

# FIELD TO FORK: BUILDING AG AWARENESS AND LIFE SKILLS IN YOUTH

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## BACKGROUND

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), less than 2% of the United States population is involved in agriculture. As farmland continues to decrease and cities grow, consumers are further removed from agriculture and where food comes from.

Younger consumers are more likely to eat out or purchase prepared foods and less likely to cook at home. Many youth lack an understanding of our food system, as well as the life skills they need to purchase and prepare food. In Jefferson County, 34% of adults are obese, compared to the Florida average of 25%.

Gardening, cooking at home, and purchasing local foods instead of eating out are ways to not only help address rising obesity in our county, but also support local agriculture.

## OBJECTIVES

The purpose was for youth to increase awareness of agriculture, build life skills for growing and preparing food, and implement those skills at home.

- 100% of participants will increase awareness of agriculture production
- 75% will increase their skills needed to grow, prepare, cook, and grill their own food
- 50% of participants will begin gardening, cooking, or grilling at home



## PRE AND POST SURVEY RESULTS

**100%**  
INCREASED THEIR KNOWLEDGE  
of gardening, soils, and food safety.

**100%**  
ARE MORE INTERESTED  
in home gardening.

**91%**  
ARE MORE AWARE  
of agriculture in the food supply chain.

**91%**  
ARE MORE INTERESTED  
in cooking at home.

**90%**  
PLAN TO COOK MORE  
at home.

**90%**  
FEEL CONFIDENT  
they could grill their own food.

**82%**  
PLAN TO PLANT  
a garden at home.

**72%**  
ARE MORE INTERESTED  
in a career in agriculture.

## METHODS AND MATERIALS

Five 8 hour sessions were taught for youth ages 11-14 during a week long day camp. The program used multiple delivery methods such as hands-on demonstrations, PowerPoint presentations, interactive games, and team building activities.

Through partnerships with local businesses, campers were able to tour a local blueberry farm, hog farm, meat processor, farm to table restaurant, and grocery store.

## IMPACT

10/11 parents completed the follow up survey.

Of those who responded, 100% noticed changes in their child's behaviors since attending camp. Changes included cooking and grilling at home, planting a garden, and price comparison while shopping.

One of the participants placed 1<sup>st</sup> at the 4-H Regional Grilling Contest. Another participant signed up for a middle school agriculture elective as a result of attending camp.



## CONCLUSIONS

A day camp with hands on experiences is an effective way to engage youth, increase agriculture awareness, and build life skills.

