

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

Introduction

The impact of Produce Safety Alliance Grower Trainings in twelve North Central Region states was evaluated in four consecutive years. Training participants were invited to take the survey approximately one year after the training. This report shares cumulative results.

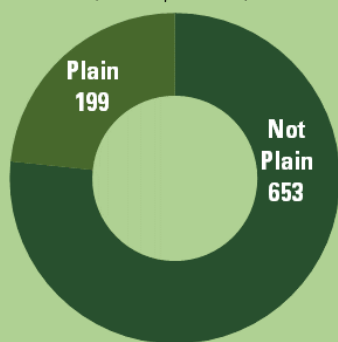
Methods

A survey was conducted electronically and through the mail. Iowa conducted its own survey in year 3 and Minnesota in years 2-4.

Respondents

1126 participants (24%) responded to the survey.

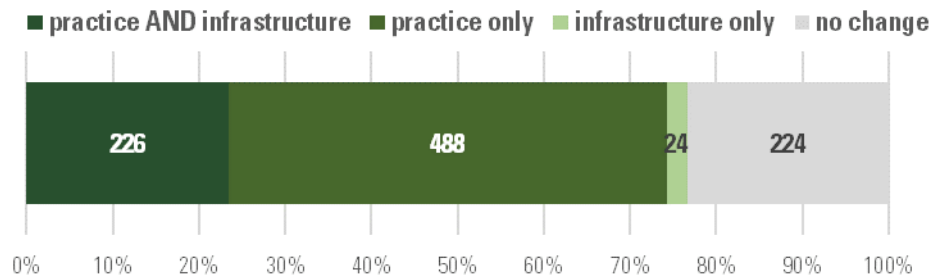
23% of respondents participated in a training for Plain clothes growers. (852 respondents)



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

Results

77% of grower respondents made changes to food safety practice, infrastructure, or equipment.



84% (792 of 941) of growers had practices for cleaning & sanitizing food contact surfaces within 1 yr. of training.



79% (725 of 915) of growers were training employees about food safety within 1 yr. of training.

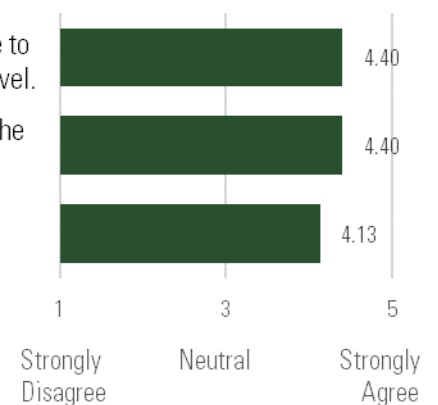
In April 2020, NCR FSMA partners began offering trainings using remote delivery due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey was sent to participants in two of the first trainings. Results were positive:

Remote delivery trainings received high ratings. (15 respondents, year 4 only)

The remote delivery training was more accessible to me than face-to-face, because I didn't have to travel.

I was able to get my questions answered during the remote delivery training.

The remote delivery format was engaging.



Illustrations: cleaning by The Icon Z (Noun Project), training by Cintuza (Noun Project)

26% of growers added or modified on-farm infrastructure or equipment to improve food safety practices.



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



59 replaced or updated **equipment**, including packing line equipment.



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



34 added or upgraded **restrooms**.



29 improved **water or irrigation systems**.



12 upgraded **food contact surfaces**.



12 added **fencing** to deter animals from growing areas.



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



9 dedicated **vehicles** for transportation of produce.



4 posted new **signs** about food safety.

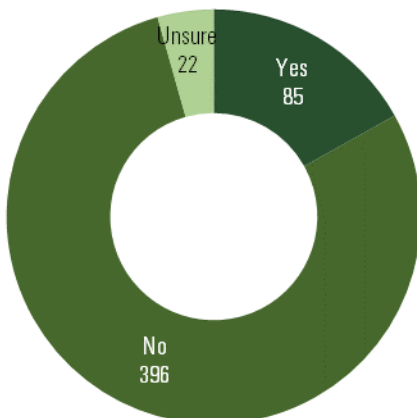
Illustrations from Noun Project: garden box by Lluisa Iborro, table by Azam Ishaq, truck by David, sign by Mani Cheng



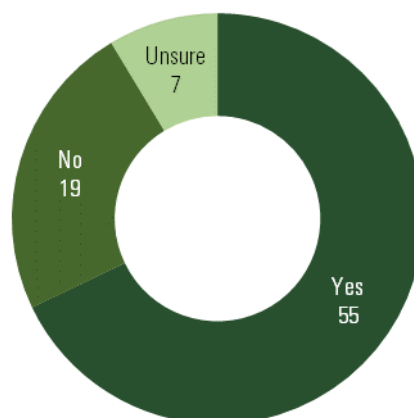
235 respondents spent an estimated **\$1,010,965** to improve food safety practices and infrastructure.

On-Farm Readiness Reviews (OFRRs) have been effective in helping growers make food safety changes:

17% of farm respondents have participated in an OFRR. (of 503)



68% of OFRR participants made a change based on what they learned. (of 81)



Recommendations

Continue to use flow charts during and after trainings to help participants in the PSA Grower Training determine their coverage status.

Consider ways to reach out to Plain clothes growers, especially those who operates farms in which part of the farm must comply with FSMA and another part is not required to comply, to reduce difficulties they face. These farms may face unique challenges related to operating diversified farms. These growers may need assistance in identifying the changes they need to make and ways to make them.

Continue to offer On-Farm Readiness Reviews, as these have proven effective in helping growers make on-farm food safety changes.

Consider modifying future follow-up surveys to ensure respondents can share accurate responses regarding their FSMA status and inspection.

If allowed, continue to offer some trainings using remote delivery, because those trainings are more accessible to some people, because they do not have to travel to attend.

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Updated: May 2021