

## Extension Empowers Consumers to Ensure Food Access During Pandemic

*As grocery stores struggled to maintain adequate food supplies during COVID-19, Extension reached out to consumers to help empower them with gardening and food safety information. This education will help those reached see to their food needs, long after the pandemic restraints are released.*

### Here are some examples:

- In **California**, Extension staff helped community school gardens grow and harvest food that was distributed to local food pantries. They also provided education on social distancing at farmers markets and food safety.
- In **Kansas**, 10 videos were produced to educate people on how to “homestead” during a pandemic. The topics covered included how to grow and preserve food, how to buy local foods and information on the nutritional quality of foods. Thousands of people viewed the videos online.
- More than 40,000 people nationwide signed up for a free Extension online course on vegetable gardening offered by the Master Gardener program in **Oregon**. A free, online course titled “Victory Garden 101” also taught **Kansans** and people in at least 14 other states how to raise food in their own gardens.
- In response to food shortages, more backyard poultry flocks started popping up in **Arkansas**. Extension staff went online to provide these new poultry owners with information on how to properly raise chicks, ducks and other fowl so as to supply their own meat and eggs.
- In **Minnesota**, people learned how to stretch their food dollars, plan meals and avoid making frequent trips to the grocery store. Menus and shopping lists were also provided to the more than 800 virtual workshop participants.
- Beginning gardeners in the “Grow This Challenge” in **West Virginia** learned how to plant, manage pests, preserve foods and then share their produce one crop at a time.

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