

# Assessing the Impact of a Grassroots Produce Prescription Program on Participants and Local Food Systems in West Virginia



*Country Roads*

From the Farm to the Community

**June 9-12, 2025**

**Charleston, West Virginia**

National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals

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# EXTENSION

FAMILY NUTRITION PROGRAM



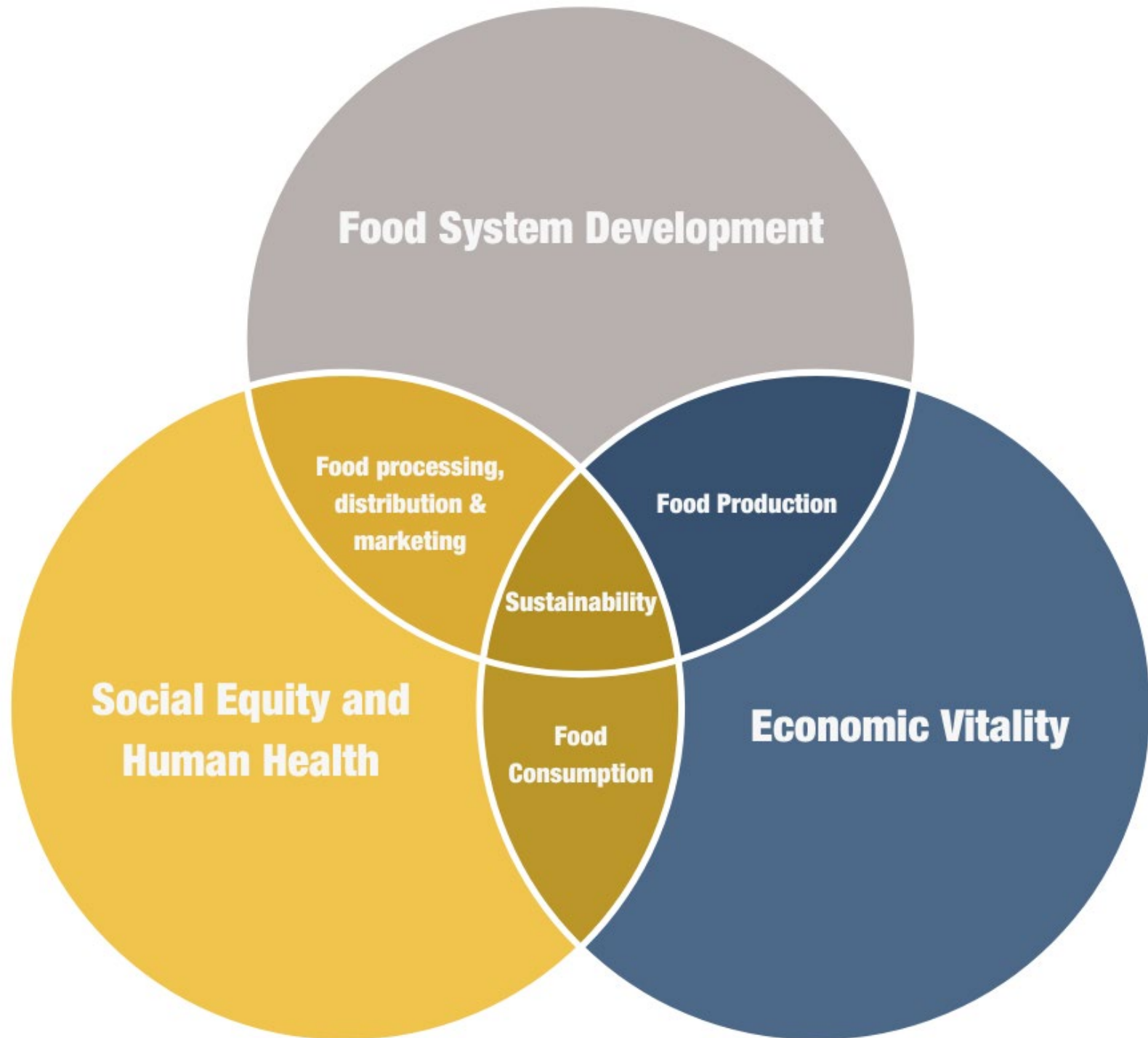
Mission: To provide nutrition education and obesity prevention outreach to limited-resource individuals and families throughout WV

Combined funding of \$5.1 million

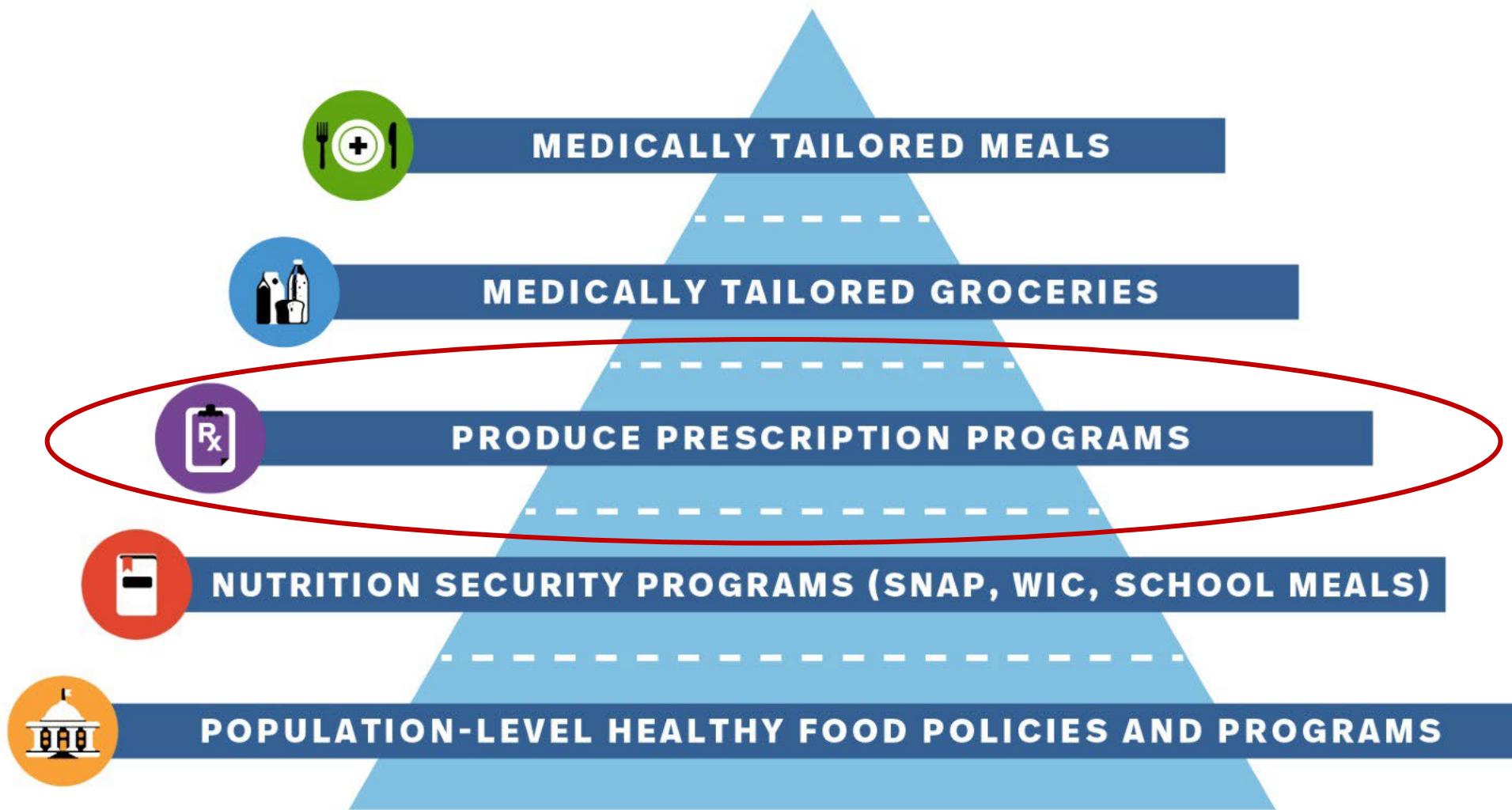
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Addressing food consumption alone is insufficient.

Access and affordability are also vital for community health and prosperity.



PREVENTION ↔ TREATMENT



NUTRITION COUNSELING  
AND EDUCATION



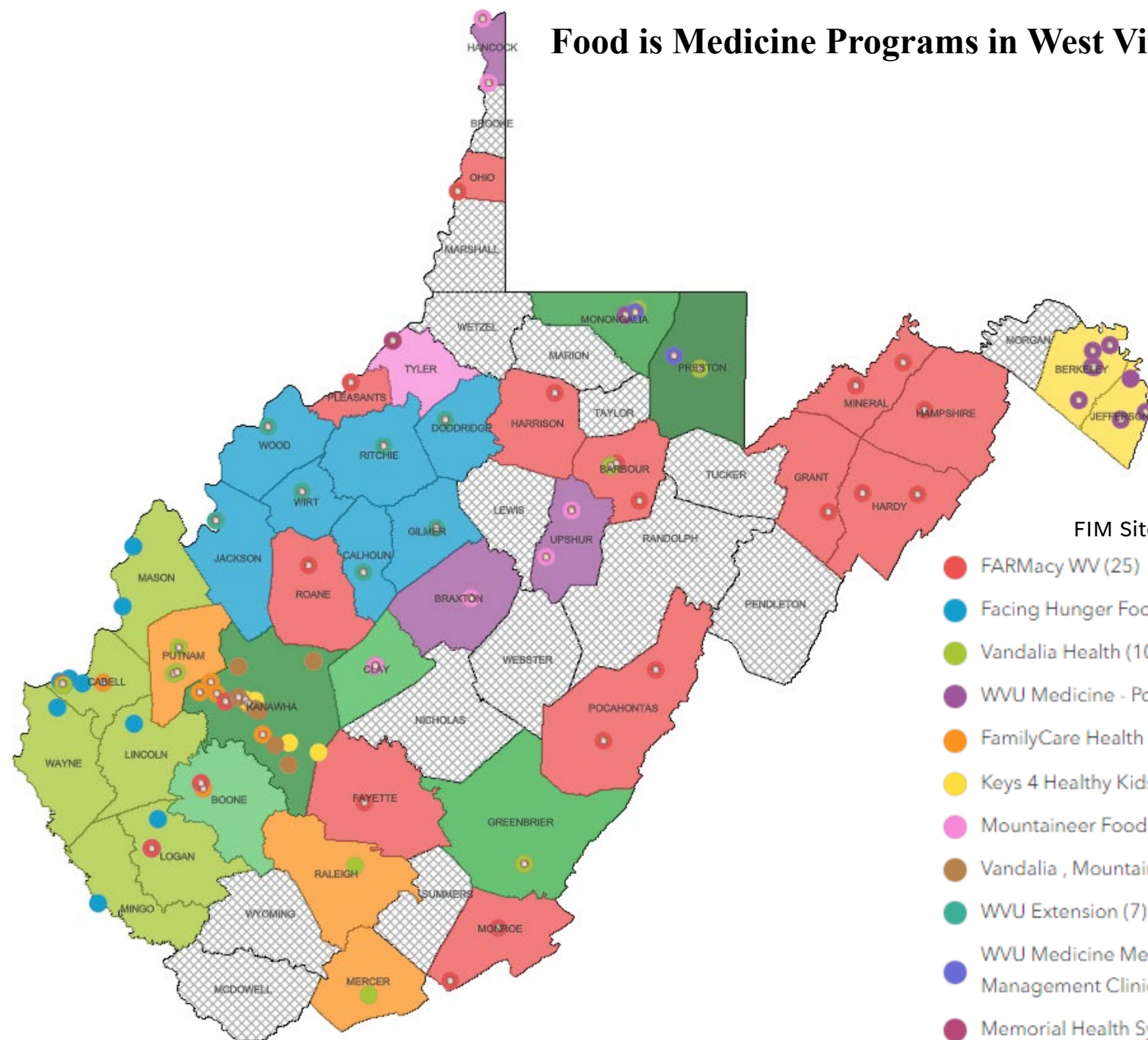
# Food is Medicine Programs in West Virginia - 2024

## Key organizational presence

- FARMacy WV
- WVU Extension
- Facing Hunger Food Bank
- Mountaineer Food Bank
- Vandalia Health
- WVU Medicine - Population Health
- Memorial Health System

## Multiple Organizational Presence

- Vandalia Health;WVU Medicine Medical Weight Management Clinic
- Keys 4 Healthy Kids;Vandalia , Mountaineer, Family Care
- FARMacy WV;Vandalia Health;WVU Medicine - Population Health;WVU Medicine Medical Weight Management Clinic
- FARMacy WV;Vandalia Health
- FARMacy WV;Mountaineer Food Bank
- FARMacy WV;FamilyCare Health Centers
- No FIM program reported



FARMacy WV: a 15-week produce prescription program providing \$25/week in locally-grown produce to people with food insecurity and chronic disease through a prescription from their health care provider.

Pop-up farmers markets each week at host health centers

From 2020-2023, FARMacy served over 1,100 participants in 21 counties.

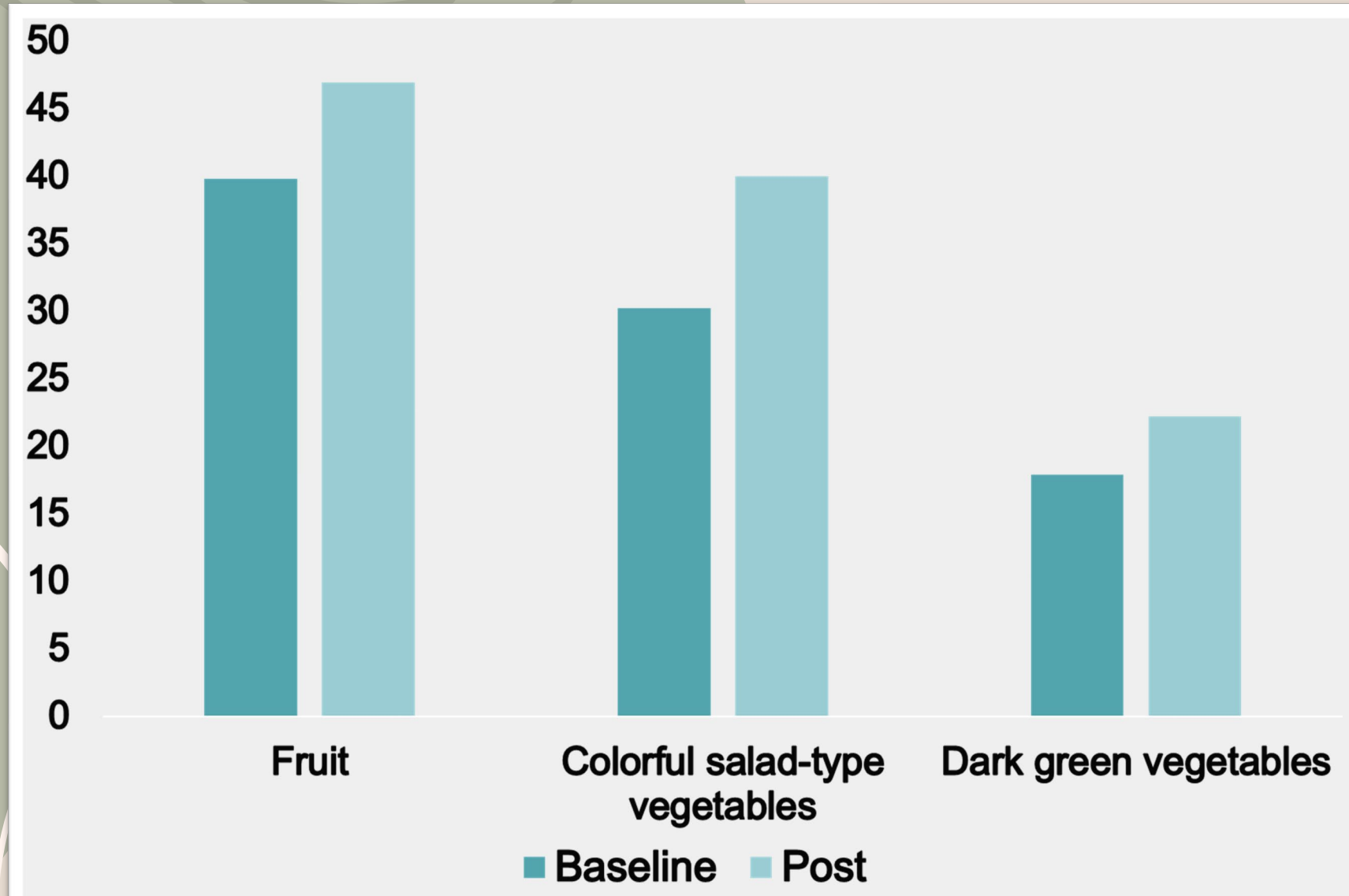


Table 1  
Change in HbA1c among participants by baseline level of  
glucose control (n=771)

Pre-intervention Hemoglobin A1c Level	Pre-intervention HbA1c (Mean $\pm$ SD)	HbA1c Change (Mean $\pm$ SD)	T	P	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
<5.7	5.2 $\pm$ 0.3	-0.02 $\pm$ 0.49	-0.58	0.5620	-0.08	0.04
5.7-6.4	6.0 $\pm$ 0.2	0.06 $\pm$ 0.63	1.29	0.1979	-0.03	0.15
6.5-7.0	6.7 $\pm$ 0.2	-0.22 $\pm$ 0.72	-2.82	0.0059	-0.38	-0.07
>7.0	8.8 $\pm$ 1.6	-0.84 $\pm$ 1.56	-8.71	<0.0001	-1.03	-0.65

*Figure 1*

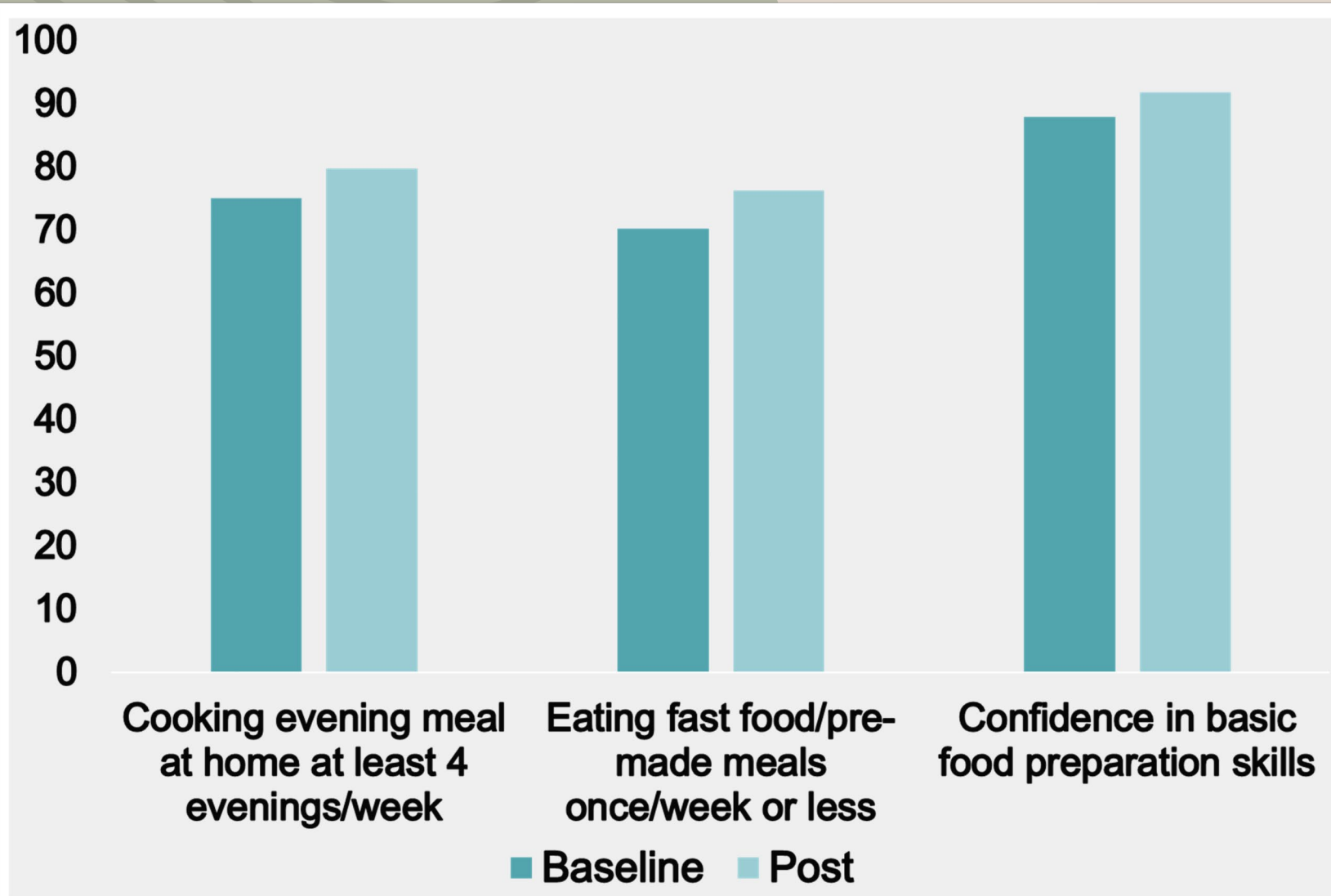
*Change in percent of FARMacy WV participants consuming fruit and vegetables at least once a day: 2020-2023 (n=761)*





*Figure 2*

*Change in FARMacy WV participants' food preparation habits and cooking confidence: 2020-2023 (n=772)*



*Figure 3*

*Percent of FARMacy participants agreeing with statements related to satisfaction with produce received: 2020-2023 (n=421)*

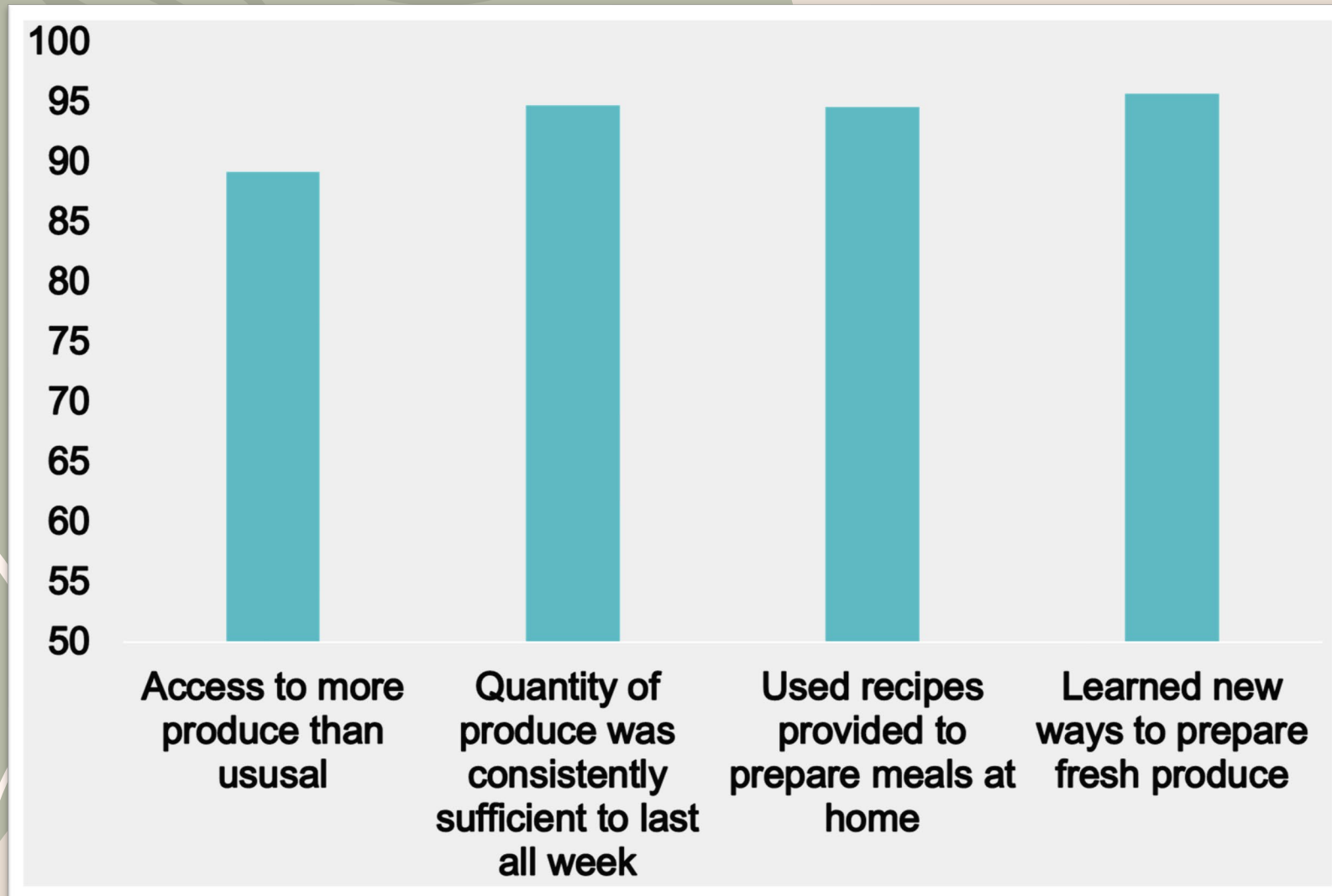
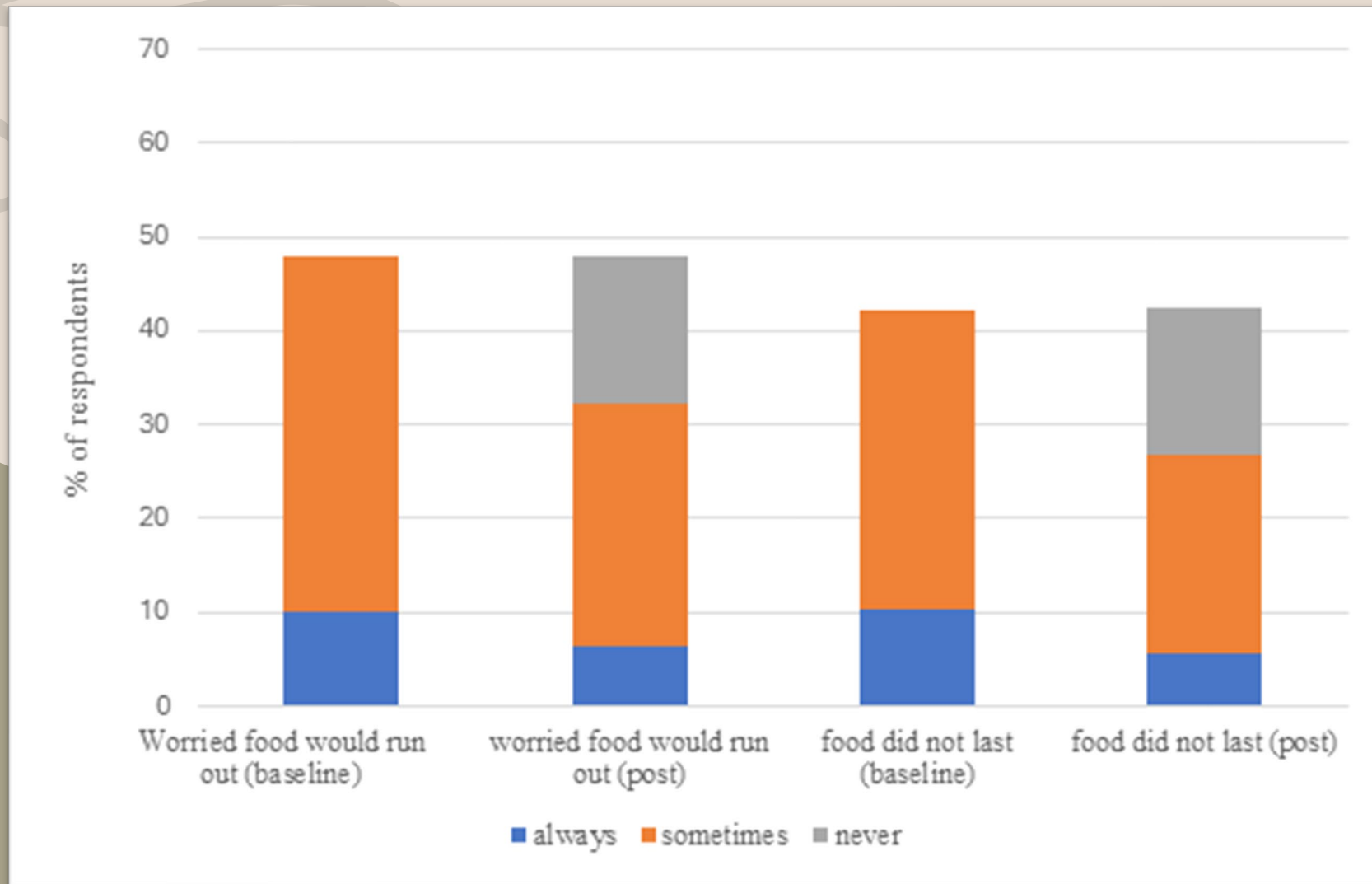


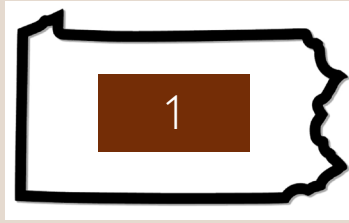
Figure 4

*Improvement in food security among risked participants (n=627)*



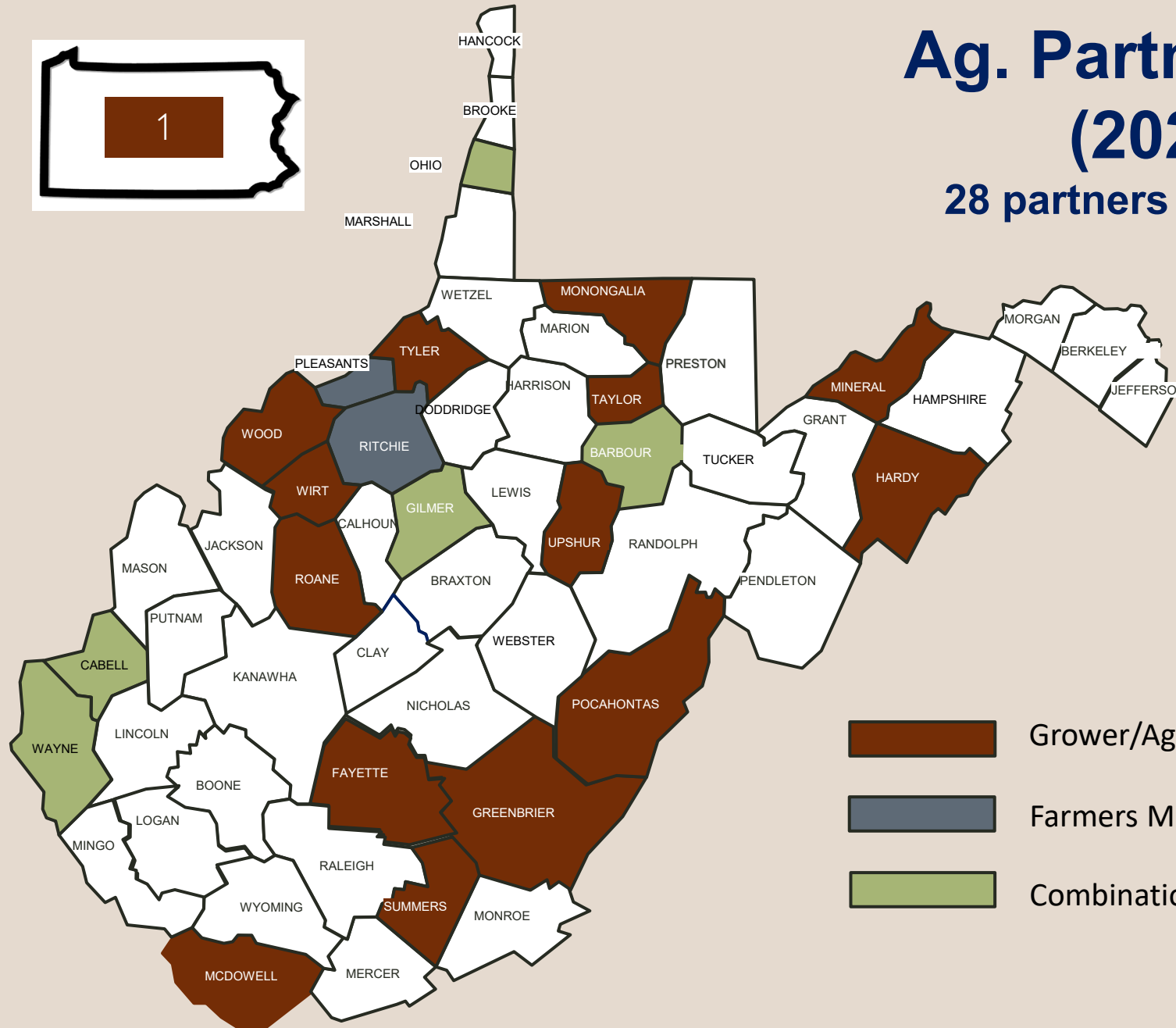





# FARMacy Agricultural Partners (2020-2024)



# Ag. Partner Locations (2020-2024)

28 partners across 24 counties



-  Grower/Aggregator
-  Farmers Market/Retail
-  Combination/more than one



# Partner Survey: Development and Dissemination

- Adapted from survey used in the past by the CRC Food Justice Lab
- 21 core questions
- Mix of closed (multiple choice and Likert scale) and open-ended questions to determine barriers, facilitators, benefits of participation, etc.
- Disseminated annually, except 2022
- 25 total responses over 4 years, representing 18 different growers
- Unable to determine exact response rate – approx. 70% of those known to have received the link
  - Some were not on the email list
  - Some growers forwarded the survey link to others







# Survey Results

Question	Response choices	n (%)
Preferred delivery method	Drop-off/wholesale	12 (52.2)
	CSA/pre-bagged	7 (30.4)
	No preference	4 (17.4)
How did you integrate the program into your growing plans?	Increased production (quantity/variety)	8 (38.1)
	Increased aggregation efforts (geographic reach, request growers increase production)	10 (47.6)

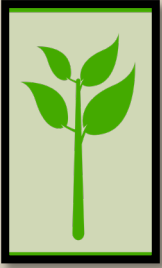


# Survey Results

Indicator	Direction of change	n (%)
Production	Increase	13 (54.2)
	No change	7 (29.2)
	Unable to determine	4 (16.7)
Income	Increase	19 (79.2)
	No change	4 (16.0)
	Unable to determine	2 (8.0)



# Economic Impact



- 53.8% of those reporting increased production indicated a 10-30% increase
- 23.1% reported a 30-50% increase



- 46.1% of those reporting increased income indicated a 10-30% increase
- 15.4% reported a 30-40% increase



- 44% of ag. partners reported adding one or more part-time employees



- Estimated 457,000 lbs. of local produce worth approximately \$560,000 was purchased from local farmers between 2020 and 2024

# Barriers and Facilitators

Barriers	n (%)	Facilitators	n (%)
Bureaucracy (paperwork, payment logistics)	6 (24)	Overall operation of program	19 (76)
Production uncertainty	5 (20)	Partnership with clinic and Extension	18 (72)
Labor production issues (time, costs, availability)	5 (24)	Travel to program location	15 (60)
Weather-related production issues (flooding, drought)	4 (16)	Day and time of program	8 (32)



# Qualitative Feedback

## BARRIERS

"Our reimbursement was delayed multiple times throughout the summer. Payment delays that went beyond a month from delivery dates."

"With both sites receiving produce on the same day, it really stretched the capacity of our vehicle to its limits. In 2023 we had a Tuesday and a Wednesday delivery. That was easier than both on Tuesday in 2024."

## FACILITATORS

"I believe the program was ran very well. It works perfectly with our schedule and we look forward to doing it again in the future. I have heard great feedback from participants in the community."

"Our extension rep left in the middle of FARMacy. We loved working with her. It definitely strengthened our connection with the local clinic."

# Additional Qualitative Feedback

"This is every farmer's dream. You've got farmer to consumer week after week after week, so you make a relationship. And you are living this with them. And I find myself harvesting based on what they want. They know their farmer, I know who I'm feeding. I've been paid whether it snows, sleets, rains or its blasting sun hot. The sale has been made. It's a guaranteed sale. It's predetermined. It's a contract. And you don't find that very often as a farm."

"The nutritionist/educator from the extension office was the main person we collaborated with and helpers/coordinators at the clinic sites... were fabulous to work with and I felt like we created a collaborative community atmosphere on Farmacy market days."

"This may be a big ask but assurances that this program will continue at current levels or even potential grow in the coming years would allow farmers to plan their growth accordingly while mitigating the risk that can come with production expansion."

(the program) "provides economic sustainability for farmers across the state that production planned for this market and can be encouraged to grow more and scale up in their production."



# Conclusion



Nutrition incentive programs such as FARMacy contribute to both improved physical health and economic stability of our most rural and vulnerable residents and communities.

Further exploration of the co-creation of generative models to scale and sustain nutrition incentive programs and provide fair reimbursement to farmers and CBOs is needed.



# Questions/comments

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