

2021 NCR FSMA Annual Impact Report

The North Central Region Center for FSMA Training, Extension and Technical Assistance (NCR FSMA) is a collaboration of on-farm food safety specialists from 12 Midwest states. Its purpose is to help small and medium-scale fruit and vegetable growers and processors become compliant with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule.

This document shares impacts of the NCR FSMA based on its evaluation in 2021.

Report prepared by:
Arlene Enderton
Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Farm, Food and Enterprise Development
February, 2022



North Central Region
Center for FSMA Training, Extension
and Technical Assistance

NCR FSMA by the numbers:

211 subscribed to the NCR FSMA newsletter

35 people on average attended monthly listening sessions

10 PSA grower trainings were offered collaboratively by multiple states using remote delivery

10 unique types of underserved audiences reached by Food Safety Outreach Program grant recipients in 2021

81 people attended the 2021 NCR FSMA Annual Meeting

77% of growers who responded to the follow-up survey in the last four years made a change to food safety practice, infrastructure, or equipment since the training.

26% of growers made changes to infrastructure or equipment to improve food safety practices after taking the training.

Nhia Xiong, a Hmong Farmer, works with Lincoln University Cooperative Extension's Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program (ISFOP)

Issue: Nhia Xiong is a diversified farmer located in Anderson, Missouri. Mr. Xiong is a first-generation Hmong refugee who moved to Southwest Missouri with the goal of making a living by producing and

What has been done: Lincoln University's Innovative Small Farmers' Outreach Program (ISFOP) employs a holistic approach and sustainable agriculture methodologies in assisting



small farmers. ISFOP staff has been working with Mr. Xiong and his family since 2010 through one-on-one farm visits and consultations. They also invited the family to participate in educational farm tours and workshops offered specifically for Hmong producers in the Southwest Region in

selling vegetables at the local farmers' markets. When he contacted Lincoln University Cooperative Extension (LUCE), he was growing vegetables on a 0.25-acre plot and selling at one farmers' market, one day per week. Mr. Xiong had asked for LUCE's assistance to help him expand his operation, sell vegetables on a year-round basis, and make a profit.

Missouri. The areas of focus for Mr. Xiong included, among other things, season extension structures and techniques, drip irrigation, weed control using plastic mulch, on-farm food safety, and marketing. ISFOP staff introduced Mr. Xiong to the USDA Service Center and the various programs available to benefit the small farmers just like him.

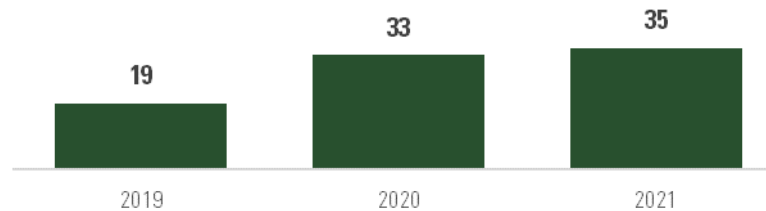
Impact: As a direct result of these educational outreach efforts, Mr. Xiong was able to expand his area of production by installing drip irrigation system and by utilizing plastic mulch for weed suppression. LUCE staff had accompanied Mr. Xiong for his initial USDA Service Center visits. He received partial funding for two wells from Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for use in his livestock and vegetable production. He also had signed up for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) High Tunnel initiative. Once approved for the high tunnel, ISFOP helped Mr. Xiong build his first high tunnel and assisted with planting schedules that allowed him to harvest produce on a year-round basis. This innovative farmer, based on the information gathered at a LUCE-offered workshop, designed and built a cold storage room for his harvested vegetables. This cold room helped to prolong the shelf-life and the freshness of his harvested produce. At the time of this reporting (2020), Mr. Xiong has almost four acres of land in vegetable cultivation, and a total of four 30' X 60' high tunnels. He follows most, if not all, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and food safety protocols during the production and marketing of the vegetables grown on the Xiong farm. Presently, he is a regular vendor at the Webb City, Bella Vista and Kansas City farmers' markets. Despite the pandemic, in 2020, Mr. Xiong was able to gross over \$25,000 from the sale of vegetables produced on his farm.

Reported by: Nahshon Bishop – LUCE ISFOP Small Farm Specialist, Southwest Region

“The thing that has been most helpful and engaging is building relationships with others doing this work in our region.”

~State regulator

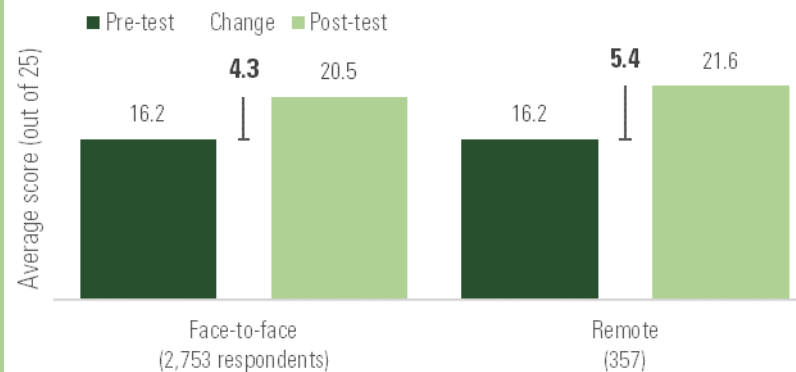
Average listening session attendance has nearly doubled since 2019.



“I would say NCR FSMA not just provides letters of support but real connections and support.”

~ FSOP awardee

NCR FSMA partners were surprised to learn in 2021 that participants in remote delivery PSA trainings learned more than face-to-face.



This institution is an equal opportunity provider. For the full non-discrimination statement or accommodation inquiries, go to www.extension.iastate.edu/diversity/ext.

Recommendations for 2022:

Clarify and communicate whose needs the **listening sessions** are meant to meet.

Consider establishing a **listserv** where NCR FSMA partners can post questions or share resources.

Continue to provide opportunities for **educators to learn from regulators** about on-farm food safety practices which regulators have observed need improvement.

Invite all FSOP awardees to participate in NCR FSMA events and join the mailing list.

Give leadership to help states understand how **data** that is being collected about farmers, such as in farm inventories, is being/could be used to inform program implementation and development to support small and diverse farms.

Continue to expand the support available to people who work with **food processors and cottage food makers**.

Collect **demographic data** as a part of the knowledge assessment to help answer the question of whether the superior performance of people who participate in remote delivery trainings is related to the delivery format or to differences in the populations who access different styles of trainings.