

INTRODUCTION

Country cured hams were essential for early Americans on diversified farms. The long shelf life of salted pork made ham a staple food for many rural Americans. Supply chain issues caused by the 2020 pandemic and a renewed interest in homesteading created a demand for country cured ham education. In effort to respond to increased demand and engage stakeholders in extension programming, Kyle Whittaker developed a Country Cured Ham Workshop. Over the last five years, participation in the workshops has increased and enthusiasm is growing due to increased opportunities to show their hams. In 2021, the Webster County Fair added a country cured ham show for youth and adults. Youth also entered their hams at the Ozark Empire Fair Gold Buckle. Ninety-five percent of the hams selected for the sale were prepared in one of these workshops.



OBJECTIVES

To increase participant's knowledge in the following topics: selecting meat, curing products, applying cure, aging process, cold smoking, ham exhibition, and cooking methods. Additional hands-on workshops were held for proper trimming

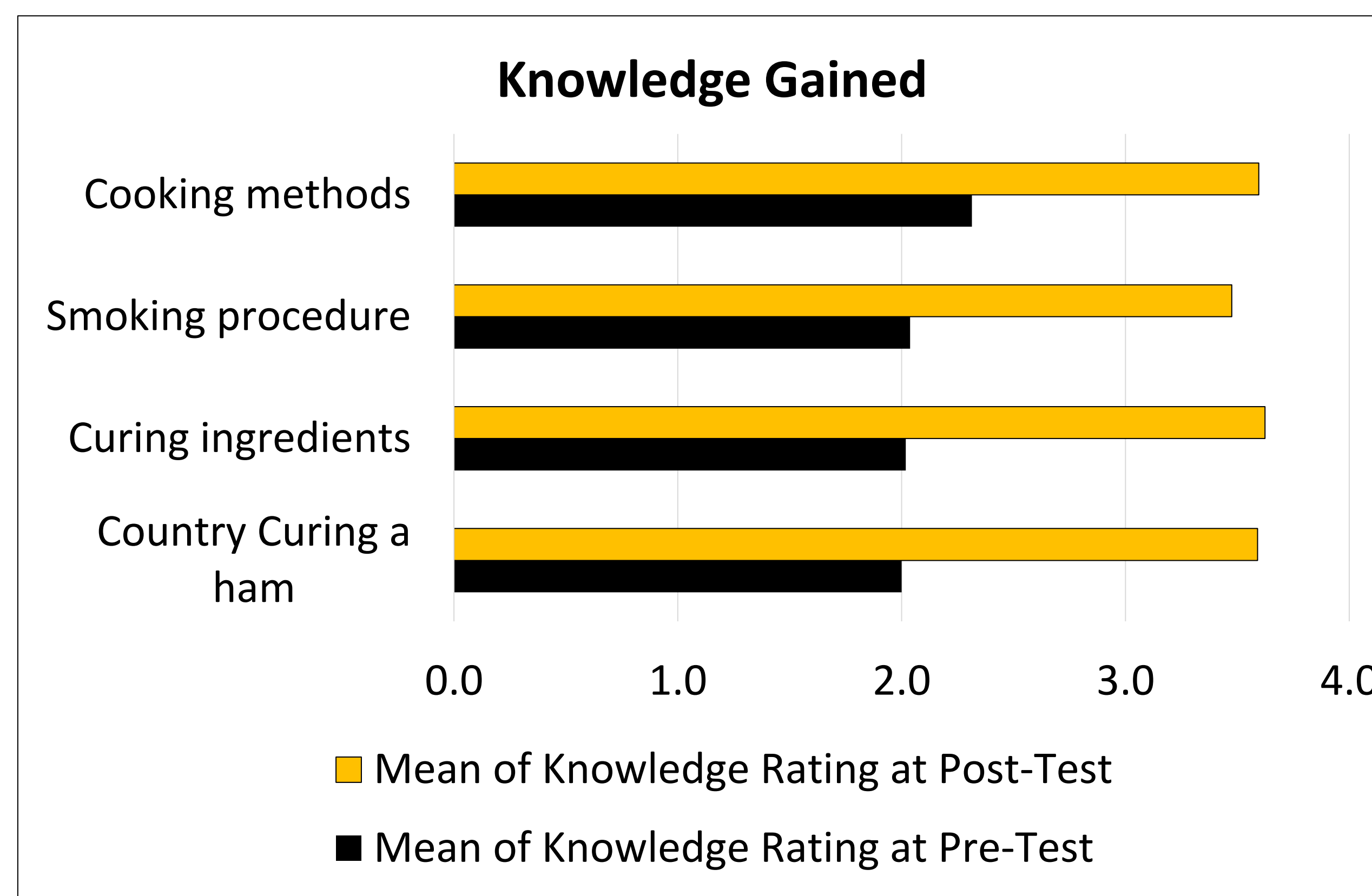


OUTCOMES

Country Cured Ham Workshops began in 2020 and expanded over the last five years. The workshop has been taught 23 times in 11 counties with 1,076 participants. Separate workshops were held for youth focused on exhibiting hams at county and regional fairs. Participants gained knowledge from the workshop as determined by pre- and post-evaluation instruments.

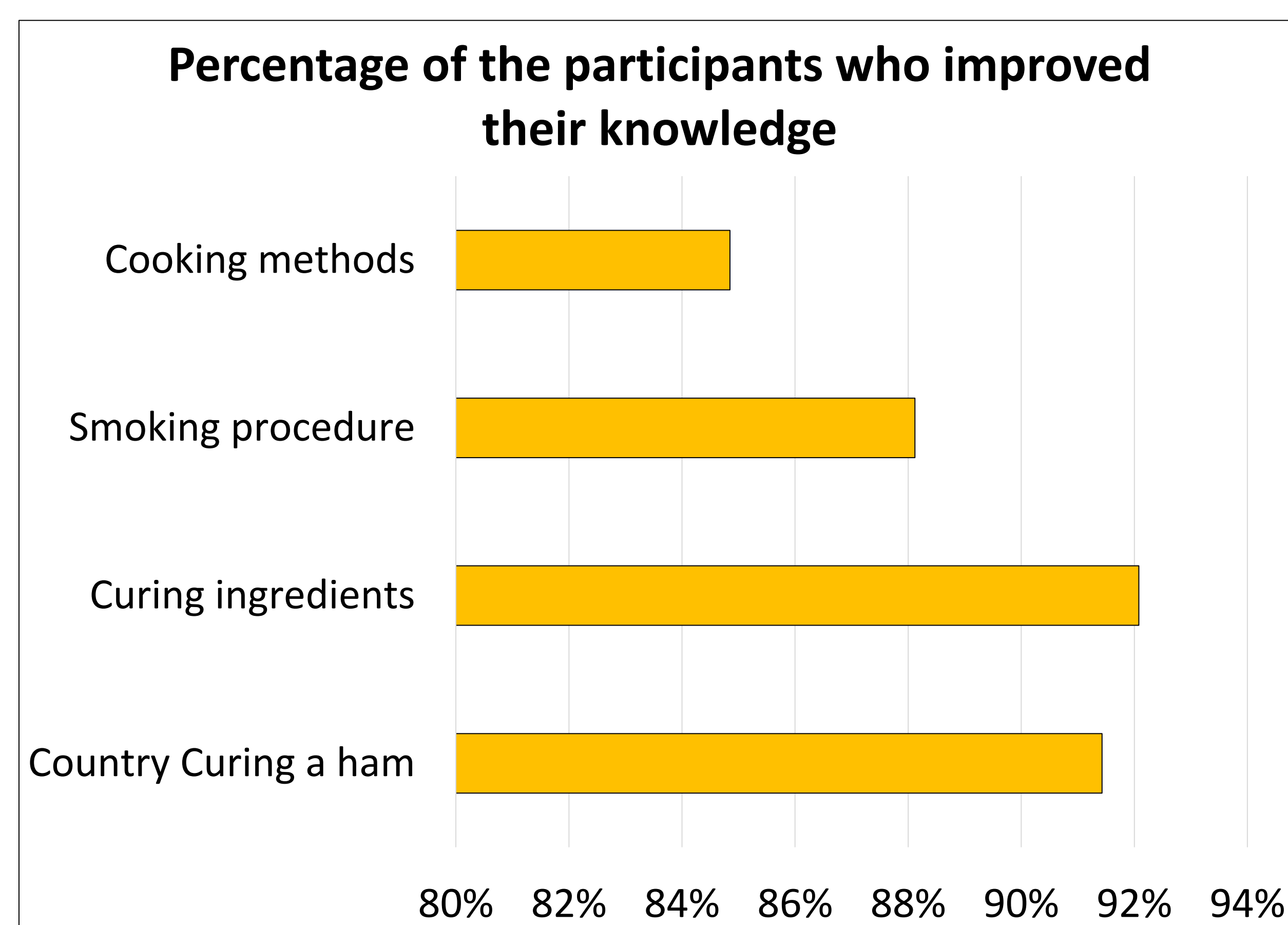
Knowledge gained (difference in pre- and post-evaluations, Likert scale, 1=very low, 4= high) per topic:

- Country curing a ham + 1.59
- Curing ingredients + 1.60
- Smoking procedure + 1.44
- Cooking methods + 1.28



Based on workshop post-evaluations, participants reported:

- 99% - the workshop fully met or exceeded their expectations.
- 92% - improved their knowledge of curing ingredients.
- 91% - improved their knowledge of country curing a ham.
- 88% - improved their knowledge of smoking procedures.
- 85% - improved their knowledge of cooking methods.

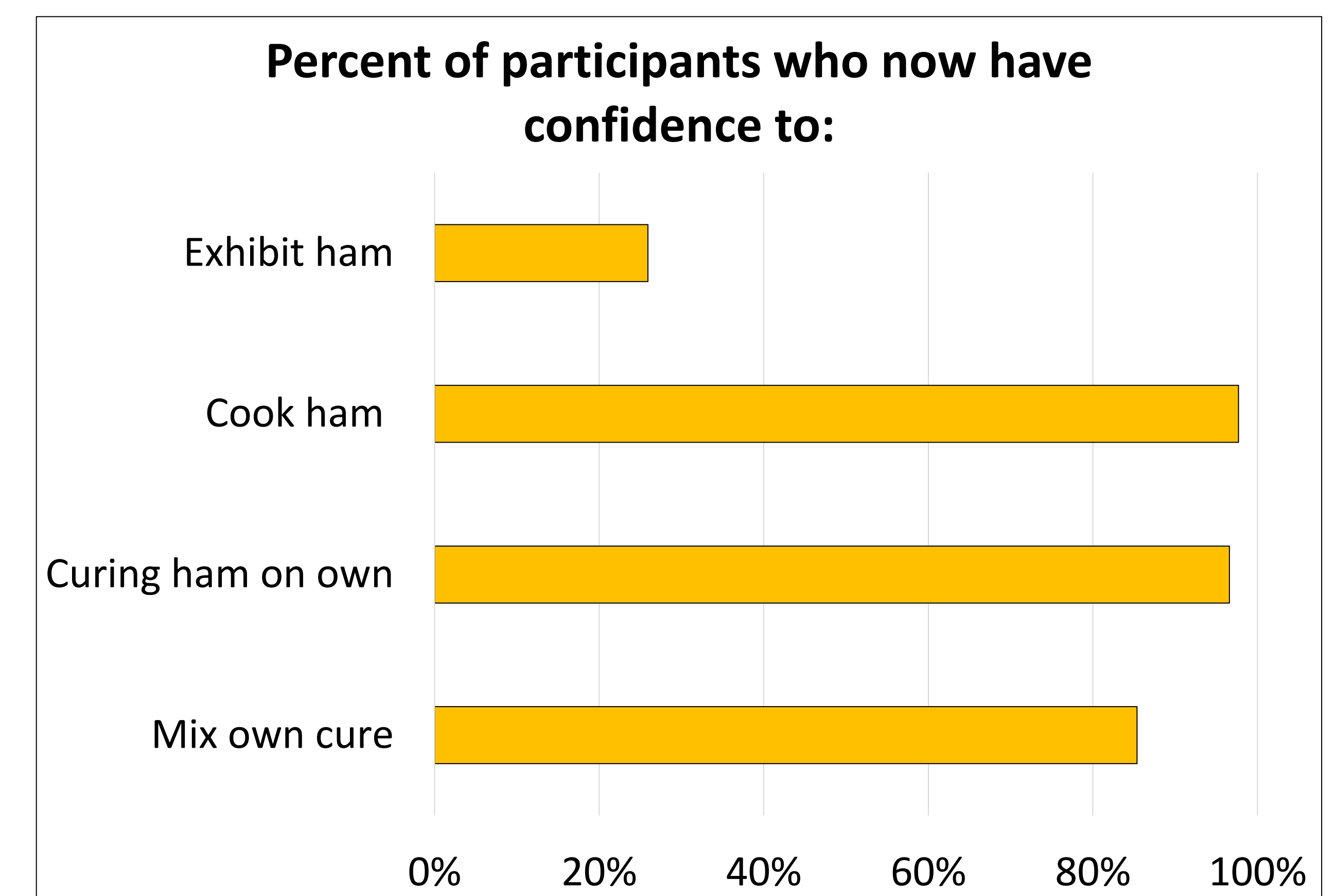


IMPACTS

As a result of the Country Cured Ham Workshop, multiple youths exhibited hams at the Ozark Empire Fair Gold Buckle Gala and sold for a combined total of \$242,500, in 2024 one of the hams sold for \$60,000 which was record setting.

Participants also reported they now have confidence to:

- 98% - smoke their ham when curing is completed.
- 97% - try curing a ham on their own.
- 85% - mix their own meat cure.
- 26% - exhibit their ham in a fair.



Participants, when asked what they would tell others about this class, reported:

- “Great experience for anyone of any age, I would definitely recommend this workshop!”
- “Take this class. We need to learn this as a society.”
- “This workshop was well worth the time to attend, exceeded my expectations of learning.”

