Revolutionizing Food Safety Training

Making Food Safety Relevant on a Multicultural Incubator & Training Farm
Transplanting Traditions
Community Farm

- 8-acre incubator farm in Chapel Hill, NC
- 13 separate farm businesses

Focus population is refugee families originally from Burma
  - Called by ethnic group name: Karen or Chin at TTCF (NOT Burmese)
  - Note: shared language is Burmese
Transplanting Traditions: Vision & Mission

Transplanting Traditions Community Farm envisions a world in which all people have access to healthy affordable food, land, education, satisfying work and a space to celebrate culture and to build strong, resilient communities.

Our mission is to uplift food sovereignty in the refugee community through access to land, education and opportunities for refugee farmers to address community food insecurity and the barriers they face in reaching their dreams of farming. The farm provides a cultural community space for refugee adults and youth to come together, recreate home and build healthy communities, and continue agricultural traditions in the Piedmont of N.C.
Transplanting Traditions

● Programs include:
  ○ Community Supported Agriculture
  ○ Share A Share (Food Access Program)
  ○ Farmer Education
  ○ Leadership Development
  ○ Teen and Kids Programming
Betsy Jackson,
Farm & Educational Programs Manager at TTCF

Masters in social work & Certificate in Ecological Horticulture from UC Santa Cruz

Farmed at CSA farms in California, New York, and a cut flower farm in Connecticut

Joined Transplanting Traditions in 2019
Chloe Johnson, Food Safety Consultant

Started this work with CFSA’s Local Produce Safety Initiative

Continued as contractor to finish out the grant

Now work at Farm Commons doing legal education for farmers
Challenges in Food Safety Training at TTCF

- Multiple languages spoken
- Low literacy
- Cultural differences
- Shared spaces
- Farmers on different “tiers,” i.e., levels of experience, market outlets, different infrastructure on farm
- Food safety training can be boring!
- Evaluating success
How we met these challenges

Multiple Languages Spoken

- Held separate training events for Karen and Burmese translations
- Presented in English, a farmer/TTCF staff person translated
- Focused on visual communication as often as possible
- Untranslatable words

Additional Challenges Presented with these Techniques

- Trainings were twice as long as they would be without translators, and we had to schedule twice as many
- Had to use the most basic language as possible
Translating Food Safety Concepts into Visual Language

Do not put harvest crates directly on the ground:
Use a BUFFER CRATE!

- Paint your buffer crates so they don’t get mixed up with your other crates.
- The buffer crates are the only crates that should touch the ground and they should not be brought to the wash area or set on food contact surfaces.

Sanitizer Stops the SPREAD of Pathogens

- Wash water with no sanitizer
- Wash water with sanitizer

No harvest crates directly on the ground in the wash/pack area!

- No produce can be on the ground. Compost any dropped vegetables!
Do not put harvest crates directly on the ground:
Use a BUFFER CRATE!

- Paint your buffer crates so they don’t get mixed up with your other crates.
- The buffer crates are the only crates that should touch the ground and they should not be brought to the wash area or set on food contact surfaces.
• No harvest crates directly on the ground in the wash/pack area!

• No produce can be on the ground. Compost any dropped vegetables!
Sanitizer Stops the SPREAD of Pathogens

E. coli Contamination

Lettuce

Lettuce contaminated with E.coli

Sink with Lettuce

Wash water **with no** sanitizer

Wash water **with** sanitizer
Using Simple Language

Pathogen

Germ
How we met these challenges

Low literacy

- All policies were translated into “visual SOPs”
- No written policies handed out, all training done live and reinforced through the visual SOPs

Additional Challenges Presented with these Techniques

- Just the time and energy it takes to communicate differently about complex food safety themes
Example of Visual SOP

Wash your hands before:
- Starting work
- Putting on gloves
- Washing & Packing Produce
- Entering Fields

Wash your hands after:
- Using the toilet
- Breaks
- Touching fertilizers
- Touching trash
- Touching chickens or eggs
- Coughing or Sneezing

Burmese
Karen
Wash your hands before:

Starting work

Putting on gloves

Washing & Packing Produce

Entering Fields

Wash your hands after:

Using the toilet

Breaks

Touching fertilizers

Touching trash

Touching chickens or eggs

Coughing or Sneezing
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Tiered System of Food Safety Policies

**FOOD SAFETY PLAN**

**TRANSPLANTING TRADITIONS COMMUNITY FARM**

**Traditional 40-50 page food safety plan; only for reference**

**Visual SOPs available in all shared spaces; what the farmers see**

**Mock audits to reinforce learning**
How we met these challenges

Cultural Differences

- Insisting on using pictures from the farm where we were training so that it is more relevant to learners
- Making culturally relevant points, for example, rules around chewing betel nut

Additional Challenges Presented with these Techniques

- Takes an investment of time to get appropriate pictures for the themes covered in trainings
How we met these challenges

Shared Spaces

● Posting visual SOPs in appropriate places
● Creating visual-based record keeping documents
● **Having a manager who constantly reminds folks to fill out paperwork**
● Thankfully standard operating procedures (non-food-safety related) were already in place (shared space already had norms)

Additional Challenges Presented with these Techniques

● Biggest challenge was consistent use of paperwork and record keeping
## Visual-Based Recordkeeping

### TYE Bathroom and Hand Washing Station Weekly Checklist 2022 – Station 1

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<th>Station 1</th>
<th>Seap Filled</th>
<th>Paper Towels Stocked</th>
<th>Trash Emptied and bag replaced</th>
<th>Spray room handles</th>
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### FIELD CHEMICALS RECORD

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<th>Neem Oil 2.5 TBSP per gallon water</th>
<th>Spinosad 4 TBSP per gallon water</th>
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How we met these challenges

*Farmers with different practices, infrastructure, market goals*

- Making additional requirements as simple as possible (masking tape with date on crates, crates pre-marked to identify the farmer)
- Individual training for farmers that had post-harvest huts

*Additional Challenges Presented with these Techniques*

- Scheduling large group meetings, and small group meetings, and individual meetings
How we met these challenges

Food safety can be boring!

- Created games to reinforce concepts
- All trainings had some interactive element
- Accepted that some concepts would feel elementary or repetitive

Additional Challenges Presented with these Techniques

- Difficulties with evaluation led to doubt over techniques
- Conversation and ongoing “testing” best method to make sure concepts were absorbed
- Engagement is important, even for basic concepts
Handwashing Game
Clean/Dirty Game
Fumbling Farmer Game
How we met these challenges

Evaluating Success

- Most difficult, might not have gotten it right even by the end of the project
- Visual post and pre tests
- Group mock audits, and “fumbling farmer” spot the food safety issue game

Additional Challenges Presented with these Techniques

- For group audits, not clear if all participants would have known the answer
- Pre/post tests were confusing for learners
Pre/Post Test Examples

Health, Hygiene and Sanitation Training Post-Assessment

1. COVID-19 is an illness I can get through eating contaminated food.

2. Using hand sanitizer is the same as washing my hands with soap and water.

3. If I touch something with bacteria on it, I can pass that bacteria to something else I touch.

4. I should eat and drink things other than water in a designated break area, away from produce I am harvesting or packing.

5. If you cut myself while harvesting vegetables, I only need to put on a Band-Aid before continuing to work.

6. If my cell phone is not visibly dirty, it is okay to touch it and use it while harvesting, washing and packing vegetables.

FOOD SAFETY PRACTICES WORKSHOP POST-ASSESSMENT:

1. You should wash your hands BEFORE doing which activities below (circle the correct images):

   - putting on gloves
   - washing & packing produce
   - entering fields
   - starting work
   - using the toilet
   - touching fertilizer
   - touching trash
   - coughing or sneezing

2. You should wash your hands AFTER doing which activities below (circle the correct images):

   - putting on gloves
   - washing & packing produce
   - entering fields
   - starting work
   - using the toilet
   - touching fertilizer
   - touching trash
   - coughing or sneezing

3. Circle food contact surfaces:

   - Handwashing sink
   - Harvest crate
   - Cell phone
   - Harvest knife
   - Farmer’s hand
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   😊 😞

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   - entering fields
   - starting work

   Using the toilet
   Touching fertilizer
   Touching trash
   Coughing or sneezing

2. You should wash your hands AFTER doing which activities below (circle the correct images):

   - putting on gloves
   - washing & packing produce
   - entering fields
   - starting work

   Using the toilet
   Touching fertilizer
   Touching trash
   Coughing or sneezing