

Food Safety Programming Action Plan

Situation

Nutrition, Food Safety, and Health Extension programming targets environmental and lifestyle factors that improve health and reduce chronic disease to improve the quality of life for Kansans, addressing the grand challenge of health.

Foodborne illness has been estimated to cost the US economy an average of \$55.5 billion to \$93.2 billion (Scharff, 2015). The average cost per case of foodborne illness in Kansas was estimated to range from \$1,089 to \$1,841 (Scharff, 2015). Foodborne illnesses represent a total cost of \$475.8 million to \$804.6 million to the Kansas economy, which are preventable expenses.

The selection of healthy foods depends, in part, on people having access to high-quality foods. Research has demonstrated that some people living in the U.S. lack access to affordable, high quality foods in their neighborhoods. High-quality foods include nutrient-dense foods that are of acceptable or better freshness and within optimal “use by” date if processed. Access includes not only availability of nutritious foods, but also affordability and safety, and the knowledge and skills to procure and prepare high-quality foods. To support their ability to eat healthfully, many consumers – especially but not exclusively those with limited resources – need help acquiring food safety skills.

Outcomes

Short-Term (Knowledge)

Program participants will improve knowledge, skills and/or attitudes for:

- recommendations related to food safety
- strategies that improve access to high quality, safe food
- being able to sell safe food and meet regulatory and marketplace requirements
- creating a Culture of Health through policy, system, and environmental changes for community stakeholders

Indicators

The increase in the number of program participants reporting awareness, knowledge, and/or understanding of:

- recommendations related to healthy eating
- strategies that improve access to high quality, safe food
- being able to sell safe food and meet regulatory and marketplace requirements, including Farmers Markets
- a Culture of Health created through policy, system, and environmental changes for community stakeholders

Medium-Term (Behavior)

Program participants will:

- practice and/or model safe food handling recommendations, including handwashing
- plan and prepare food-safe meals and snacks
- implement plans focused on policy, system, and environmental change for communities

Indicators

- Increase in the number of Kansans practicing and/or modeling safe food handling recommendations (track through training and classes)
- Increase in the number of community stakeholders improving the health of their communities via policies, systems, and environmental approaches (including but not limited to ServSafe)
- Increase the number of Extension personnel and volunteers who improve their food safety practices and procedures via direct education and policy, system, and environmental approaches.

Long-Term (Change in Condition)

Program participants will:

- meet safe food recommendations
- have access to a safe food supply
- maintain healthy communities via policy, system and environmental approaches

Indicators

- All Kansans meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommendations for food safety.
- All Kansans have access to a safe food supply
- Policies, systems, and environments in Kansans communities support healthy lifestyle behaviors

Public Value

By supporting K-State Research and Extension nutrition, food safety, and health programs, people adopt safer food handling practices, incidences of foodborne illness decrease, a safer food supply is available, medical costs decrease, quality of life improves, employees are more productive and miss fewer days of work due to illness. Other community members benefit as well by reducing the public cost of health care and health insurance, food businesses contribute to the community through jobs and offering safely prepared food, and the number of productive and contributing citizens are increased.

Outputs

Evidence-based programming on physical activity, well-being/mental health and other health-related topics to support:

- Culture of health
- Health equity
- Underserved audiences
- Employers (healthy workforce)
- Healthy military (homeland safety)
- Consumers

Examples of a few programs that support these program areas include:

- **ServSafe(R):** ServSafe is a national food safety education program targeted to food service managers and workers. This program can also be used to train volunteers of all ages, Extension professionals, and other groups who are serving food in groups settings.
- **Preserve it Fresh, Preserve it Safe:** Food safety education for preserving food at home including canning, freezing and dehydrating.
- **Food Safety for Farmers Market Vendors:** This program is offered with the Kansas Department of Agriculture to educate farmers market vendors on growing and selling safe produce, prepared foods, and many other food products.
- **Donating Safe and Nutritious Food to Food Pantries and Soup Kitchens:** To help reduce food waste and also help provide safe food for consumers in need, this program helps educate all consumers and those who manage food pantries about food safety with donated food.
- **Four Steps to Food Safety:** The core practices of safe food handling include clean, cook, chill, and separate. This education is part of the FightBac!(R) program and USDA.
- **Volunteer Quantity Cooking:** Gathering around a table with a group of family and friends is beneficial in many ways. Serving safe food is key to a successful event for clubs, churches, schools, fundraisers, and many other group events. This program helps education volunteers who cook and serve the food prepare it safely for all.
- **Master Food Volunteers:** The Extension Master Food Volunteer Program allows people with interests in food, cooking, food safety and nutrition to take their expertise to a higher level while developing new avenues for helping in the community. The Master Food Volunteer Program is patterned after the successful Master Gardener Program