Agriculture: How Sweet it Is

Program Area: Education and Ag Promotion (EAP)
County Farm Bureau: Steele County Farm Bureau
State: MN
Membership Category: 0-1,000
Year: 2014
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Program Description: As the saying goes, "people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." The members of the Steele County Farm Bureau in Minnesota worked hard to show just how much they care after an inflammatory news article appeared in a mailing from a community food shelter. As a result, the "Agriculture: How Sweet it is" campaign was born.

After the questionable article was mailed to households in the county, Farm Bureau members knew they needed to be proactive. The objectives of their campaign included developing a strategic consumer-friendly communications message, creating an environment where local farmers could meet directly in-person with the general public and grow and donate healthy food to local charities.

To start with, the county Farm Bureau worked with the county extension educator to develop a plan to grow a two-acre plot of sweet corn that would be planted and harvested by volunteers and of which the crop would be donated to local charities. In addition, the county also worked to create a community event to invite members of the local public to meet with members of the local farming community in an engaging and family friendly environment.

As it turned out, more than 1,500 pounds of sweet corn were donated to the local food shelter. In addition, several hundred extra pounds of sweet corn were distributed to a men's shelter, women's shelter and various other nonprofit organizations around the county. Nearly 150 people attended the "Agriculture: How Sweet it Is" community event
to learn more about food and farming. 40 volunteers were involved in bringing both pieces of this campaign together, and in the end the Steele County Farm Bureau estimates that approximately 5,200 individuals were positively impacted from the campaign's objectives.

Photo 1:

Photo 2: