

# Consumer Food Safety

## Situation

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 48 million Americans contract a foodborne illness every year. Additionally, 3000 lives are lost yearly due to foodborne illness (2011). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates that foodborne illnesses cost \$15.6 billion each year (2014). Currently the San Juan County Extension Office is the only organization in the county teaching consumer food safety classes.



## NMSU Extension's Response

- Since 2015, twenty-two food safety classes have been taught focused on the USDA's Food Safety Guidelines of Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill. Participants learned strategies to prevent the growth and spread of bacteria, how to use a meat thermometer and the importance of refrigeration to stop bacteria growth. The classes reached a total of 415 participants.
- Twenty-three hand-washing workshops have been presented at San Juan County elementary, junior, and high schools, reaching a combined 351 students (2015-2018). Additionally, 316 more youth participated through lessons taught by volunteers. Student learned how bacteria spread by contact, and used scientific method to test the effectiveness of hand washing under different conditions.
- The program has participated in twelve community health fairs reaching over 1900 individuals to increase awareness for food safety. Community health fairs participants learned the importance of properly cooking meats to prevent foodborne illness, how to use meat thermometers and ways to prevent cross contamination. The FCS Agent also answered questions on how to properly thaw foods, how to prevent the spread of germs and how to plan healthy meals, as well as distributed food safety fact sheets including USDA pamphlets on the four steps to food safety.

## Impacts through Testimonials

"I learned I still have to wash organic produce to be safe from foodborne illness"

"I started using the meat thermometer, not only do I know my food is safe, but it tastes better."

"It's shocking to see how fast germs multiply; I will thaw my meat in the microwave from now on."

"The handwashing demonstration showed me how easy germs spread in the kitchen"

2017-2018 Cumulative  
Program Reach  
**945**  
participants

Average Rated Knowledge  
Gained by Participants  
**4.1/5**

Cumulative Program Reach  
**2982**  
Since September 2014



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