

OUTCOMES & IMPACT QUARTERLY – SPRING 2023

INTRODUCTION

This issue of Outcomes and Impacts Quarterly focuses on the overarching impact of Utah State University (USU) Extension during 2022. As the land-grant university for Utah, USU is a key partner in the land-grant university system with the United States Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA NIFA). NIFA is the federal partner in a vast network of scientists, educators, and Extension staff that address critical issues about agriculture, food, the environment, and communities.

Please read on to discover evidence-based success stories about USU Extension programs, events, and activities that have improved the lives of Utahns.

Sincerely,

Kenneth L. White

Dean, College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences; Vice President, Extension and Agriculture



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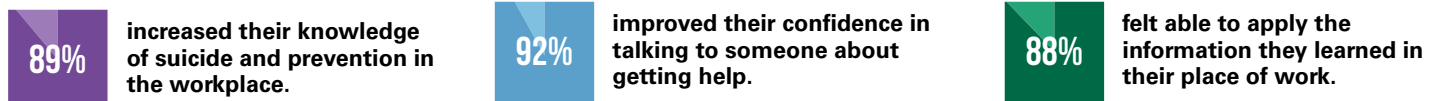
BUILDING VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

Utah consists of many rural counties spread out over vast areas of land, with only a few urban counties in centralized locations. As a result, there is an increasing disparity in economic opportunities for rural county residents. The Vibrant Communities program at Utah State University Extension was formed to strengthen communities across Utah to facilitate economic and social well-being. The desired long-term outcomes of the program are to (a) connect rural communities to economic opportunities in urban centers through innovative workplace practices (e.g., remote working arrangements), and (b) facilitate educational interventions, and community partnerships and coalitions to reduce substance abuse disorders in rural counties. Selected impacts are shared below.



Suicide Prevention Training for Workers

USU Extension facilitated VitalCog to help businesses address mental health and suicide concerns in the workplace. Ten virtual training sessions were held with 87 participants. Short-term evaluation results include:

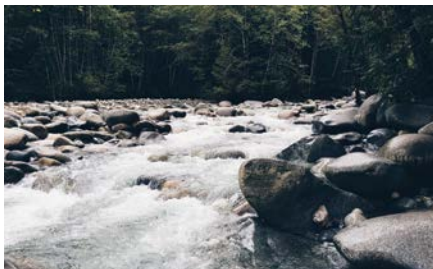


2022 Certified Remote Work Professional Courses results (n = 101) showed:



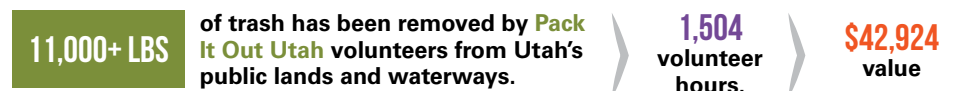
SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCES AND ECOSYSTEMS

The efficient management of natural resources is a primary concern for Utahns, where natural resources are used for economic and social benefits. The goal of this program is to provide non-formal education to residents, stakeholders, and organizations to promote, facilitate, and strengthen environmental stewardship and sustainable natural resource use in Utah. The project targets adults and youth to help (a) equip residents with the competency to effectively engage in natural resource conservation and preservation, and (b) facilitate partnerships between community members and public and private stakeholders to strengthen natural resource conservation and enable sustainable resource use. Selected impacts are shared below.



USU Water Quality Extension Education

While outdoor recreation is beneficial to individuals' physical and mental health and the economy, it has led to an increase in garbage on trails, parks, neighborhoods, and waterways. Pack It Out Utah was created to combat the increase in garbage.



Forecasting and Adapting to Drought

The 2022 Spring Runoff Conference provided five hours of educational activities facilitated by USU Extension. There were also 12 presentations from two federal agencies and four state agencies. A majority of participants (74%) reported knowledge gain in one or more topics about drought as a result of attending the conference.



PUBLIC FOOD SAFETY

Foodborne illness is a major cause of death, claiming the lives of the elderly, young, pregnant women, people with impaired immune function, and the chronically ill. The USU Extension Public Food Safety Education program provides relevant research-based education to Utah residents on best practices to reduce the risk of food contamination and foodborne illnesses. The desired long-term outcomes of the program are to (a) reduce the occurrences of foodborne illnesses in Utah through research-based education on food safety practices in households, and (b) to reduce food contamination in the food supply chain by providing relevant education on best practices to processors and producers. Selected impacts are shared below.

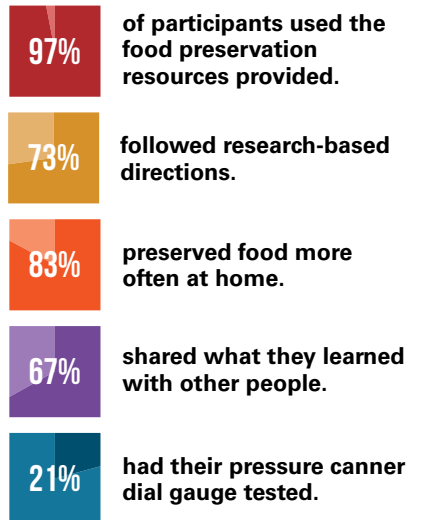
Food Preservation and Safety

The Master Food Preserver Training Course is a 4-day training that covers canning basics, jams, jellies, fruits, vegetables, meats, pickling, salsa, tomatoes, dehydrating, freezing, and freeze-drying. Evaluations showed there was an increase in participants' knowledge of all workshop topics. These outcomes can lead to a decrease in food-borne illnesses and the associated health-care costs of treating them.



Preserve the Harvest Education

In 2022, USU Extension hosted a Canning 101 series on food canning and preservation. Results showed:



PUBLIC NUTRITION AND HEALTH

It is important to provide effective nutrition information and education to the public to help consumers make wise dietary choices. As the relationships between diet, physical and mental health, and disease prevention become clearer, the promotion of healthy eating behaviors and lifestyles for both youth and adults has received increased attention in recent years. The desired long-term outcomes of the Public Nutrition and Health Education program are to (a) empower residents to make healthy food choices and improve their nutritional intake, and (b) reduce the economic cost of chronic diseases in Utah through ongoing nutrition education to youth and adults. Selected impacts are shared below.

Chronic Disease Prevention

The Diabetes Cook Along Classes were piloted in Box Elder and Cache County. Participants prepared a diabetes-appropriate meal during the class. Most reported positive changes to their lifestyle behaviors (e.g., checking blood sugar levels daily, exercising daily, taking medication as prescribed, and limiting carbohydrate intake daily).

Diabetes Prevention and Management in Utah

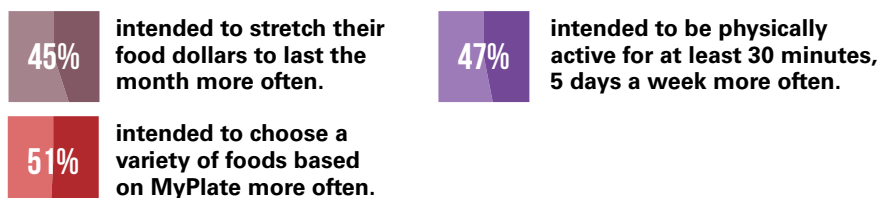
> 180,000
people in Utah have been diagnosed with diabetes.

38% of Utah adults have pre-diabetes.

"Food as Medicine" webinar series:
124 in-person participants **123** people viewed recorded sessions

Statewide Create Better Health (Utah SNAP-Ed) Programming

Create Better Health (Utah SNAP-Ed) offers group nutrition education classes targeted to adults and youth. After participating in a class for adults (n = 307):



POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



4-H programs are grounded in the belief that youth learn best by doing. Kids and teens complete hands-on projects in many educational areas including science, health, agriculture, and civic engagement. The long-term goals of Utah 4-H are to facilitate positive youth development through educational activities that foster youth competence, character, connection, caring, confidence, and contribution, and empower youth to pursue their passion for successful careers and a healthy life. Selected impacts are shared below.

Positive Youth Development areas of impact include:



An increased sense of community belonging, knowledge of local agriculture, consumption of fruits and vegetables, and willingness to try new foods (Community Gardens for Youth).



Opportunities to apply their knowledge of remote work skills coupled with college and career readiness skills (Remote Work Education for Youth).



Increase in self-confidence, self-efficacy, connection, contribution, leadership, and teamwork (Adventure-Oriented Confidence Curriculum for Youth).

PERSONAL AND FAMILY WELLBEING

A major goal of Home and Community Extension programming is to enhance individual and family resource management, including financial management and other aspects of family health, such as healthy marital and family relationships, mental health and well-being. The target audience includes youth, adults, and families in Utah. Desired long-term outcomes are to strengthen family relationships and improve the economic well-being of individuals and families.



USU Extension programs show impacts in the following areas:

96%

of **Family Finance Webinar** participants intend to make positive changes to their personal finance practices.

96%

of **Strengthening Marital Relationships Webinar** respondents agreed they were more committed to forming/maintaining healthy relationships.

93%

of **Celebrating Women Conference** participants agree they expect that what they have learned will benefit their well-being.

50%

of participants in the **Homebuyer Education Courses** stated the course contributed to their success in purchasing a home.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

Utah has over 18,000 farms and ranches spanning 11 million acres, which generate more than \$21 billion in total economic output (after adjusting for the multiplier effect). Utah becomes more urbanized each year, but agriculture continues to play a vital part in our state. Extension meets the needs of traditional agriculture while evolving to meet the needs of developing agricultural industries. The long-term goals of the Agriculture and Natural Resource program are to increase the productivity and efficiency of Utah agricultural operations, and promote sustainable natural resource use through education on conservation practices.

USU Extension impacts the following agricultural productivity areas:



Ensuring best practices for **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** through demonstration farms.



Ensuring welcoming and inclusive farmers markets.



Increasing pre-service teachers' agricultural literacy to pass on to future generations through **Utah Agriculture in the Classroom**.



Increasing confidence and best practice use with beginning beekeepers.



Preventing injury among master gardeners.