

# 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 five 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, inviting 5,412 people to respond. 1,279 people responded to the survey (24% response rate). Iowa conducted its own survey in year 3 (60 responses) and Minnesota in years 2-4 (108 responses).

## Respondents

261 respondents participated in a training offered primarily for Plain clothes growers. 80 respondents participated in a remote delivery training. Most respondents farm or work in Michigan (333) or Wisconsin (312). 1,146 of 1,311 respondents are produce growers (includes MN and IA surveys).

## Results

**76% of growers who responded to the survey improved food safety practice, infrastructure, or equipment since the training.**

### Top practice changes:



**45% (400 of 881)** of growers changed employee training.



**44% (443 of 1013)** wrote new or modified existing farm food safety plans.



**43% (449 of 1047)** of growers changed cleaning & sanitizing practices.



**42% (395 of 944)** started or updated food safety record

*"We used to have customers pick into 5-quart buckets, then at checkout we would weigh the bucket, then dump the berries into a cardboard flat for customers. Now, the customer picks into, weighs and transports berries home in ONE container."*

Minnesota farmer

### Top infrastructure or equipment changes:



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



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



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



**34** added or upgraded **restrooms**.



**32** improved **water or irrigation systems**.



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



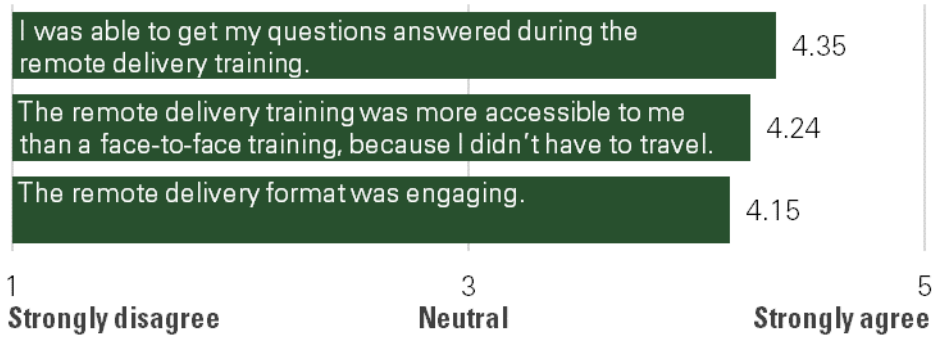
North Central Region

Center for FSMA Training, Extension  
and Technical Assistance

Illustrations from Noun Project: paper by Denicon, training by Cintuza, cleaning by The Icon Z, binder by Edi Prastyo, garden box by Lluïsa Iborro

## Remote delivery trainings received high ratings.

(55 respondents)



*"The remote delivery was very good. Everyone participated and I personally got a lot out of the course, just as if I were face-to-face.*

*Don't get me wrong, I prefer face-to-face, but this was good."*

Missouri grower

**88%**

(53 of 60) of respondents who participated in a remote delivery training made a change to practice, infrastructure, or equipment since attending the training.

**235** respondents spent an estimated

**\$1.1 million**

to improve food safety practices and infrastructure.

**19%** of respondents have participated in an On-Farm Readiness Review,

**64%** of whom implemented changes on their farms as a result.

*"We installed a buffer strip of grass between cattle and produce."*

Michigan grower

*"We took steps to improve water quality [after our OFRR]."*

Missouri grower

## Recommendations

Consider the NCR FSMA'S role not just in educating farmers, but in contributing to policy, systems, and environmental changes that might help remove some of the barriers farmers face.

Consider identifying farmers who have not yet identified their FSMA coverage status not only to help them identify their status, but also to offer additional technical assistance, if needed.

Consider developing resources or highlighting stories of how farmers can make on-farm food safety practice, infrastructure, and/or equipment changes in no/low cost ways.

If allowed, continue to offer some trainings using remote delivery, because those trainings are more accessible to some people. Offer a mix of one-day and multi-day trainings to accommodate as many growers as possible.

Share farm-based examples during trainings featuring a variety of types and sizes of farms.

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