



Newsletter: Nutrition Notes

COUNTY EDUCATOR: Mary Alice Gettings, Beaver County, Southwest Region

PROGRAM

Mary Alice Gettings developed an impact evaluation for a newsletter distributed in five counties in the Southwest Region (Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, Washington, and Westmoreland). The Newsletter, which circulates to over 4700 subscribers, focuses on nutrition and food safety topics. The newsletter reaches general consumers who include all ages, both men and women. Some have attended extension programs; others have not.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES FOR THE NEWSLETTER

Impact Objectives:

- Consumers who read the newsletter will enhance their awareness of nutrition and food safety throughout the lifecycle.
- Consumers who read the newsletter will make at least one nutrition change to improve their health.
- Consumers who read the newsletter will make at least one change in their food handling practices to enhance the safety of their food.

Delivery Method Objectives

Consumers will believe that:

- the newsletter provides timely, unbiased information
- the format is easy to read and understand
- the writing is appropriate for understanding the information
- use of space, print size, and length of the articles is on target for audiences
- there is enough information provided to make changes in eating and food handling habits

EVALUATION STRATEGY

This evaluation, used successfully five years ago, and revised to be used again in 2001, has four advantages: the professional design, the measures, the sampling plan, and postage paid reply.

Design: The evaluation is laid out in a large booklet format (one 8 1/2 x 14 sheet folded in half). Research suggests that a booklet format increases the response rate. The layout with plenty of white space and large enough print for seniors makes the survey look easy.

Measures: The evaluation assesses the degree to which both types of objectives above are achieved while at the same time keeping the evaluation short and easy to do. Specific questions measure behavior change as well as the quality of the newsletter including the degree to which it is read. Additionally, the evaluation garners needs perceived by the target audience, which can then be addressed in future newsletters. Finally it measures the demographic profile of the target audience, important information about who the newsletter is reaching.

Sampling Design: Because of the large circulation, over 4700 subscribers, sampling was determined to be a must. Resources could then be saved to make certain a high response rate is achieved among those sampled. Wanting to insure a +/- 3% precision level in the responses, the sample was determined to be 909. A random selection will be achieved by selecting from the list every fifth person starting with the third person on the list.



Postage: A #9 business reply envelope will be included in the envelope, decreasing the burden on respondents and reducing the postage cost for Extension because only evaluations returned are paid for. The first 1,000 envelopes cost \$117; the second 1,000, \$35. The cost of postage for each returned survey, given its size, is \$.44.

In the past, Mary Alice and the other writers have used the results of this evaluation on two levels: for accountability and program (newsletter) improvement. She reported the results in her annual county report, and at meetings with commissioners and state and federal legislators. She also wrote newsletter articles with the confidence that the information would be useful as well as of interest to the readers.

LETTER OF REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN SURVEY

PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY



Cooperative Extension
in Beaver County

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Dear Nutrition Notes Reader:

It is time again to evaluate the *Nutrition Notes* newsletter that you receive from Penn State Cooperative Extension. We want to determine if this newsletter is meeting your needs and interests in the areas of nutrition and food safety and whether the articles are helping you to improve your health through proper nutrition and handling of foods. Good nutrition has been linked with lower rates of many chronic diseases, including heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and stroke. In addition, 5000 people die every year from food they eat due to unsafe food handling habits. Nutrition and food safety are important for all ages and ethnic backgrounds. They do not discriminate.

We need your feedback so that we can help you help yourself. Not only are we looking to improve upon the content, but also the layout, readability, and other information about the newsletter's format. All of your answers will be confidential and will be used strictly to make this newsletter useful to you.

We have included a postage-paid return envelope. We hope you will take a few minutes out of your day to complete this evaluation and return it by _____ (deadline date). If you have questions about the evaluation, you are welcome to call me at _____ (agent's phone number).

Sincerely,

Mary Alice Gettings, MS, RD, CDE
Nutrition and Health Agent

College of Agricultural Sciences

Penn State, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Pennsylvania Counties Cooperating
An Equal Opportunity University



DATA COLLECTION METHOD: MAIL SURVEY

**Food and Nutrition Notes
Feedback**

QUESTION ON
TARGET AUDIENCE
PARTICIPATION

1. To what extent have you been able to read the four *Food and Nutrition Notes* sent during the past year, from August 2000 to May 2001? (circle letter)

- A. DON'T USUALLY READ
- B. SCAN SOME
- C. SCAN AND READ SOME
- D. USUALLY READ ALL

NEEDS
ASSESSMENT
QUESTION

2. What 3 or 4 previous or new topics would you want to read about in future newsletters?

REACTION TO
RESOURCES
QUESTION

3. When you think about the *Food and Nutrition Notes* in the past year, August through May, what is one thing that stands out in your mind about the newsletter?

REACTION TO
RESOURCES
QUESTION

4. To what extent do you think *Food and Nutrition Notes* has included each of the following in the past year? (circle answer)

Unbiased information	DON'T AGREE	TEND TO AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NOT SURE
Timely information	DON'T AGREE	TEND TO AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NOT SURE
Easy to understand writing	DON'T AGREE	TEND TO AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NOT SURE
Good length in articles	DON'T AGREE	TEND TO AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NOT SURE
Easy to read print size	DON'T AGREE	TEND TO AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NOT SURE
Enough white space	DON'T AGREE	TEND TO AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NOT SURE



5. After having a chance to read the articles in *Food and Nutrition Notes*, some people decide to make changes while others don't. **As a result of reading the articles in the newsletter**, indicate for each of the following whether your habit stayed the same, increased, decreased, does not apply, and/or whether you were doing it before the newsletter. (circle *all* that apply)

NUTRITION

BEHAVIOR
QUESTION

Eat smaller portion sizes	STAYED THE SAME	INCREASED	DECREASED	DOES NOT APPLY	WAS DOING BEFORE
Use meat substitutes, like soy	STAYED THE SAME	INCREASED	DECREASED	DOES NOT APPLY	WAS DOING BEFORE
Intake of soluble fiber through beans, peas, and legumes	STAYED THE SAME	INCREASED	DECREASED	DOES NOT APPLY	WAS DOING BEFORE
Consumption of fruit	STAYED THE SAME	INCREASED	DECREASED	DOES NOT APPLY	WAS DOING BEFORE
Intake of vegetables	STAYED THE SAME	INCREASED	DECREASED	DOES NOT APPLY	WAS DOING BEFORE
Variety of food in children's lunches	STAYED THE SAME	INCREASED	DECREASED	DOES NOT APPLY	WAS DOING BEFORE

FOOD SAFETY

BEHAVIOR
QUESTION

Use meat thermometer for meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs	STAYED THE SAME	INCREASED	DECREASED	DOES NOT APPLY	WAS DOING BEFORE
Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with warm water and soap	STAYED THE SAME	INCREASED	DECREASED	DOES NOT APPLY	WAS DOING BEFORE
Keep juices from uncooked meat, poultry, and seafood away from ready-to-eat foods, like fruits and vegetables	STAYED THE SAME	INCREASED	DECREASED	DOES NOT APPLY	WAS DOING BEFORE
Use ice pack or insulated lunch box for packed lunches	STAYED THE SAME	INCREASED	DECREASED	DOES NOT APPLY	WAS DOING BEFORE
Use of recommendations when dressing a deer in the field	STAYED THE SAME	INCREASED	DECREASED	DOES NOT APPLY	WAS DOING BEFORE



TARGET
AUDIENCE
PROFILE
QUESTIONS

6. So that we know we have a representative sample, please answer the following questions.
(circle letter)

Gender

- A MALE
- B FEMALE

Age

- A 20 – 29
- B 30 – 39
- C 40 – 49
- D 50 – 59
- E 60 – 69
- F 70 – 79
- G 80 OR OVER

How far did you go in school?

- A NONE
- B GRADE SCHOOL
- C SOME HIGH SCHOOL
- D HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE
- E COLLEGE
- F COLLEGE GRADUATE

How do you describe yourself? (circle *all* that apply)

- A WHITE
- B AFRICAN-AMERICAN
- C HISPANIC
- D ASIAN
- E AMERICAN INDIAN
- F OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)

We appreciate the time you have spent completing this evaluation. We will use this information to help us write future newsletters to meet your needs and interest!

For further information about the evaluation, please contact Mary Alice Gettings (magettings@psu.edu). This Web site is copyrighted by the Pennsylvania State University. The information may be used for educational purposes but not sold for profit.