

Research Rundown

Article

Agricultural Experiences Are Positively Associated With High School Students' Fruit and Vegetable Perceptions and Consumption

What did this study examine?

This study examined the relationship between high school students' agricultural experiences and their attitudes about consuming local fruits and vegetables, their willingness to try new fruits and vegetables, and their fruit and vegetable consumption.

How were the associations between agricultural experiences and the outcomes examined?

High school students across 3 of 5 high schools in Bridgeport, CT participated in the study by answering a 5-10 minute questionnaire. This survey measured their experiences, attitudes, and behaviors surrounding their agricultural experiences and their perceptions of fruits vegetables. Agricultural experiences include gardening and/or farming at:

1 Home

2 School

3 Within the Community

The **exposures** of interest were:

- Having a garden at home and having ever helped out at a community garden or farm.

The **outcomes** of interest were:

- Willingness to try new fruits and vegetables, local food perceptions, and fruit and vegetable consumption.

Key Findings:

Both having a **Home Garden** and **Community Garden/Farm** experience were related to favorable perceptions for consuming local produce.

- The youth in this study saw local food consumption as a way to improve their community.
- Having home and community garden or farm experience were also related to a willingness to try new fruits and vegetables.

Both having a **Home Garden** and **Community Garden/Farm** experience were also related to willingness to try new fruits and vegetables.

- However, they were not related to either adequate fruit or vegetable consumption, because while perceptions may change, without addressing access, adolescents may struggle with overall consumption.

Put it into practice!

- Promote fruit and vegetable consumption by implementing strategies that reference home garden and community garden/farm programming.
- Boost your school lunch and breakfast programs by participating in Farm to School month. Highlight the connection between produce served and local farms.
- Advertise your meal programs by featuring items procured from local farms, schools, or community gardens.
- If your school(s) qualify, apply for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program to receive funds to purchase fruits and vegetables and introduce new produce to your students that they otherwise may not have ever tried!

Reference:

Greer AE, Davis S, Sandolo C, Gaudet N, Castrogiovanni B. Agricultural Experiences Are Positively Associated With High School Students' Fruit and Vegetable Perceptions and Consumption. J Nutr Educ Behav. 2018 Feb;50(2):133-140.e1. doi: 10.1016/j.jneb.2017.08.009. Epub 2017 Oct 4. PMID: 28988655.



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