help

growers think through how they can make no-cost or low-cost changes. Growers may also need help thinking through the cost of a foodborne illness outbreak traced to their farm versus the perceived benefit of not making food safety changes.

One hundred eighty-six respondents described in their own words how NCR FSMA partners have provided them with guidance regarding FSMA. Responses were coded for themes:

Explained the requirements of the FSMA Produce Safety Rule: “It was beneficial to hear from individuals who understood the law.”

Provided additional resources:

Thirty-two respondents valued the available resources.

Provided information about food safety practices: “They helped detect some minor things that we had missed or didn't know about.”

Provided the required training:

Eighteen growers said that the greatest value of NCR FSMA and its partners’ work was that they provided a training which growers were required to take.

Provided on-farm education and technical assistance or conducted an on-farm readiness review:

Nine growers indicated that their state extension or department of agriculture had given on-farm education.

Helped write or update farm food safety plans:

“They helped me to understand how to make a food safety plan that addresses the contamination risks associated with my operation.”

Hosted other food safety education events:

“A field day was held that was helpful because it was focused on real world implementation.”

Clarified which farms are covered by FSMA:

“We learned we are exempt, but I want to still follow through with new procedures.”