

Food Safety and Quality Team Outcomes and Impacts 2023

► Best practices in food safety and quality control was the subject of multiple in-person training workshops led by Alabama Extension food safety agents in 2023 for audiences ranging from food service professionals to home cooks.

Food Safety Training for Food Service Workers-ServSafe

Project Leaders: Rebecca Catalena Lee and Janet Johnson

Institutional Lead: 1862 Extension – AU

Co-Leaders/Collaborators: Susan Hill, Dani Reams, Bridgette Brannon, Angela Treadaway, Christy Mendoza, Alice Moore, Juani Christian

Background/Situation/Issue: Food Safety Training for Food Service Workers provides certification-based training through the nationally recognized American National Standards Institute (ANSI) accredited program, ServSafe. The program follows the guidance of the 2013 Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Code adopted by the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH). This requires that the person in charge be a certified food protection manager and on site during all hours of operation. The objective of the program is to provide accessible food safety training throughout the sixty-seven counties in Alabama to meet the requirement of the ADPH and prevent foodborne illness.



Outputs: Certified instructors/proctors of the food safety team taught a total of 114 2-day food safety classes across Alabama counties. As a result of these efforts, over 1,087 food service workers completed the training, resulting in a 76 percent pass rate, up from 68 percent in 2022. ServSafe certifications are valid for 5 years. These numbers include sixty-six workers taught in Spanish by our A&M partner.

By conducting these classes in many rural counties, workers receive certification of food safety training allowing businesses to stay open, generate revenue, and contribute to the local economy. Workers that do not pass the exam but attend the 2-day training are provided with an Hours of Training certificate valid for 1 year under the ADPH.

Every additional dollar spent in Alabama restaurants contributes \$1.90 to the state's economy, and every additional \$1 million spent in Alabama restaurants generates 18.3 jobs. The effort of the Alabama Extension Food Safety team to train 1,087 food service workers at an annual mean salary of \$25,500 directly impacted the state's economy by \$27,718,500.





Audience Diversity: 81 percent female, 19 percent male; 98 percent adult, 2 percent youth; 2 percent Asian, 4 percent Hispanic, 40 percent Black, 51 percent White, 3 percent other race, 4 percent no answer

Evaluation Techniques: Individuals must take an accredited exam and pass with a score of 70 percent or higher to receive a 5-year ServSafe certification. Post-training effectiveness surveys are conducted for each class.

Value Statement/Synopsis: The food safety and quality team provides current, research-based education aimed at increasing the safety of our food supply, thus providing health and economic benefits to all citizens. We work to develop a safe food culture on farms, in the home, and in food service and processing establishments. Our programming and information are essential to the viability of our restaurant industry, which generates over \$11 billion in sales and supports over 200,000 jobs in Alabama. Ultimately our work provides information for well-being, prevents foodborne illness, and saves lives.

Revenue Generation: \$132,000

Social Media Channels: <https://www.facebook.com/acesfoodsafety/>

Key Web Page: <https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/servsafe/>



HOME FOOD PRESERVATION

ALABAMA EXTENSION

Home Food Preservation— Food Preservation Camps

Project Leaders: Angela Treadaway, Christy Mendoza, Bridgette Brannon, and Alice Moore

Institutional Lead: 1862 Extension – AU

Co-Leaders/Collaborators: Susan Hill, Dani Reams, Janet Johnson, and Rebecca Catalena Lee

Background/Situation/Issue: According to Carla Schwan, the National Center for Home Food Preservation (NCHFP) saw an increase of 620 percent in website access and 270 percent in requests for validated home food preservation recipes from March 2020 to 2022. Interest in canning started to spike in 2020 due to supply chain disruptions, more time at home, and anxiety over the global lock-down. Individuals continue to be motivated to can today. According to the NCHFP, sales of the *So Easy to Preserve* cookbook, published by University of Georgia Extension, have spiked 175 percent since the pandemic began. To combat the well-intentioned information and advice of the Internet and local food systems that are not providing safe food preservation methods, the Alabama Extension food safety team provided three 2-day home food preservation camps in 2023.

Outputs: Three interactive and comprehensive 2-day camps demonstrating science-based methods in pressure canning, water bath canning, dehydrating, blanching, freezing, and fermentation were offered in 2023. Camp sizes were limited to optimize learning potential, and each camp reached maximum capacity. Impact evaluations were conducted at all three camps and collected at the end of each day. Of the sixty evaluations, 77 percent were taking part in an Alabama Extension food safety program for the first time, and 62 percent had been practicing food preservation for up to 3 years and 21 percent for over 10 years.

- Before attending the class, 10 percent of participants said they were “extremely to very knowledgeable” about **pressure canning**; after attending, that number rose to 56 percent.
- Before attending the class, 14 percent of participants said they were “extremely to very knowledgeable”

about **water bath canning**; after attending, that number rose to 73 percent.

- Before attending the class, 8 percent of participants said they were “extremely to very knowledgeable” about **dehydrating**; after attending, that number rose to 53 percent.
- Before attending the class, 20 percent of participants said they were “extremely to very knowledgeable” about **blanching**; after attending, that number rose to 57 percent.
- Before attending the class, 23 percent of participants said they were “extremely to very knowledgeable” about **freezing**; after attending, that number rose to 66 percent.
- Before attending the class, 4 percent of participants said they were “extremely to very knowledgeable” about **fermentation** of sauerkraut; after attending, that number rose to 56 percent.



- Before attending the class, 5 percent of participants said they were “extremely to very knowledgeable” about **pickling**; after attending, that number rose to 65 percent.
- Before attending the class, 11 percent of participants said they were “extremely to very knowledgeable” about **canning tomatoes**; after attending, that number rose to 75 percent.

Audience Diversity: 93 percent female, 7 percent male; 95 percent adult, 5 percent youth; 1 percent American Indian/Alaskan Native, 12 percent Black, 80 percent White, 4 percent more than one race, 3 percent other races, 100 percent non-Hispanic

Evaluation Techniques: Pre- and post-food preservation training evaluation

Value Statement/Synopsis: The food safety and quality team provides current research-based education aimed at increasing the safety of our food supply, thus providing health and economic benefits to all residents. We work to develop a safe food culture on farms, in the home, and in food service and processing establishments. Ultimately our work provides information for well-being, prevents foodborne illness, and saves lives.

Revenue Generation: \$2,400

Social Media Channels: <https://www.facebook.com/acesfoodsafety/>

Key Web Page: <https://www.aces.edu/blog/category/food-safety/>



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New April 2024, ANR-3064

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