

Impact of Produce Safety Alliance Grower Trainings in the North Central Region

Introduction

The impact of Produce Safety Alliance Grower Trainings in eight North Central Region states was evaluated in January 2020. Between October 2018 and June 2019, 926 participants attended a training in one of those states. They were invited to participate in the survey.

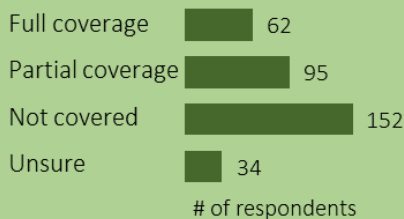
Methods

A survey was conducted electronically and through the mail.

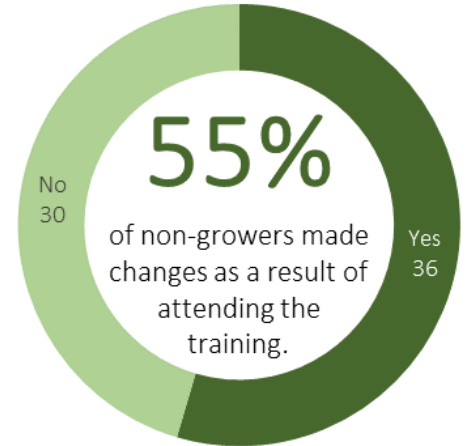
Respondents

364 participants (39%) responded to the survey. (Some results also include data from a separate survey sent in Iowa.)

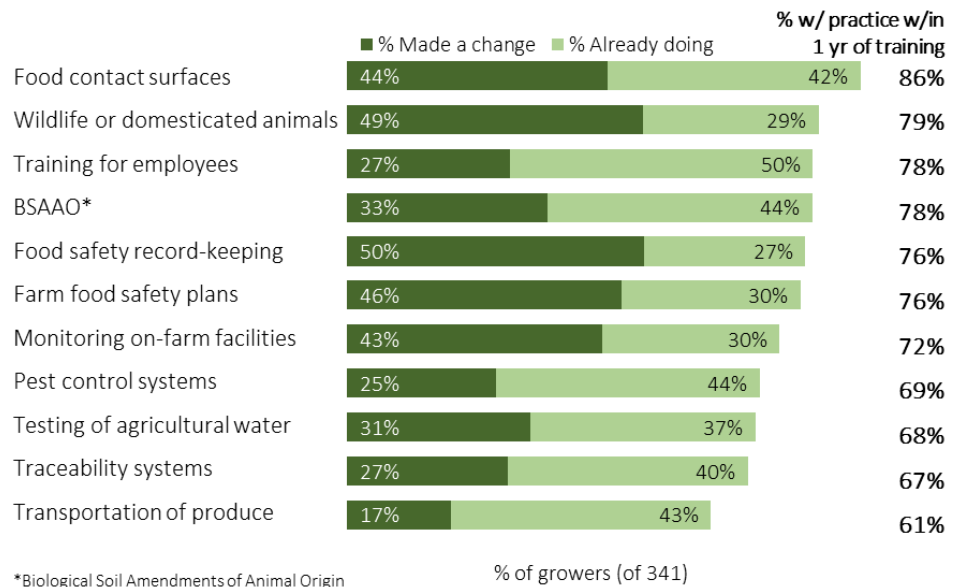
Growers most commonly are not required to comply with FSMA.



Results



Farmers made significant progress toward being compliant with FSMA since taking the training. See the changes farmers/growers made, as well as which practices they already had in place prior to the training.



96 respondents spent an estimated **\$209,350** to improve food safety practices and infrastructure.



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25% of growers (69 of 276) added or modified on-farm infrastructure or equipment to improve food safety practices.



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



15 replaced or updated **washing or sanitizing equipment**.



9 improved **water or irrigation systems**



8 added or upgraded **restrooms**.



7 built new or upgraded existing **buildings**.



5 upgraded **food contact surfaces**.



5 switched to **picking/storage containers** that can be washed and sanitized.



4 added **fencing** to deter wildlife from growing areas.

Illustrations: garden box by Lluisa Iborro (Noun Project), table by Azam Ishaq (Noun Project)

64% of growers who have participated in an OFRR made changes to on-farm food safety practices as a result.

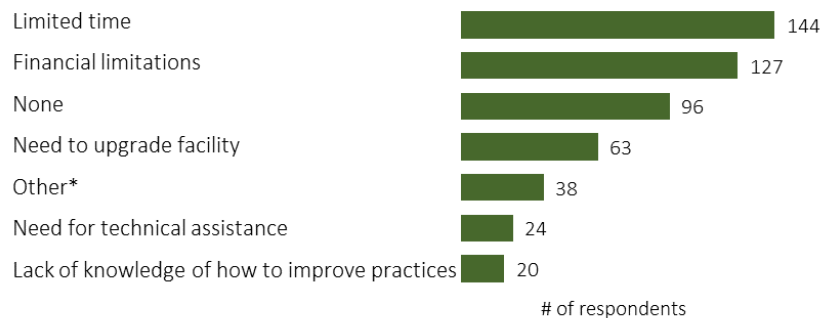
7 growers created **clean zones** in packing areas to reduce contamination.

6 changed how they clean or sanitize **food contact surfaces**.

“I am very happy with the guidance and suggestions that the review team gave us. I feel very comfortable calling any one of them if we have a question as we prepare for training our employees and implement new procedures.”

~ OFRR participant

Limited time and money were the most commonly cited limitations to improving on-farm food safety practices.



*Need to upgrade equipment (4 respondents), small scale (4), gray areas (3), record keeping (3), lack of financial benefit (3), water testing issues (3), negative attitude (2), farm is exempt (1), consumers need to change (1).

Recommendations

Continue to offer **food safety education**.

Provide **updates** via email or newsletters whenever FSMA requirements are updated.

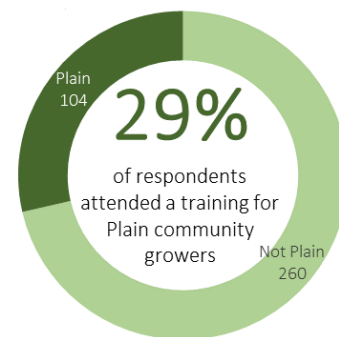
Continue to offer **OFRR's and similar on-farm activities**.

Provide **technical assistance** to individual growers.

Share information about **grants or loans** available to farmers for food safety improvements.

Highlight information on **low-cost ways** to improve food safety practices.

104 respondents attended a training targeted towards Plain Growers. They were more likely to be fully covered than growers who attended other trainings.



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