Edutators working with Cooperative Extension are a resource for foods are processed for a variety of reasons; processing can occur (2) To conduct a needs assessment to determine need of educational New food processing technologies [FPTs] can ensure the safety and The surveys created in Qualtrics (pre) and Google Forms (post) Pre-and Post- Survey Development • The surveys created in Qualtrics (pre) and Google Forms (post) consisted of fixed choice, check-all-that-apply, preference, and open-ended questions regarding food processing, conventional FPTs (pasteurization, microwave technology, high pressure processing, and irradiation), emerging FPTs (light and gas technologies), and educational resources for FPTs • The post-survey, specifically, assessed changes in perceptions of FPTs and the usage of educational resources.

METHODS CONT.

1. First, to what extent do you agree that you would purchase food that has been processed? Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?
2. Do you have any concerns about foods that have been processed? Yes – Please specify, No, Don’t know/Refuse
3. Food processing is any deliberate change in a food that occurs before it is available for us to eat. It can be as simple as freezing or drying food to preserve nutrients and freshness, or as complex as creating a frozen meal with the right balance of nutrients and ingredients [3]. How knowing this, to what extent do you agree that you would purchase food that has been processed? Do you… Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree, Don’t know/Refuse

RESULTS CONT.

Conventional Technologies (Pre-survey) • While all agents acknowledged they would purchase pasteurized foods, some agents would not purchase foods treated with preservation technology (14.3%), HPP (6.1%), and irradiation (26.5%). • Majority of agents expressed concerns with microwave technology (53.1%) and irradiation (63.3%). • Agents often associated HPP with pressure cooking (i.e. using a pressure cooker for canned foods)

Post Survey Response Highlights (N=6) • 90% said their perceptions of food technologies changed after workshop attendance • Only 4 of the 9 Infosheets developed on FPTs were distributed or utilized by Agents. The sheets were shared with the seafood industry, ServSafe Participants, and among other Agents • Agents wanted future FPT materials in the form of educational videos and easy-to-understand social media posts to share with their constituents • 75% wanted additional, follow-up trainings on both FPTs and disputing food safety myths

DISCUSSION & SIGNIFICANCE

• Because there is consumer demand for raw and/or minimally processed foods, FPTs are necessary to control foodborne pathogens
• Development of FPT educational materials is necessary to promote Extension agent confidence in disseminating FPT information to the general public
• Agents surveyed were located in Virginia; other needs assessments in other states are necessary to depict Extension agent FPT knowledge and perceptions, and the current available FPT resources needed to be developed as videos, social media posts, and other accessible forms.

RESULTS

Pre-Survey Results 49 Extension agents completed the pre-survey 19 Family and Consumer Science (FSC) agents, 24 Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) agents, 6-4-H Youth agents Food Processing (Pre-survey) • 93% (n=49) of agents agreed that they would purchase processed foods • When asked to describe what the term “food processing” meant to them, agents most frequently described: Changing a food from its original state; Incorporating ingredients, preservatives, and additives; Preserving and extending the shelf-life of foods; Physical changes (such as cutting, slicing, mixing, etc.)

outputs list

• Infosheets on FPTs • VCE Winter Conference Train-the-Trainer Workshop • Journal of Extension Publication – “How Virginia Extension Agents Engage with Public about Food Processing Perceptions”