

# Small Flock Education for Hobby Producers



**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**  
**EXTENSION**

Stewart, R. L.<sup>1</sup>, McCann, Z.<sup>2</sup>, Ritz, C. W.<sup>3</sup>, Dunkley, C.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>County Extension Coordinator, University of Georgia, Lincolnton, GA, 30817, rlstew2@uga.edu, <sup>2</sup>Extension Agent, University of Georgia, Homer, GA, 30547, <sup>3</sup>Poultry Specialist, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, 30607, <sup>4</sup>Poultry Specialist, University of Georgia, Tifton, Georgia, 31793

## OBJECTIVE

The objective of this program was to develop and deliver poultry education on essential production and management topics to hobby flock owners.

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- Sixteen percent increase in number of backyard flocks and 20% increase in number of laying hens from 2012 to 2017 (USDA Agriculture Census).
- Small flock owners lack essential knowledge and experience in flock husbandry.
- A 2014 study\* found only 28% of respondents get information from university sources and 38% of participants were interested in hands-on workshops (Elkhoraihi, 2014).
- A 2019 needs assessment in Lincoln County found 33% of participants were interested in a hobby flock educational program.

## TEACHING METHODS

The Lincoln County Agriculture and Natural Resource (ANR) agent developed curriculum for a four-week seminar series about hobby flock husbandry and management that was then translated into a five-week online webinar series in July of 2020. Presentations were conducted by Robyn Stewart, M.S. and Zachary McCann, UGA Extension Agents and Dr. Casey Ritz and Dr. Claudia Dunkley, UGA Poultry Specialists.

## PROGRAM

- 10 states and 2 countries represented.
- Attendance averaged 40 people per class.
- A Qualtrics survey was required for post-program access to the recordings, handouts, and other class materials.
  - 30% of respondents (n=58) were not able to attend any of the seminars.
  - 98% of respondents (n=58) stated they intended to use the class materials.

**141**

Online Registrants

**40**

Average Webinar Attendance

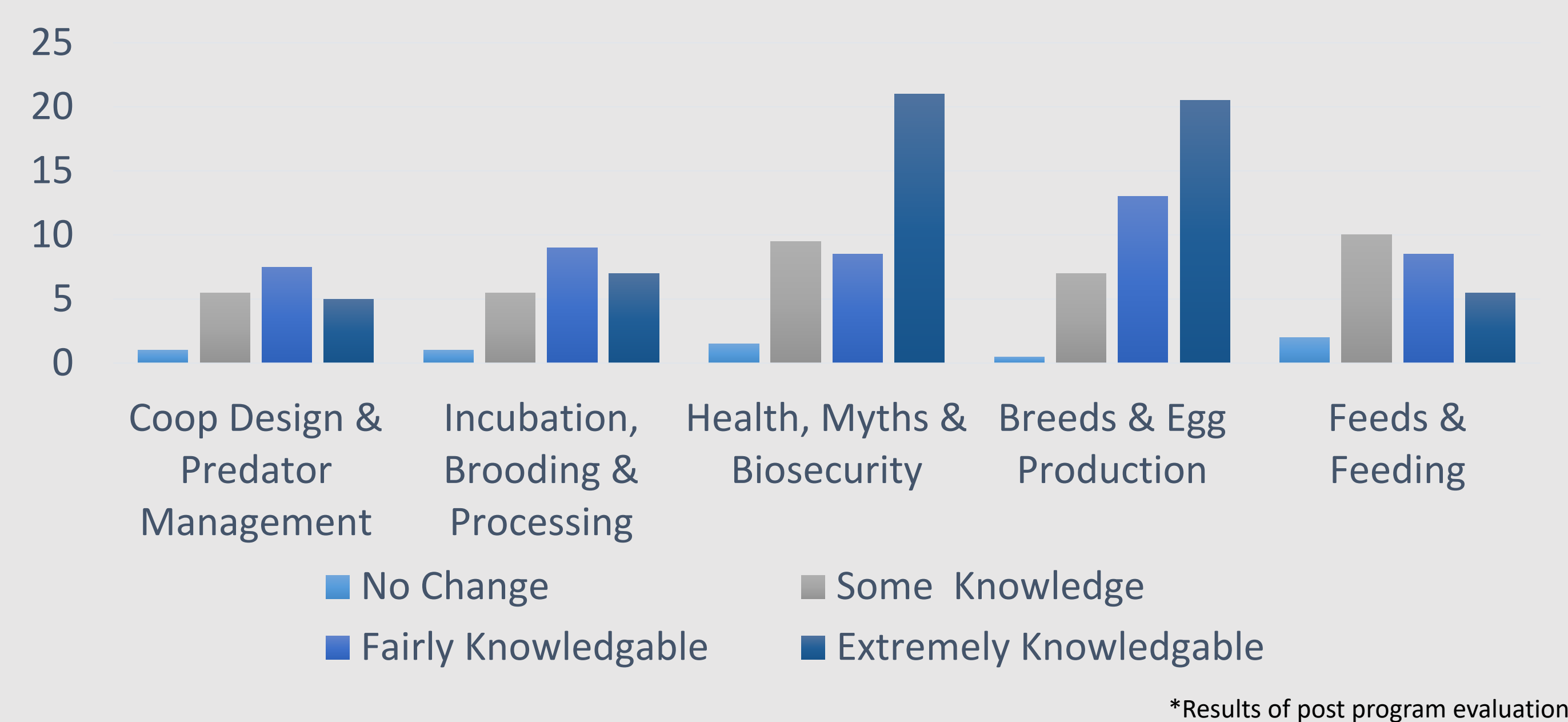
**16**

Topics Covered

**3**

Guest Speakers

## KNOWLEDGE CHANGE OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS\*



## RESULTS AND IMPACT

Programs were evaluated using voluntary surveys after each session to assess knowledge change, intended behavior changes, and overall response to the program.

### Initial Post Program

- The instructors, presentations, and information for this program were ranked excellent 70% of the time.
- Overall satisfaction with the series was ranked excellent by 67% of participants.
- Respondents indicated learning something new in 95% of the sessions.

### 6 Months Post-Program

Six months after the program, participants were surveyed to gauge behavioral change and economic benefit of this series.

Respondents (n=21) indicated behavior change including but not limited to:

- Improving coop design (30%)
- Altering feeding programs (28%)
- Improving bird health through vaccinations and biosecurity (14%).

As a result of these behavioral changes, respondents reported economic benefits of:

- Increased productivity of meat and eggs (35%)
- Reduced feed, health care, and replacement bird expenses (31%)
- Decreased bird mortality (19%)
- Increased profit from meat and egg sales (8%)

## PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

- “Great class that covered all of the topics I was interested in.”
- “This class has been very informative. We are looking forward to this adventure!”
- “Your presentations have had great value in preparing for our birds.”

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## HOBBY FLOCK WEBINAR SCHEDULED SPEAKERS

Wednesdays in July

REGISTER AT: [HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/YAKA66DV](https://tinyurl.com/YAKA66DV)

**JULY 1: COOP DESIGN & PREDATOR MANAGEMENT**  
Robyn Stewart, M.S.

**JULY 8: BREEDS, ANATOMY, AND PHYSIOLOGY**  
Claudia Dunkley, Ph.D

**JULY 15: HEALTH, REGULATIONS & MYTHBUSTING**  
Casey Ritz, Ph.D

**JULY 22: NUTRITION AND FEEDING**  
Robyn Stewart, M.S.

**JULY 29: BROODING, INCUBATING, AND PROCESSING**  
Zach McCann, UGA Extension Agent

\*Elkhoraihi, C., Blatchford, R., Pitesky, M., & Mench, J. (2014). Backyard chickens in the United states: A survey of flock owners. *Poultry Science*, 93(11), 2920-2931. doi:10.3382/ps.2014-04154