Food Safety Outreach

What do we want to say? Key concepts:

* Food safety is important.
* Farmers/food entrepreneurs sometimes fear & resist the regulatory system.
* Food regulatory staff sometimes believe farmers/food entrepreneurs/advocates in the local food system are opposed to food safety.
* Farmers/food entrepreneurs are interested in food safety.
* Organizational & peer support for food safety is important to food handler adoption of food safety practices.
* Farmers/food entrepreneurs are motivated by:
  + Desire to succeed/be profitable
  + Desire for independence
  + Belief in sustainable local food system
  + Concerns re: nutrition, nutrient density of food
* Food system advocates are motivated by:
  + Concern for economies of rural or urban neighborhoods
  + Desire for food access/food security for low-income people
  + Desire to support family farmers
* Food regulators are motivated by:
  + Protection of public safety
* Activity: Create forums where inspectors, farmers, food entrepreneurs, food system advocates can talk to each other directly, share perspectives, and gain understanding of each others’ priorities and requirements.
* Outcome: Build trust within regional networks of inspectors, farmers, food entrepreneurs, advocates.
  + Improved food entrepreneur perception/trust of MDA/MDH/Delegated intentions
  + Improved MDA/MDH/Delegated perception of food entrepreneur willingness to comply with food safety provisions
* Outcome: Increased food entrepreneur knowledge of food safety concepts and increased inspector knowledge of business practices
* Farmers/food entrepreneurs must innovate in order to succeed (refs.)
* Some farmer/food entrepreneur innovation is spurred by advocate innovation.
* Food enterprise innovations must fit into FSMA.
* Food enterprise innovations must fit into state regulatory frameworks.
* State regulators understand FSMA concepts.
* State regulators understand state regulatory frameworks.
* Farmers/food entrepreneurs/advocates understand innovation of enterprises.
* Farmers/food entrepreneurs/advocates need help from regulators to understand how FSMA and state regulation apply to innovations.
* State regulators need help from farmers/food entrepreneurs/advocates to understand food enterprise innovations.
* Activity: Establish a mechanism for fitting food enterprise innovations into FSMA and state regulatory frameworks
* Outcome: Meet farmer/food entrepreneur/advocate need for innovation
* Outcome: Increased efficiency for food inspectors fielding fewer points of confusion
* FSMA implementation is challenging.
* FSMA is new to state regulators.
* FSMA is new to farmers/food entrepreneurs/state advocates.
* FSMA implementation is an opportunity for regulators, farmers, food entrepreneurs, and advocates to learn together.
* Discussion and exploration of topic by collaborative group w/variety of viewpoints can lead to building of knowledge (ref. “Peer Scaffolding”)
* Activity: Develop a body of knowledge around effective FSMA implementation techniques that work with Minnesota’s state-level regulatory system and MN’s sustainable ag/local food community.
* Outcome: Robust base of FSMA knowledge and methods of implementation among regulators, farmers/food entrepreneurs/advocates in MN.
* Outcome: Better coordination/alignment among food regulatory agencies within regions on integration of FSMA and licensing.

* Local food systems in MN include both FSMA-exempt and FSMA-non-exempt farmers and food entrepreneurs.
* FSMA-exempt farmers & entrepreneurs still encounter FSMA.
  + Sell alongside non-exempt vendors at farmers’ markets
  + Compete with non-exempt vendors for sales
  + Buyers may require adherence to FSMA provisions
  + Sell through entities that are non-exempt
* FSMA-exempt farmers may move into non-exempt status as their farms expand.
* FSMA compliance will become the standard for local food sourcing.
* All farmers involved in specialty crop production, sustainable agriculture and local food systems in MN – whether exempt or not -- need to understand FSMA Produce Rule and move toward implementation in order to remain viable.
* Food businesses and institutions that source locally need to understand FSMA and state regulations.
* Food advocate-led programs that source locally need to understand FSMA and state regulations.
* Activity: Conduct outreach through broad collaboration to all local food system participants in MN.
* Outcome: Effective implementation of FSMA by Minnesota’s sustainable ag/local food community