

Summary

UGA Extension Fulton County's Fulton Fresh program is a multigenerational nutrition education program, which integrates youth, agriculture, and family and consumer science programming in an urban community. The purpose of Fulton Fresh is to increase awareness and consumption of in-season, local produce through hands-on education with the Fulton Fresh seasonal mobile market and additional adult and youth programming throughout the year.

Fulton Fresh Program Components:

- Mobile Market
- Featured Farmers
- Youth and Adult Canning Classes
- Farm to Fork educational workshops
- 4-H Gardening and Health Clubs
- Fulton Fresh/4-H Day Camps



Figure 1.
Mobile Market outdoor setup

Situation

One of the leading causes of overweight/obesity and other chronic diseases in the United States is an unhealthy diet¹. As of 2015, 33.4% of Fulton County youth ages 3-17 were overweight or obese², and studies have shown that childhood obesity can contribute to Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, asthma, sleep apnea and early maturation, as well as behavioral and developmental disorders³. In adults, obesity can be a major contributor to cardiovascular disease. In 2016 alone, 29.2% of the Fulton County population died from cardiovascular disease. This obesity crisis is compounded by the fact that Fulton County has 34 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) designated food deserts. A food desert is a low-income community that is at least one mile from a grocery store. Living in food deserts can lead to higher consumption of foods high in fat, sugar and salt and decreased access to healthy local food options, despite there being 52 urban farms in the metro-Atlanta area. Atlanta farmers typically sell their produce through farmers markets, but these markets have historically struggled to attract the low-income food desert populations most in need of fresh, local food⁴. The Fulton Fresh program aims to combat these issues by providing nutritional education, engaging local farmers, and increasing awareness of fresh, local food sources.

Response

Featured Farmer and Mobile Market: The mobile market delivered 10 weeks of nutrition education, food demonstrations and free local produce to adult citizens residing within food deserts. The nutrition class taught topics such as purchasing in-season produce, reducing fat and sodium in the diet, and eating a colorful plate. The market also engaged local farmers by featuring one unique local crop grown within 15 miles of or available for purchase in Fulton County, such as, kale, sweet onions, cucumbers and collards. Each producer who provided the crop was featured in a rack-card style profile as a "Featured Farmer" with quotes on why they farm, where their produce can be found, and a recipe featuring their specific commodity. All additional produce was sourced through a local distributor who specializes in locally grown and Georgia grown produce, furthering the Fulton Fresh mission of promoting local accessible food.

Youth & Adult Canning Classes – The FACS agent taught youth and adults how to can strawberry freezer jam, apple and peach preserves, pickled green beans, and summer salsa. Classes used the curriculum and evaluations from the National Center for Home Food Preservation (NCHFP).

Farm to Fork Day Camps and Workshops - Youth learned about the local food system and healthy food choices through hands-on produce education in the garden or kitchen. Activities included: visiting local farms and food production facilities, gardening, cooking, and 4-H Yoga for Kids. The 4-H Yoga for Kids curriculum was used and additional curriculum and oral/written evaluations were created by county agents with content from Cooperative Extension, 4-H, and USDA/MyPlate publications.

4-H Gardening & Health Club - This monthly 4-H club taught youth about gardening, healthy snacking, and the importance of physical activity. It was held at Farm Chastain and was taught by a Fulton County Master Gardener and 4-H agent. Curriculum and oral/written evaluations were created by county agents with content from Cooperative Extension, 4-H and USDA/MyPlate publications.

Results

Throughout the ten week summer season of the mobile market, 36,975 pounds of fresh produce were distributed in food deserts at twelve different locations. Of this produce, 23,090 pounds were produced exclusively in Georgia (425 pounds local to the Atlanta area). Thirty-five additional year-round programs were offered since October 2018 and reached 832 people, with 642 being between kindergarten and high school ages. Youth learned the concepts of MyPlate food groups, the parts of a plant, preserving local produce through canning, and how to prepare healthy snacks and meals, and the importance of physical activity through yoga.

Impact

- 89% of youth surveyed agreed that they had learned how to make healthy food choices participating in Fulton Fresh 4-H programs.
- 65% of youth surveyed agreed that they had shared healthy meal and snack ideas with their families.
- 50% of youth surveyed agreed that they had learned about ways to be physically active by participating in Fulton Fresh 4-H programs.
- 100% of participating farmers claimed they would participate in Fulton Fresh again as a Featured Farmer and highly recommend it to fellow producers.
- 33% of participating farmers made sales to individuals who sought them out due to participating in the mobile market classes
- 75% of farmers submitted plant disease samples to or requested site visits from the County ANR Agent
- 100% of Featured Farmers reported that they would use the ANR Agent as a diagnostic resource in the future, despite 75% of these farmers having no familiarity with Cooperative Extension prior to participation

Table 1. Produce commodity breakdown by origin within the continental United States.

Locally Grown	Georgia Grown	Southeast Grown	Nationally Sourced
Basil	Onions	Tomatoes	Apples
Lettuce	Yellow Squash	Sweet Potatoes	
Collards	Zucchini	Zucchini	
Cucumbers	Peaches	Corn	
Onions	Sweet Potatoes	Green Peppers	
Okra	Green Peppers		
Peppers	Tomatoes		
Arugula			
425 pounds	23,090 pounds	12,560 pounds	1,025 pounds



Figure 7.
A FACS volunteer leads a 'Parts of a Plant' activity during a Farm to Fork library program



Figure 8.
A 4-Her prepares fruit during a strawberry freezer jam class



Figure 2.
Class attendees receive their free local produce



Figure 3.
Fulton County 4-Hers plant seeds during a 4-H Gardening Club meeting



Figure 4.
4-Hers learn knife skills from the FACS Agent while canning apple preserves



Figure 5.
4-Hers prepare local produce at the kids' cooking competition

Produce Percentages

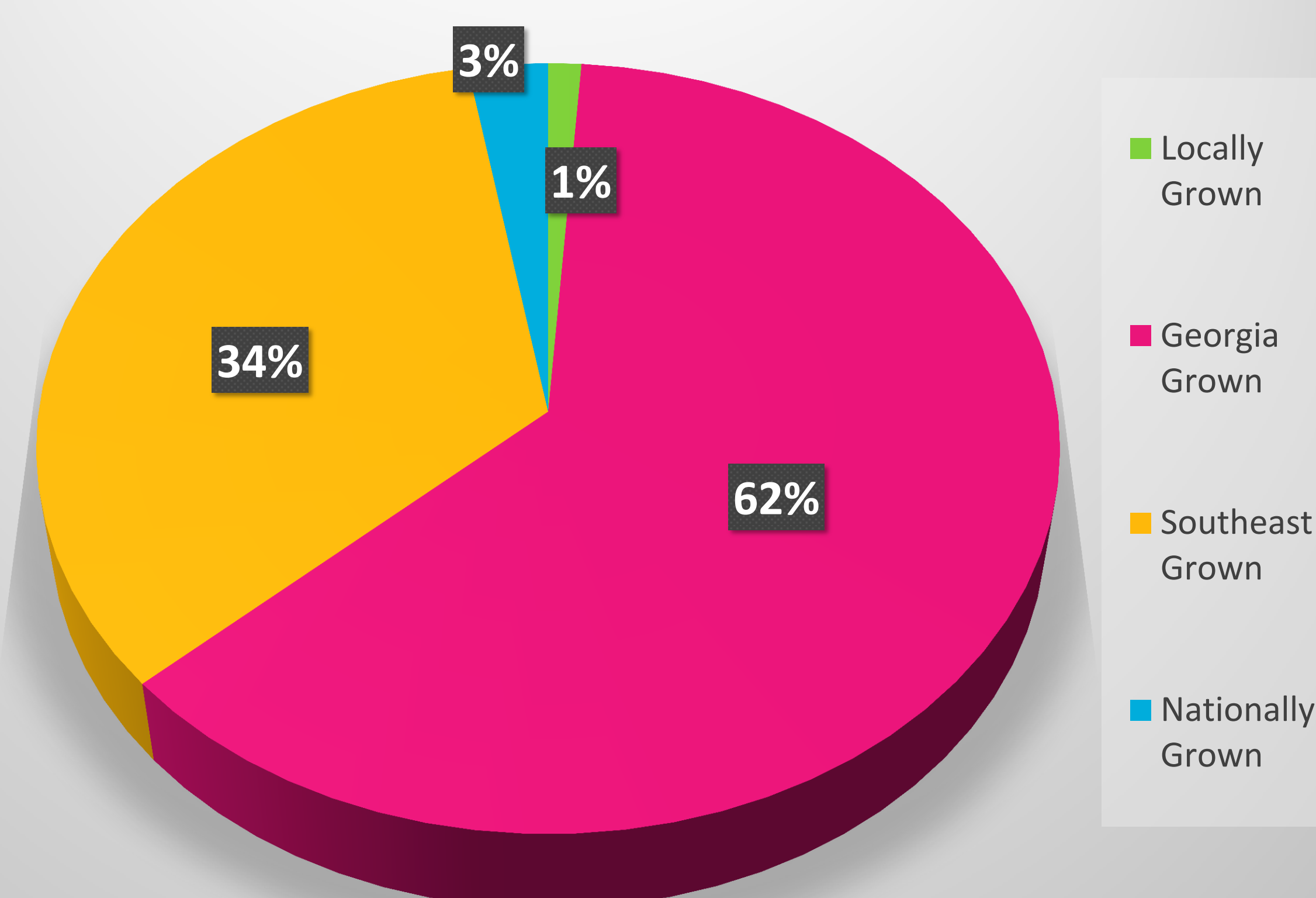


Figure 6. Total percentage of produce distributed by location of origin.

Locally Grown refers to produce grown in Fulton County, or grown in the Metro-Atlanta area and available for sale in Fulton County; Georgia Grown crops are grown in-state; Southeast Grown crops are grown in bordering states; Nationally Sourced are from non-bordering states in the continental United States.

References

1. Philanthropic Collaborative for a Healthy Georgia. (2011). *Healthy Schools, Healthy Communities: A Guide for Preventing Childhood Obesity in Georgia*. Atlanta, Georgia
2. Davila-Payan, C., DeGuzman, M., Johnson, K., Serban, N., & Swann, J. (2015) *Estimating prevalence of overweight or obese children and adolescents in a small geographic area using publicly available data*. Centers for Disease Control, Atlanta, Georgia
3. Georgia Department of Human Resources, Division of Public Health. (2005) *Overweight and Obesity in Georgia, 2005*. Atlanta, Georgia.
4. Food Well Alliance. (2017). *Atlanta's Local Food Baseline Report*. Atlanta, Georgia

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Latrice Burgess, Olga Shumate, Diandria Barber for their assistance at the mobile market Mary's Market Garden, Snapfinger Farms, Mena's Farm, Patchwork City Farm, Rag n Frass Farm, Crystal Organics, Ceed Farms, and Levity Farms for serving as Featured Farmers; Les Dames d'Escoffier International for funding; Dr. Deb Rosenstein, Fulton County Master FACS Volunteer; Farm Chastain & Chastain Park Conservancy for hosting the Fulton Fresh 4-H Club; Kathy Kennedy, and Ken Jones, Fulton Fresh 4-H Club volunteer leaders; Atlanta-Fulton Public Libraries for hosting 4-H youth workshops; Green Market and East Point Farmers Markets for hosting youth cooking competitions; National 4-H Council and the Target Wellness 360 grant; the Thalia & Michael C. Carlos Foundation, & the Imlay Foundation.