

Food Safety Modernization Act Strategic Communications Campaign

School of Journalism &
Mass Communications



outreach.uiowa.edu/rcd-partnership

In partnership with Iowa Valley RC&D

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Campaigns

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Food Safety Modernization Act

Final Campaign Report

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Executive Summary

The Food Safety Group utilized many various outlets and strategies in order to effectively reach the goals and to communicate the Food Safety Modernization Act to producers and consumers. Some of the strategies are as follows:

Communication and Message Tactics

- Face to face communication at an Iowa City farmers market
- News media: press release
- Organizational media: brochures, handouts, and a poster
- Website update
- Community email pitches
- Promotional media: interview with Jason Grimm on CBS affiliate

Action Strategies

- Audience Engagement
- Special Event
- Alliance

Ultimately, through these various tactics the Food Safety Group effectively met the goals and objectives.

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Formative Research

Situation Analysis

I.

Iowa Valley Resource Conservation & Development is a small but greatly impactful 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Iowa Valley RC&D serves a six-county region in East Central Iowa including: Benton, Iowa, Johnson, Linn, Poweshiek, Tama Counties and the Meskwaki Nation. The main goal of Iowa Valley RC&D is to help local communities grow their economies, foster protection and enhancement of natural resources, and work to develop awareness for the art, history and culture in the region. All of these are illustrated through their mission, which is, “To conserve and develop our resources in Iowa and Cedar Valley area through education, demonstration and partnerships”.

Another large aspect of Iowa Valley RC&D is the connection of local food and entrepreneurship opportunities, specifically in the area regarding farmers that are growing food locally. This presents a challenge because this year, the Food and Drug Administration changed their regulations on how fruits and vegetables are labeled, grown and distributed. These changes are presented in the Food Safety Modernization Act. This is the first time since the 1920's that the federal government is making changes to the regulation of fruits and vegetables. The challenge that is presented to the Food Safety Group is ensuring that every farmer is fully aware of these new regulations. If farmers are unaware of these new regulations, it would severely hinder their farms and their income. The challenge is to find the most accessible outlet for farmers to receive this new information from.

II.

To ensure every farmer in the East Central Iowa region is fully aware and in compliance with the new regulations from the Food Safety Modernization Act so their farms can continue to prosper.

III.

Iowa Valley RC&D is known throughout the community for performing outstanding work and making it their priority to support rural areas, vitalize and promote smaller communities and increase community development. Though they are a small organization, the quality of their performance in the community is extraordinarily large. The greatest resources Iowa Valley RC&D can provide are their connections with people throughout the community. The Food Safety Group will be able to utilize the connections to spread this message via small town newspapers, magazines, through the consumers of the food, farming organizations such as Iowa Fruits and Vegetables Association and social media.

From research of Iowa Valley RC&D's social media sites and their online web presence the group was able to conclude that though their public perception is positive, it could be improved by more recognition of the significant work Iowa Valley RC&D has done for the community. The Food Safety Group will increase recognition by reformatting the website to make it easier to access and understand, increase presence on the Facebook page, and create new ways to market and advertise Iowa Valley RC&D and their work.

Iowa Valley RC&D does not have any specific competitors but they do have a particular obstacle that the Food Safety Group will need to overcome during this campaign. That challenge is to present these regulations as something that the farmers are excited to implement and to

tailor them as being positive additions to what they are already doing. The Food Safety Group will make the regulations positive by emphasizing that when farmers become in compliance, their food will be of better quality and safer for the consumer. Therefore, there will not be an uncertainty of people becoming sick as a result of eating their produce and sales may increase because of this.

IV.

The most important public that we are focused on targeting is the farmers in the East Central Iowa region. Farmers are directly affected by the new regulations. This public will need to take immediate action to come into compliance with the Act. It is extremely pertinent that we reach these publics. Failure to do so will result in consequences for the farmers. The regulations also vary upon the size of the farm so it is important that each farmer understands how the regulations relates to them and the allotted time they have to come into compliance before the regulations are completely in effect. For instance, large farms have two years to come into compliance to the regulations while smaller farms have four years. This may seem like a lot of time, but in reality, the farmers need to be taking steps now to be able to come into compliance fully in the upcoming years.

The second public the Food Safety Group wants to target is the consumer, the people who are eating the fruits and vegetables. These regulations are positive for the consumer because it increases food quality and is safer for consumption. The group will focus on consumers of all ages in East Central Iowa. Citizens in this area may feel inclined to buy more fruits and vegetables if they found out that farmers are working diligently to make sure the produce is safe

and the best quality it can possibly be. This understanding would help increase sales of crops, making consumers an important public.

V.

This is an exciting campaign because of the opportunity to inform farmers of new regulations that will affect every consumer every time they eat fruits or vegetables. The challenge arises when figuring out the most accessible way to farmers so they retrieve information regarding these new regulations. The Food Safety Group has many outlets and resources to ensure that the message will be spread to the specific publics. The Food Safety Group has a goal to make sure every farmer is aware of these regulations and that they find these regulations as a positive addition to their farming regimes. The Food Safety Group also wants to inform consumers that their fruits and vegetables will be of better quality because of these new regulations.

Research Report

Executive Summary

After conducting research, the direction of the Food Modernization Act campaign has changed considerably. The perspective of the consumer will be taken, rather than approaching food producers from the point of view of a fellow food producer. Previously the campaign was to inform producers of the act and summarize this in an understandable way. Now, the main objective is to highlight the importance and necessity of the Food Modernization Act. This is due to the results of surveys and interviews, which indicated that food producers are aware of the changes, however do not see necessity in it. Further, the Iowa Valley Resource Conservation and Development and the National Sustainable Agriculture organization have begun to implement our previous objective of summarizing the changes. These two organizations have experience with agriculture and knowledge of the Food Modernization Act, therefore the food safety group will act as a liaison to direct food producers to these resources. Rather than presenting the logistics of the Food Modernization Act, the food safety group will now focus on the reasons for the changes. Another emphasis of the campaign is to emphasize eat local produce to consumers.

The research highlighted that food producers are aware but not enthusiastic about the changes. The secondary research gave insight as to why these changes are important. Although the likelihood of food outbreaks are statistically uncommon, the consequences are detrimental to food sales and consumer perception. Due to the media sensationalizing these outbreaks, it causes consumers to believe food outbreaks are more prevalent. This ultimately leads to distrust in local food production as well as decreased food sales. Because farmers are aware of how rare these outbreaks truly are, it can be difficult for farmers to agree with the importance of the changes.

The majority of farmers are already practicing proper farming techniques; these changes are for the minority of farmers who are not following appropriate protocol. The Food Modernization Act will greatly improve consumer attitude and increase food sales.

Overview

The implementation of the Food Modernization Act will affect the farmers in East Central Iowa. In order to improve consumer perception, it is essential that farmers are in compliances with the new regulations. The original focus of the food safety group was to inform farmers of the act because it was anticipated that farmers would be unaware of these changes and would not have adequate resources to gather information from. Through research, the food safety group found that the public perception is that farms are unclean. However, this is not the case. The food safety group will also focus on communicating to consumers that the benefits of eating locally far outweigh the risks. The Food Modernization Act was put into action to create a positive public perception of farms and to strongly encourage the minority of farmers to come into compliance with the new regulations. The majority of the farmers are already in compliance with the act; nonetheless, if one farm does not follow the regulations, then every farm suffers. The food safety group utilized surveys, interviews, and secondary information to gauge farmers' awareness of regulations, their attitudes toward regulations, and their beliefs of public perception of farms.

Methods

In order to gather research, the food safety group conducted three phone interviews with agriculture experts, emailed an eight question online survey to 10 farmers in Eastern Iowa, and utilized secondary research to better understand the awareness and attitudes of the Food

Modernization Act, as well as perceptions of local food from a consumer's point of view. The phone interview and survey contact information was supplied by Jason Grimm, Food System Planner with Iowa Valley RC&D, who knew these individuals were experts on this subject. The food safety group spoke on the phone with Sophia Kruszewski, a food safety expert for the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. She provided insights on what the NSAC is currently doing to provide information about the act and outlined the importance of these changes. The food safety group spoke to Laura Krouse, owner of Abbee Hills farm, who explained her attitudes and perceptions on the newest FDA regulations. She was a fundamental source to speak with because these FDA changes will directly affect her farming techniques. The food safety group also spoke with Chris Blanchard, former farmer and current owner of Purple Pitchfork, an educational and outreach organization dedicated to helping farmers and their farm businesses. He explained his understanding as to why farmers may not be as enthusiastic about the newest changes. Each interviewee offered a unique perspective, providing a holistic view of the attitudes toward the Food Modernization Act. The food safety group spoke to a food safety expert, a current farmer, and the founder of an educational and outreach organization.

The online survey was sent to 10 farmers in Eastern Iowa who all have five or more years of experience in the farming industry. The survey was created through Qualtrics, which provides detailed findings, trends, and graphs that represent the conclusive results of the survey. The food safety group strategically distributed the survey to farmers of 10 farms of varying size, therefore the survey method is valid and reliable because it accurately represents the diversity of farms in Eastern Iowa that will be affected by the newest regulations. Along with the survey, the food safety group utilized secondary research from the University of Iowa libraries database system to further understand consumer perception of food quality and safety. The food safety group

researched studies from past food outbreaks and how those consequences affected consumer habits.

Key Findings

Interviews

Chris Blanchard is a former farmer and current owner of Purple Pitchfork, a business that provides consulting and education for farming, food, and business for farmers in East Central Iowa. He emphasized the important distinction between likelihood and consequence: the realistic likelihood of an outbreak occurring is low, but the consequences are high. He stated how this law was created to strengthen farmers' reputation and encourage farmers to routinely record samples so that the possibility of an outbreak becomes a rarity. Farmers may misunderstand and interpret the message as they are not doing their job properly; this is not the case. Blanchard emphasized how rare these outbreaks actually are but, in the end, the consequences are severe. It is important for every farm to come into compliance with the changes because if one farm has an outbreak, it affects the public perception of local farmers as a whole. Blanchard exemplified this idea by referring to the 2006 E. coli outbreak in spinach. Although only three out of 250,000 people died, sales of spinach have not returned to what they previously were. He also stressed that the act does not apply to many farmers with small farms in the area due to the size regulations; this is an important detail that will affect the way the food safety group campaigns the Food Modernization Act.

(see Appendix A)

Sophia Kruszewski is a food safety expert for the sustainable agriculture organization in Iowa. In regards to the Food Safety Modernization Act, she explained how the changes will be

significant but several farmers in East Central Iowa region will not be affected due to size regulations. Kruszewski explained in terms of marketing and market access, buyers may want to buy products that are produced at farms that are in compliance. She stated how producers look to trusted sources and how the rules are staggered so that not all farms have to comply at the same time. This allows for changes to be made gradually. Kruszewski emphasized how quality is closely associated with safety. Particularly, direct market farmers have a strong desire to serve safe food, but they do not totally see the necessity for this law. She suggested farmers that have questions should go to sustainableagriculture.net, which provides charts and explanations that will be of value to farmers.

(see Appendix B)

Laura Krouse, owner of Abbe Hills farm, is a farmer in the area that will be directly affected by the Food Modernization Act. She explained how farmers in the area are aware of the new law, but are not enthusiastic about it. This is a challenge the food safety group faces when looking to market this new law. Krouse said this act will affect her farm because she does not take samples right now. She will have to come into compliance for these new regulations. She does not think her farm will greatly benefit from these regulations, but that this act is necessary for farmers nationally. A challenge the food safety group must overcome is encouraging farmers to bring their farm into compliance with the new regulations, as this is currently a threat to many farmers in the area. Specifically, Krouse said that she is not in a hurry to come into compliance right away. She also stated how she thinks these new regulations are demanding of small farms and that the law is striving for complete cleanliness, which is not realistically feasible.

(see Appendix C)

Surveys

According to our survey results, survey participants were fairly aware of the changes to the Food Modernization Act scoring an average of a 4/5 on knowing how it will affect the way they produce and process their food. The survey participants are farmers in Eastern Iowa with at least 5 or more years of farming experience and most commonly find their information through organizations such as Iowa State University, the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, or Practical Farmers of Iowa. Altogether, the generalization is that participants think it will take 13 or more months to come into compliance with these changes. Producers are relatively aware of the changes, but not necessarily eager to comply with them.

The survey questions address a multitude of questions regarding the awareness and attitudes of the changes. Ultimately, these results influenced the direction of the food safety campaign. Currently, the food safety group will highlight the importance of the changes, rather than trying to inform producers, processors, and consumers. The survey questions specifically asked participants about their awareness of the Food Modernization Act, how they receive their updated information, and if their current farming techniques will be strongly affected within the next few years. Altogether, the food safety group finds the results of these questions pertinent to the future of the success and direction of the campaign.

(see Appendix D)

Secondary Research

Currently, there is a disconnecting perception between farmers and consumers on food safety. Public perception is skewed because of previous happenings with food borne illness outbreaks linked back to farms. Food borne illness outbreaks are rare but impactful occurrences;

the general public has started to distrust the quality of food that is being produced at farms. Rather than consumers choosing food based on nutrition facts, studies have shown consumers purchase produce based on earlier psychological experiences- this means that even though the food is safe, if a consumer had a previous negative experience, that consumer will be less likely to purchase and consume that type of food (Rozin 1). The negative public perception has consequences from both the producer and consumer end. Overall, it affects the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the food supply chain. Consumers need to know their food is safer than they perceive and farmers need to understand the need for the Food Modernization Act. With this, “divergence may arise because of inadequacy of risk communication systems and/or a loss of confidence or trust in the food supply chain and its various agents, including regulators” (Rozin 1). The focus of the campaign is to decrease the disconnecting perception between farmers and consumers and adequately address the risk communication.

The Food Safety Modernization Act is revolutionizing food consumption from producers to distributors to consumers. The act is the first overhaul in updating food safety in over 70 years (FSMA 1). The market has drastically changed with the rise in demand of local food at farmers market and more organic companies surfacing, consumers are more demanding than ever before. The regulation is about prevention instead of reaction. The Food Modernization Act aims to target and stop uncontrolled outbreaks that affect entire markets.

When there is a foodborne illness outbreak, it affects that specific food market dramatically. In September 2006, bagged Spinach was recalled for five days. This was a nationwide epidemic that caused panic in restaurants, grocery stores, and overall, to consumers. Because of this outbreak, the United States was estimated to lose \$200 million of food sales as well as decreasing to halting spinach production. Since 2006, sales of bagged spinach have not

overcome the large deficit that affected the product almost 10 years ago. When a food product suffers from unclean standards, the consumer is hesitant to buy those products in the future for fear of discrepancies (Taylor 2). While media is a large component for the distrust, it cannot be the only reason. The media consistently reports negative information regarding food produce; the media rarely reports the positive information. Research indicates that when the media pinpoints an outbreak and emphasizes the contaminated food occurrence, it negatively affects consumer perception toward farm and decreases food sales. It causes consumers to either temporarily substitute the produce or permanently avoid the food altogether, which then leads to negative price development (Bitsch 2). Further, research shows that 64 percent of foodborne illnesses in the U.S. arise from fresh produce - a primary focus of the Food Modernization Act (2).

Foodborne illness can become fatal for producers, distributors, and consumers if precautions are not taken. When a product like spinach is recalled for food safety issues, the market is directly affected due to a loss in demand. This information provides the importance of the Food Safety Modernization Act to all sides of food production and consumption. Food safety is beneficial to the consumption of local foods. This aspect of the research is to further assure consumers that outbreaks are rare and that the benefit of local food outweighs the risks. These benefits include but are not limited to: more flavor, support of local economy, and helping the environment.

(Arnade, Calvin, & Kuchler 1).

Conclusion

Overall, the primary focus of this campaign is to highlight the importance and necessity of the Food Modernization Act to food producers, processors, and consumers. After conducting research through interviews and surveys with farmers and food safety experts, the food safety group found that food processors and producers are aware, but not enthusiastic about the Food

Modernization Act. The food safety group also recognized the large disconnect between consumer's and farmer's perception of the cleanliness of produce. By utilizing secondary research from the University of Iowa libraries database system, it was evident that the possibility of a food outbreak is uncommon; the consequences are detrimental to food sales and consumer perception. This further emphasizes the need of urgency for communication to the food producers and processors about the FDA regulations.

Strategy

Goals and Objectives

Goal

Emphasize the necessity of the Food Modernization Act to food producers and processors in East Central Iowa.

This goal is relevant to the organization's mission because Iowa Valley RC&D is committed to communicating these changes with food producers and processors. This goal addresses the issue described in the situation analysis because it is communicating and raising awareness of the significance of the changes. Research has indicated a misunderstanding of the purpose of the Food Modernization Act and this goal clarifies.

Objective

To have an effect on the acceptance of food producers and processors in East Central Iowa; specifically to increase attitudes toward the necessity of the Food Modernization Act (10 farms in three months).

This objective is focused on acceptance, which deals with the key publics knowledge and reception of the topic. This objective is attainable because it targets an accessible number of farms with the resources in the allotted amount of time given.

Objective

To have an effect on the action of food producers and processors in East Central Iowa; specifically to maximize behavior into compliance with the Food Modernization Act. (50 percent of farms in 12 months).

This objective is focused on action because it attempts to positively change existing behaviors. The action is ultimately to encourage more food producers to come into compliance with the Food Modernization Act. This objective is attainable because it is a required FDA law that will become enforced in the next two years.

Goal

Improve consumer perception regarding local food

This goal is relevant to the organization's mission to decrease the disconnection of perception between producers and consumers. Research indicates this will increase sales of food in East Central Iowa, along with supporting the mission of Iowa Valley RC&D. This goal addresses the issue stated in the situation analysis because it highlights the positive work local farmers are doing and further supports them.

Objective

To have an effect on the awareness of consumers in East Central Iowa; specifically to increase attention of the advantages of local food consumption (50 consumers in 6 months).

This objective focuses on awareness, which aims to impact what people know about an organization and its products. This objective is attainable because the food safety group can access this amount of consumers in the specific time frame.

Objective

To have an effect on the action of consumers in East Central Iowa; specifically to generate behavior in purchasing local food at farmers markets and grocery stores. (10 percent in 4 months).

This objective focuses on action which serves to encourage audiences to act according to the mission of the organization. It also enhances the relationship between the organization and its publics. This objective is attainable because the food safety group can easily reach out to markets and groceries stores in this specific amount of time to obtain these records.

Active Strategies

The Food Safety Group engaged its public by various active strategies, which communicated the Food Safety Modernization Act to both producers and consumers. An active strategy that was utilized was audience engagement, which involved using strong two-way communication tactics. Audience engagement is specifically important to the objectives of Iowa Valley RC&D as this organization is an extension of the community – the community’s involvement is critical. One way in which the Food Safety Group engaged in audience engagement is through audience feedback. In order to generate the most effective strategy, the Food Safety Group distributed surveys and conducted in-depth phone interviews in order to get constructive feedback to implement into the direction of the campaign. This research was extremely helpful and a great addition to research previously conducted on databases provided by the University of Iowa. This feedback also allowed Iowa Valley RC&D to gain exposure and ultimately reach more producers regarding the Food Safety Modernization Act.

Another way the Food Safety Group engaged in action strategies was to form an alliance with the director of the farmer’s market. This strategy proved to be extremely beneficial and productive as both the farmer’s market and Iowa Valley RC&D have a similar common purpose of engaging the community and promoting local farmers. This alliance was informal and loosely structured but ended up being effective and beneficial. The director provided the Food Safety Group with a table and a central location at the farmers market. In addition, the director was enthusiastic with the Food Safety Group and formed a positive and potentially long withstanding relationship.

The most effective way in which the Food Safety Group participated in audience engagement is through a special event. Because a large amount of food producers were to be

present at the beginning of the Iowa City farmers market, the Food Safety Group decided it was an ideal opportunity to engage with the target market. The event was successful because of the incorporation of a children's craft. This attracted many kids, along with their parents, to the booth. The craft was using vegetables to paint images and ideas. The piece of paper used for the craft had the logo of Iowa Valley RC&D on it, further contributing to exposure of the client. Additionally, the members of the Food Safety Group arrived early at the farmers market, before the event began, so that the group had the opportunity to personally meet the producers and distribute the brochures intended for them.

Message Strategies

The group's main goal was to inform both consumers and producers of the Food Safety Modernization Act and to make the Act as understandable as possible. The challenge was to market this campaign in a positive and beneficial for all way. The Food Safety Group did not want farmers to see this law as something that inhibits or hinders their practice, but rather, as general guidelines to ensure that all farmers are doing their due diligence so that all farmers are protected. Farmers tend to be categorized under the same umbrella, and when one farmer has a blunder, all the farmers are negatively affected whether there was an outbreak on their farm or not. The Food Safety Group focused on presenting farmers with resources to seek out more information regarding the act so that they could be as informed as possible. These resources included our spokespeople, Jason Grimm, Jessica Rilling and Iowa Valley RC&D's services as well as brochure and information on their web page. The group's members are not experts on this new Act, so it was beneficial for them to promote the already extensive array of resources available, rather than creating more resources that would not be as effective because of the group's limited knowledge on the topic.

The group created an open dialogue from producers to consumers at the farmer's market. Consumers and producers were able to speak directly with the group. Jason Grimm and Jessica Rilling were also available to answer producers' or consumers' questions regarding the new Act. At this event, Jason Grimm and Jessica Rilling were able to promote their services and reach out to both producers and consumers in a fun and conversational way.

Furthermore, the Food Safety Group found from research that there was a need to include consumers as one of their target markets as well. These regulations are beneficial for consumers because the food available for purchase is becoming safer to eat. Consumers should be aware of

and excited about the Food Safety Modernization Act. From research, it was found that consumers are weary of the safety of food. The Food Safety Group wanted to combat this by promoting local farmers, the current safety of local food, and inform consumers that the new regulations make food safer. The group utilized the farmers market to target consumers by speaking with them and dispersing the hand out.

The group decided since there were two separate publics, promotional materials would need to be tailored to each specific audience. The Food Safety Group created a brochure for producers. The brochure highlighted the features of the Food Safety Modernization Act as well as information and resources farmers can go to if they need help coming into compliance. This brochure was dispersed before the farmers market opened. Also, during the farmer's market IVRC&D had their own booth, which was utilized to target consumers with crafts and facts about eating locally and the new act. The attendance at the market was promoted through a press release that was released from the Gazette and Press Citizen as well as local people in the community that are well known. The group used their resources such as their mailing lists to help spread the message and inform their readers of Iowa Valley RC&D's attendance at the market.

Tactics

Communication Tactics

Throughout the campaign, the Food Safety Group has utilized various tools to communicate with publics, including face to face communication, a press release, three advertising materials, email pitches, and website updates.

Face to face communication took place on May 7, 2016 at the Iowa City farmers market from 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The Food Safety Group was located with the Iowa Valley RC&D's booth handing out brochures, flyers, and spoke with consumers about celebrating local foods. Crafts were available for children, which was to decorate pictures using fresh vegetables as paintbrushes. The goal of the booth was to inform producers about resources available for the Food Safety Modernization Act and consumers on the safety of the production of local food due to the new Act ensuring food quality.

A press release was sent to Jade Manternach at the Office of Outreach and Engagement. She sent the press release on behalf of the Food Safety Group to The Gazette and The Press Citizen as well as posting the press release on the website of Office of Outreach and Engagement. This press release served as news media, informing readers that Iowa Valley RC&D would be in attendance at the Iowa City farmers market on May 7th to promote local foods and the Food Safety Modernization Act. The desired outcome was to reach targeted producers and consumers who were interested in learning more about Iowa Valley RC&D as an organization and to ask questions. After the press release was sent out, the Office of Outreach and Engagement received a call from the local CBS affiliate who was interested in learning more about the Food Safety Modernization Act campaign and attended the Iowa City farmers market. The reporter, Connor Morgan, interviewed Jason Grimm to learn more about the Act itself and

upcoming changes for farmers. Hannah Sinclair was interviewed about the strategic communication campaign project. This reached many people and was significant news coverage for the Food Safety Modernization Act. This served as great promotional media.

(see Appendix E)

Controlled organizational media was produced including a brochure, one-page handout, and an 18 x 24 inch poster. These items were handed out at the farmers market and the poster attracted consumers to visit the Iowa Valley RC&D booth. The brochure included information about the new regulations and sources of additional information. The one-page handout had facts about the benefits of local foods. The poster served as an eye-catching visual aid which attracted consumers to stop by the booth to learn more about local foods. Altogether, the marketing materials were created to be easily read and visually appealing.

Additionally, two email pitches were sent to two contacts that were referred to the Food Safety Group by Jason Grimm. One contact was Jennifer Jordan, the Recycling Coordinator of Iowa City, who sends a weekly email out to the community. The Food Safety Group explained the current project on behalf of Iowa Valley RC&D. She sent out information about Iowa Valley RC&D attendance at the farmers market and goals of informing producers and consumers about the benefits of locally grown foods. The second contact was Tammy Neuman, who works in Iowa City Parks and Recreations, and is a contact for the farmers market. The Food Safety Group was informed that she was attending several vendor meetings over the next few weeks and she agreed to share information about Iowa Valley and their attendance at the farmers market. By using Jennifer Jordan and Tammy Neuman as resources, this further spread the awareness about Iowa Valley RC&D's mission and attendance at the Farmer's Market to the community.

(see Appendix F and G)

Iowa Valley RC&D website was updated with information about the Food Safety Modernization Act, additional resources, and services offered by Iowa Valley RC&D. This was an important communication tactic because if individuals wanted more information after visiting the farmers market or reading about Iowa Valley RC&D in the newspaper, they can log on to www.ivrcd.org/food-safety-modernization-act to find out more information.

As a whole, all of these outreach tools have helped the Food Safety Group meet their goals and objectives of informing publics on new regulations and promoting celebration of local foods. In order to meet the goals and objectives, many communication tools were strategically used. However, each served a unique purpose in informing the publics on specific information, whether it was about the farmers market or explaining the Food Safety Modernization Act.

Budget

Category	Estimated Quantity	Estimated Price	Estimated Total
T-shirts	7	\$20	\$140
Poster	1	\$10	\$10
Brochures	50	\$0.25	\$12.50
Handouts	50	\$0.25	\$12.50
Paint Paper	50	\$0.25	\$12.50
Vegetables	4 types	\$11.46	\$11.46
Paint	2 packages	\$4.92	\$9.94
Paint brushes	1 package	\$2.27	\$2.27
Crayons	1 package	\$0.47	\$0.47
Wet Ones	1 package	\$2.69	\$2.69
Cups	1 package	\$3.48	\$3.48

Total: \$217.81

Implementation

Spring Semester 2016 for Strategic Communication Campaigns

- January 20: First class
- January 25: Meet team
- January 27: Meet client, Iowa Valley RC&D
- February 8: Turn in individual Situation Analysis
- February 10: Present collaborated Situation Analysis to client
- February 15: Begin research on the Food Safety Modernization Act
- February 17: Turn in group Research Plan
- February 22: Continue Research
- February 24: Call contacts and send survey to email list provided by Jason Grimm
- February 29: Begin drafting Research Report
- March 2: Begin drafting Goals and Objectives
- March 8: Finalize drafts of Research Report and Goals and Objectives
- March 9: Turn in group Research Report and Goals and Objectives
- March 21: Begin creating Implementation Plan
- March 23: Turn in group Implementation Plan, present to class
- March 28: Present Implementation Plan to clients
- March 30: Begin bring Implementation Plan to action
- April 4: Send draft of press release to Jason Grimm
- April 11: Send final press release to Jade Manternach
- April 13: Send draft of brochure, handout and poster to Jason Grimm
- April 20: Send final brochure, handout and poster to be printed

- April 27: Work on presentation and Final Campaign Report
- May 1: Upload content to website
- May 2: Present Implementation Tangibles to clients, press release published
- May 4: Rough Draft of Final Campaign Report
- May 7: Attend farmers market to disperse materials to producers and consumers
- May 11: Revise Final Campaign Report
- May 12: Turn in Final Campaign Report

Evaluative Research

Evaluation

Based on quantitative numbers of producers and consumers reached, as well as the satisfaction from the client, Iowa Valley RC&D, the Food Safety Group adequately met their goals and objectives.

The first goal was to emphasize the necessity of the Food Safety Modernization Act to food producers and processors in East Central Iowa.

The Food Safety group was to meet this with the objective of having an effect on the acceptance of food producers and processors in East Central Iowa; specifically to increase attitudes toward the necessity of the Food Safety Modernization Act (10 farms in three months). Based on the amount of producers the Food Safety Group spoke with at the farmers market, as well as the producers talked to during the research process (three in-depth interviews and 10 surveys) the group exceeded the original goal of 10 farms in three months. The goal was also accomplished through our direct marketing materials, which included face to face communication, a brochure and a booth at farmers market that showed the Food Safety Modernization Act as a positive improvement to farming practices.

The second objective for this goal was to have an effect on the action of food producers and processors in East Central Iowa; specifically to maximize behavior into compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act, (50 percent of farms in 12 months), was achieved. This was because the Food Safety Group communicated with producers on how to come into compliance with the new regulations and if the regulations applied to the size of the producer's farm. The data is currently unattainable as it is in the future but based on all the Food Safety Group's interactions with producers the goal is expected to be met.

The second goal was to improve consumer perception regarding local food.

The first objective for this goal was to set to have an effect on the awareness of consumers in East Central Iowa; specifically to increase attention of the advantages of local food consumption (75 consumers in six months). The group is confident they reached well over the goal of the number of consumers at the farmers market with the interactive craft and informative handouts as well as the news coverage received. The group was able to speak with consumers at the farmers market and provide real examples of the importance of local food and actions farmers are taking to assure safety.

The second objective was to have an effect on the action of consumers in East Central Iowa; specifically to generate behavior in purchasing local food at farmers markets and grocery stores. (10 percent in 4 months). This is not easily measurable for classwork, but the consumer handout highlighted the importance of local food and was designed to positively affect buying habits. The handout is also interactive with a recipe including local food, which is a non-direct way of promoting the purchasing of local food.

Through the targeted plan, the Food Safety Group was able to achieve the goals and objectives.

Appendix A

Interview with Chris Blanchard

- Owner of Purple Pitchfork
- Does training for farmers on food
- Focuses on marketing aspect of the new food modernization act
- Working on food safety out of Cornell
- Smaller scale farms, he doesn't see it necessary
- Liability of safe food supply
- 100% cleanliness not attainable
- Not much accurate data on food safety
- Must comply though
- Vast majority of the Food Safety Act is not relevant to Iowa

Appendix B

Interview with Sophia Kruszewski

- Food safety expert
- 5 being very aware of regulations
- Will be very significant – a lot of growers may not be covered by the rules
- In terms of marketing and market access. Buyers may want to buy products that are in compliance. A lot of work to do
- May start doing it to be up to standard with market demands
- A lot of producers look to trusted sources
- Practical farmers of Iowa
- Looking to local groups
- Rules are staggered so that not all farms have to be in compliance at the same time
- Steps each year to gradually make changes
- Quality and safety go hand in hand. Particularly direct market farmers have a strong desire to serve safe food
- What does this mean for operation, and what you need to do
- Doesn't think they are totally necessary
- Website has a lot of information about farmers and flow charts
- www.sustainableagriculture.net

Appendix C

Interview with Laura Krouse

- Highly aware of the new up dates
- Goes to farmer practice
- Utilizes Practical Farmers of Iowa
- Not needed for her farm, but nation as a whole yes
- She sees both positive and negatives of the Act
- Very hard for small farms though
- Can be very demanding
- Have to determine costs vs. risks
- Bigger farms can absorb costs
- Risk is small for bad cleanliness
- Not possible for it to be 100% clean

Appendix D

Survey Questionnaire

1. On a scale of 1-5, how aware are you of the Food Safety Modernization Act recently finalized by FDA and the impact on how it may or may not affect how you market your produce?
 - a. 1-not aware at all
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
 - e. 5-very aware
2. Where do you regularly rely on finding information about new regulations and training opportunities for staff and yourself?
 - a. Local newspaper, if so, which publication?
 - b. Local magazine, if so, which publication?
 - c. Word of mouth, if so, where do you seek this information?
 - d. Through an organization, if so, which organization?
3. Do you think these new regulations will affect the way you are currently farming?
 - a. If yes, please explain why
 - b. If no, please explain why not
4. If your farm will be affected by these new rules how long do you anticipate it will take to come into full compliance with these new regulations?
 - a. 2 months or less
 - b. 3-7 months

- c. 8-12 months
 - d. 13-18 months
5. Do you already take samples annually or quarterly of your water and soil?
- a. Yes
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. None
6. Do you think these changes are necessary to improve consumer satisfaction of produce quality?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Undecided
7. If you are aware of the FDA changes, what are your overall feelings regarding them?
- a. Positive
 - b. Negative
 - c. Indifferent or don't know of changes
8. Would you like to receive information about upcoming webinars, workshops or one-on-one assistance that Iowa Valley RC&D is organizing?
- a. If yes, please provide your contact information
 - b. No

Appendix E

Press Release

IOWA CITY, Iowa - The 2016 Iowa City Farmers Market kicks off May 4th and this year, for the first time, produce vendors will be faced with the implementation of the new Food Safety Modernization Act.

The Food Safety Modernization Act was signed into law January 2011 and the final rules were released nationwide Fall of 2015. Small produce farms in Iowa will need to assess whether they are impacted by this act and then address compliance within the 3-4 year federal timeline. The Act's "Produce Rule" covers on-farm food safety procedures like storage and handling, employee hygiene, and potable water used for everything from irrigation to washing.

Iowa Valley Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) works in Eastern Iowa and collaborates statewide to address the needs of and provide resources to Iowa's small farms. In the coming years, Iowa Valley RC&D will be working with community, county, and state partners to educate and train produce farmers in Iowa regarding these new federal rules. Iowa Valley RC&D's Food System Planner Jason Grimm will be leading the effort.

Grimm has worked as Food System Planner with Iowa Valley RC&D for more than six years. He also farms himself at Grimm Family Farm near Williamsburg. Grimm says "food safety is customer-focused, but farmer-driven. We hope that these rules can be a force for growth and improvement on our local farms, instead of a deterrent for market expansion. We also want consumers to recognize that locally-grown food has to meet safety standards and often exceeds them. Local produce is a viable option when people are concerned about food safety."

For those interested in learning more, consumers or vendors, Jason Grimm will be at the Iowa City Farmer's Market on Saturday, May 7th from 7:30 am - noon. He will be joined by a

team of University of Iowa undergraduate students who are learning about the Food Safety Modernization Act as part of their Strategic Communications class. Look for them near the entrance of the market along Washington Street.

Appendix F

Email to Jennifer Jordan

The 2016 Iowa City Farmer's Market kicks off May 4th and this year, for the first time, produce vendors will be faced with the implementation of the new Food Safety Modernization Act.

Because of this, Iowa Valley Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) will have a booth at the Farmer's Market on May 7th providing consumers with information about the benefits and safety standards of locally-grown food as well as the changes vendors will be incorporating.

Iowa Valley RC&D works in Eastern Iowa and collaborates statewide to address the needs of and provide resources to Iowa's small farms. Iowa Valley RC&D has worked with community, county, and state partners to educate and train produce farmers in Iowa regarding these new federal laws. Food System Planner, Jason Grimm, will be leading the effort. Come stop by on May 7th and learn why Iowa Valley RC&D celebrates local foods.

Appendix G

Email to Tammy Neuman

The 2016 Iowa City Farmer's Market kicks off May 4th and this year, for the first time, produce vendors will be faced with the implementation of the new Food Safety Modernization Act. Because of this, Iowa Valley Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) will have a booth at the Farmer's Market on May 7th to be available to answer vendor questions and handout information for vendors. Iowa Valley RC&D works in Eastern Iowa and collaborates statewide to address the needs of and provide resources to Iowa's small farms. Iowa Valley RC&D has worked with community, county, and state partners to educate and train produce farmers in Iowa regarding these new federal laws. Food System Planner, Jason Grimm, will be leading the effort. Stop by Iowa Valley RC&D's booth on May 7th if you have questions or need more information.

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