

Multi-State Team Provides Online Family and Consumer Sciences Professional Development Before and During the Pandemic

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Professional development is essential for Extension professionals to implement high quality, research-based programs (Cummings et al., 2015), and thus meet the learning needs of their community. In recent years financial support and capacity to offer in-person trainings have shifted, and drastically so in the past year due the COVID-19 limitations placed on face-to-face meetings. Providing online opportunities is fundamental to support Extension professionals with ongoing, timely and comprehensive training needed for relevance. Extension educators are interested in online professional development (Senyurekli et al., 2006) and may be most comfortable with webinar delivery (Carter et al., 2013).

A multi-state collaboration developed from a nutrition and wellness, consumer webinar team consisting of one Extension specialist and two county Extension agents from the University of Florida. In 2018, a need for online professional development opportunities in health and wellness was identified and the multi-state, professional development webinar team was formed including three university Extension specialists from Florida, North Dakota, and Virginia and three Extension agents from Florida. **Goal:** The Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) virtual professional development webinar series aimed to increase subject matter expertise of Extension professionals working in nutrition, health, and wellness across the US. **Objectives:** To increase participant's knowledge of the health and wellness topics and ability and confidence in developing Extension materials, as well as promote implementation of Extension programming

on the training topics. **Marketing:** The online, professional development offerings were marketed through an existing professional development webinar email list, social media outreach on the NEAFCS and local Facebook pages, and was also shared by the FCS list serves of the three associated state program leaders. Cooperative Extension was identified in the branding of all marketing materials including save the date cards, email campaigns, and in each of the series presentations.

Educational Methods and Evaluation: Four online professional development series (15 webinars) were planned and implemented between 2019 – 2020. Each one-hour session was offered as synchronous and asynchronous to Extension professionals. Each of the series included the multi-state team members, along with guest presenters from across the states including Associate Professors from the University of Florida Food Science and Human Nutrition Department, a Registered Dietitian and health sciences educator from Rutgers, a Professor in the Departments of Clinical Nutrition and Preventative Medicine and Associate Dean for Research in the College of Human Sciences at Rush University Medical Center, a neurologist from the University of Florida Department of Neurology, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Nutrition and Exercise Sciences at North Dakota State University, an advanced instructor of human development and family science at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, a distinguished professor of epidemiology from the University of South Carolina, and a Postdoctoral Fellow from the department of Neurology, Clinical Neuroscience Research Center at Tulane University School of Medicine.

Diet Dilemmas: Fads, Facts, and Fundamentals (Spring, 2019) was a four-part series that included topics on the essentials of a healthy eating pattern and reviewed the research on many trending diets and eating plans such as high protein and ketogenic diets, intermittent fasting,

gluten-free, and the alkaline diet. **Brain Boosters: Fads, Facts and Fundamentals** (Fall, 2019) included four sessions that provided information on brain disorders, primary prevention of cognitive decline and dementia, and diet and lifestyle factors associated with brain health. **Diet Dilemmas 2 – Hot Topics in Inflammation and Disease** (Spring, 2020) included 3 sessions on effects of inflammation on health and chronic disease as well as anti-inflammatory diets. **Dietary Patterns in Health and Disease: Feeding our Microbiota** (Fall, 2020) was a four-part training which focused on microbiota and diet, probiotics, health benefits of fermented foods, and home fermentation. Post-session and select 1- and 3-month post-series Qualtrics evaluation surveys were sent out. The webinar series attracted 3,195 duplicated participants.

Collaboration

University of Florida – 50%

- Hosted the multi-state team meetings – scheduling, agenda, and notes
- Sought Institutional Review Board approval for session and series evaluations
- Developed marketing materials for each in-service training series
- Hosted the webinar series through Zoom – registration, email reminders
- Confirmed and met with speakers, obtained bio and professional photos, hosted technology checks
- Converted presentations to slide handouts
- Prepared certificate of completion
- Entered and hosted the evaluations through Qualtrics – sent thank you to attendees
- Uploaded presentation recordings and managed links
- Provided team with evaluation reports and data

North Dakota State University and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University: 50%

- Identified trends and topics to support Extension professionals in nutrition and health
- Identified and contacted potential speakers

- Marketed to state Extension professionals
- Introduced speakers; facilitated question/answer time
- Reviewed speaker evaluations

Shared responsibilities of all team members:

- Identified trends and topics to support Extension professionals in nutrition and health
- Identified potential speakers and scheduled the in-service trainings
- Edited all marketing materials
- Marketed to state Extension professionals
- Reviewed speaker presentations
- Developed and reviewed series evaluations
- Provided presentation support (chat box and Q&A)
- Reviewed outcomes and impacts

Outcomes and Impacts: Diet Dilemmas post-session results showed that 92% (586 of 639) of participants increased knowledge of the eating patterns discussed and 88% (558 of 637) increased their ability to discuss topics with clientele. The one-month, post-series survey results revealed 94% (140 of 149) of Extension professionals reported the information presented was relevant for their educational programming. In the six-month follow-up, 98% of respondents (316 of 324) reported using the knowledge gained from the series to enhance their Extension program. This included direct education, creating blogs, newsletter articles, webpage and social media content, training volunteers and Extension paraprofessionals. Brain Boosters post-session results showed that 93% (174 of 187) of participants in sessions 1-3 increased knowledge of brain disorders, cognitive decline, and lifestyle factors or brain health. Of all session participants, 82% (193 of 235) increased their ability to discuss topics with clientele and 84% (196 of 234) reported an increased confidence in discussing the topic with clientele. In addition, 64% (149 of 232) planned to integrate the information presented into their Extension programming. In March

of 2020, the 3-month post-series survey was sent to 188 participants, receiving a 28% response rate (52); 56% (29 of 52) were more confident in presenting information on brain health to clientele and 15% (8 of 52) used the information to develop educational programming or train extension volunteers and paraprofessionals. Post-session results from Diet Dilemmas 2: Hot Topics in Inflammation and Disease showed a 90% (333 of 371) knowledge gain of how inflammation may affect health and 93% (343 of 370) the dietary patterns that affect inflammation; 70% (382 of 542) increased ability to discuss topics with clientele and 67% (366 of 543) increased confidence to discuss topics with clientele. For the Dietary Patterns in Health and Disease: Feeding our Microbiota, 82% (438 of 533) increased knowledge of dietary patterns and the impact on microbiota, 51% (271 of 535) increased confidence to discuss topics with clientele, 62% (332 of 535) intended to teach general health and nutrition education, and 70% (374 of 535) will use information to answer questions in health and nutrition.

This collaborative team approach was successful in providing free, easily accessible, online professional development opportunities that increased Extension professionals knowledge of current research of nutrition and wellness topics to enhance programming, train Extension volunteers and paraprofessionals, create blogs, newsletter articles, and webpage and social media content. **Future Implications:** The multi-state team is preparing for the 2021 online, professional development series on aging. The aging population and average life expectancy are growing and “approximately 61% of older adults have multiple chronic conditions” ([NIH, 2021](#)). According to CDC’s Healthy Aging in Action report, “prevention strategies are needed to promote the health and independence of older adults. One prevention strategy is to educate professionals to implement programs that address age-related health issues” ([2016](#)). This multi-state team is developing a series to address this effort to support healthy aging.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS



LANDING PAGE

Provides participants with supporting resources including the presentation slides, slide handouts, and a link to the webinar recording.

DIETARY PATTERNS IN HEALTH AND DISEASE: FEEDING OUR MICROBIOTA

Landing Page Sample

<https://mailchi.mp/d1f1fc9dd259/feeding-microbiota>



Dietary Patterns in Health and Disease: Feeding our Microbiota

Session One: The Zoo Within Us: Introducing Your Gut Microbiota & Diet
Doug Archer, Ph.D., Professor, UF/IFAS Food Science & Human Nutrition Department

[Slides](#)
[Slide Handout \(3 slide version\)](#)
[Recording](#)

Session Two: An Overview of Probiotics and Health
Rebecca Solch, Ph.D., Tulane University School of Medicine Department of Neurology

[Slides](#)
[Slide Handout \(3 slide version\)](#)
[Recording](#)

Tuesday, November 17: Health Benefits of Fermented Foods
Wendy Dahl, Ph.D., R.D., FDC, Associate Professor, Food Science and Human Nutrition Department
University of Florida
Young Ju, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Human Nutrition, Food and Exercise
Virginia Tech

[Slides](#)
[Slide Handout \(3 slide version\)](#)
[Recording](#)

Wednesday, December 2: Guide to Home Fermentation
Laura Bauer, Ph.D., Visiting Assistant Professor in the Nutrition Department at the College of Saint Benedict Saint John's University, Minnesota

[Slides](#)
[Slide Handout \(3 slide version\)](#)
[Recording](#)
[Additional information - chat questions answered](#)



SUPPORTING MATERIALS

FLYERS

DIETARY PATTERNS IN HEALTH AND DISEASE: FEEDING OUR MICROBIOTA SERIES



DIET DILEMMAS 2: INFLAMMATION AND DISEASE SERIES

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WEBINAR SERIES FOR EXTENSION EDUCATORS

Diet Dilemmas **Hot Topics in Inflammation and Disease**



February 18: Inflammation, Health and Disease

March 17: Anti-inflammatory Diets

April 21: Inflammation and Chronic Disease

Registration: <http://bit.ly/dietdilemmas>

For More Information:

Wendy Dahl, Ph.D. - wdahl@ufl.edu

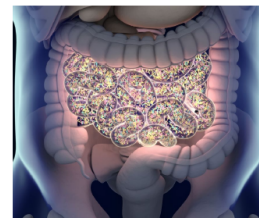
Julie England - julieeng@ufl.edu

Wendy Lynch - wendyw74@ufl.edu

Kendra Zamojski - hughson@ufl.edu

Julie Garden-Robinson, Ph.D. - julie.gardenrobinson@ndsu.edu

Carlin Rafie, Ph.D. - crafie@vt.edu



Tuesdays 3:00 to 4:00 PM Eastern Time

September 29: The Zoo Within Us: Introducing Your Gut Microbiota & Diet

October 20: An Overview of Probiotics and Health

November 17: Health Benefits of Fermented Foods

December 1 (pending): Guide to Home Fermentation

Register to attend all sessions at: <http://bit.ly/gutbiota>

Other questions?

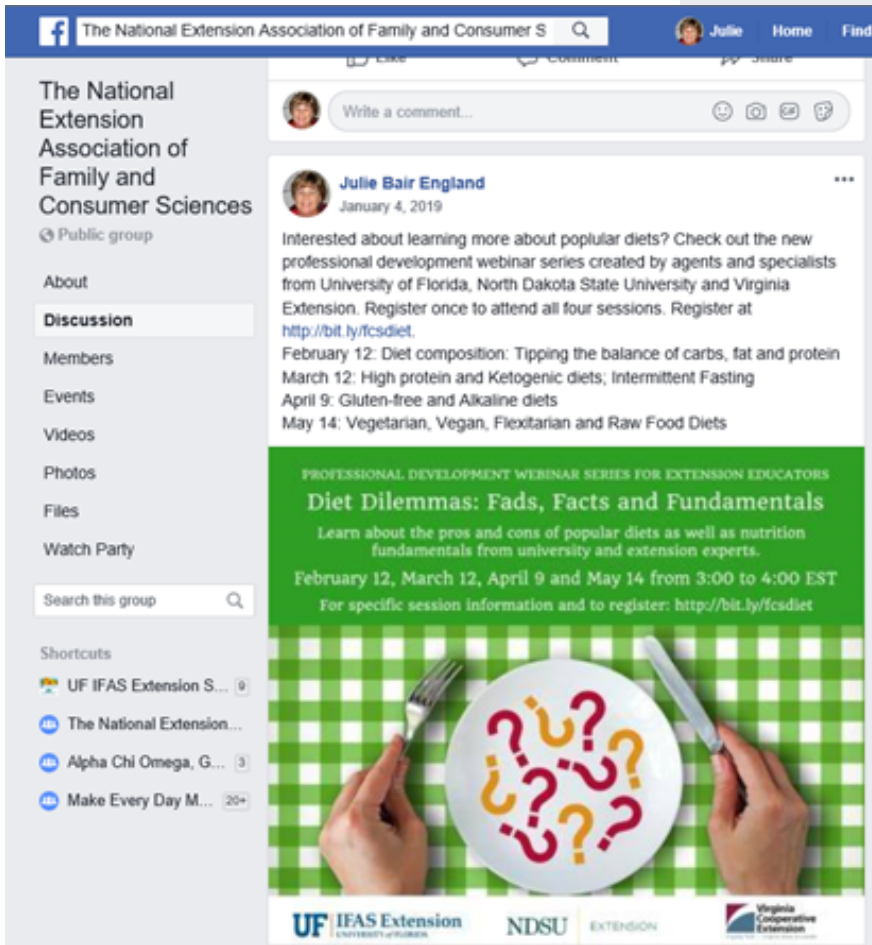
Contact Wendy Dahl, UF/IFAS Extension
wdahl@ufl.edu

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

SOCIAL MEDIA

FACEBOOK

Sample Posts

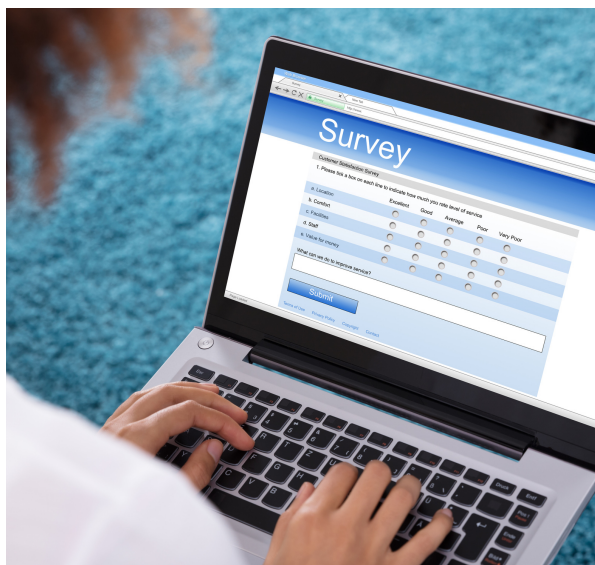


SUPPORTING MATERIALS

EVALUATIONS

DIET DILEMMAS

Sample Post Webinar Survey - Qualtrics



Thank you for taking part in today's session of Diet Dilemmas provided through a partnership with University of Florida/IFAS Extension, North Dakota State University Extension and Virginia Cooperative Extension. Please respond to this short survey. Your feedback is very important to us.

As a result of this webinar, I increased my knowledge on

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Components of eating pattern discussed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positive health effects of eating plan(s) presented	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Potential challenges of eating plan(s) presented	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

BRAIN BOOSTERS

Sample Post Webinar Survey - Qualtrics

Thank you for taking part in today's session of Brain Boosters: Fads, Facts and Fundamentals provided through a partnership with University of Florida/IFAS Extension, North Dakota State University Extension and Virginia Cooperative Extension. Please respond to this short survey. Your feedback is very important to us.

As a result of this webinar, I increased my knowledge of:

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Modifiable factors associated with risk for dementia and/or Alzheimer's Disease	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The current evidence for diet (lifestyle) as a preventive for cognitive decline, incident dementia and Alzheimer's Disease	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



IFAS Extension
Office of Central District Extension Director

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February 14, 2021

Re: Letter of Support – 2021 Excellence in Multi-State Collaboration Award

To the 2021 NEAFCS Awards and Recognition Chair and Committee,

I am pleased to provide this letter in support for the multi-state team from the University of Florida, North Dakota State University and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University for the Excellence in Multi-State Collaboration Award.

This multi-state interdisciplinary team has demonstrated excellence in responding to the need for online professional development training for Extension professionals in the areas of health and wellness. They successfully identified the trends and topics to support Extension professionals' growth in subject matter expertise. The team presented on critical issues and recruited well-regarded guest presenters representing a variety of universities and professional backgrounds.

The team effectively developed, delivered, and evaluated online trainings for over a thousand Family and Consumer Sciences and related Extension professionals. The various series' outcomes supported knowledge gain, improved competence, and evidence of application either directly in county Extension programs or through the development of written outreach.

This multi-state team has shown a strong commitment to the training and development of Extension professionals over the past few years including when Extension programs were first impacted by Covid-19. The team has shown resilience and their dedication to continue their efforts in providing online professional development to support Family and Consumer Sciences professionals in the time of the pandemic and in the coming year.

I strongly support this multi-state team application for the 2021 NEAFCS Excellence in Multi-State Collaboration Award.

Sincerely,

Tim Momol (e-signed tmomol@ufl.edu)

Dr. Tim Momol
Professor and District Extension Director



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UF/IFAS Extension Putnam County

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February 15, 2021

To the Awards and Recognition Chair and Committee:

I am pleased to support Wendy Lynch and the multi-state professional development team from the University of Florida, North Dakota State University and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University for the 2021 NEAFCS Excellence in Multi-State Collaboration Award.

The team has been successful in providing several online professional development series for Extension professionals since 2019. As professional development needs are ongoing, this team has adapted to online trainings to extend the reach of their educational opportunities. The team has shown a strong partnership between the states and valuable expertise since their collaboration began. Through this collaboration, the team was equipped to continue their online trainings for Family and Consumer Sciences professionals across the US when the pandemic struck.

This multi-state team has demonstrated their effectiveness of providing online training in trending and essential areas of health and nutrition. They were successful in providing the latest research from their team specialists and expert guests representing a variety of institutions. Their trainings were identified as "relevant" for Extension professionals' programming. Through the online series, Family and Consumer Sciences professionals increased knowledge in a variety of areas including brain health, inflammation, dietary patterns, and microbiota. There was significant evidence to support increased confidence in participants' ability to discuss information with clientele and answer questions specific to health and nutrition and application in health and nutrition outreach.

This team provides reliable, research based, and timely information to support Extension professionals' development and training in health and wellness. I fully support Wendy Lynch and team for the 2021 NEAFCS Excellence in Multi-State Collaboration award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon Treen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sharon Treen, County Extension Director
UF/IFAS Extension - Putnam County