Kids, Compost, Crops, and Consumption
Educating youth about the food cycle

The Situation
According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 92 percent of children in North Dakota do not eat enough vegetables. Also, the average American consumer is three to four generations removed from agriculture.

Extension Response
Youth participating in the Kids, Compost, Crops and Consumption program learned about nutrition, agricultural production and where their food comes from. Emmons County was selected as one of the state’s pilot sites. Fourth graders at Linton Public School participated in the program.

The program consisted of six lessons taught once a month throughout the school year by Acacia Stuckle and Kelsie Egeland, Extension Agents, NDSU Extension Service – Emmons County. Each lesson focused on a different part of the food cycle. Every lesson also promoted daily physical activity. Linton High School Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) students led the energizer activity each lesson as part of a partnership between their school organization and the NDSU Extension Service Office in Emmons County.

Impacts
Success of this program was measured with pre and post evaluations. Students improved their knowledge of nutrition, composting and agriculture by participating in this program. For example:

- 100 percent know livestock use plants as food.
- 86 percent know paper can be composted, compared with 23 percent before the program.
- 94 percent were able to identify a tap root, compared to 46 percent before the program.
- 81 percent correctly defined photosynthesis as the life cycle that uses sunlight energy and carbon dioxide to make sugar and oxygen.
- 81 percent identified sand as the largest soil particle, compared to 15 percent before the program.
- 100 percent indicated they are more willing to try new fruits and vegetables.
- 100 percent know fruits and vegetables contain vitamins and minerals that help our brain, eyes, heart, skin and teeth.
- 69 percent of students reported their family read the newsletter.

The participating fourth-grade students completed a follow-up survey one year later.
- 69 percent grew a garden this past summer.
- 85 percent indicated they ate three or more servings of vegetables each day this past summer.
- 62 percent indicated they tried new vegetables this past summer as a result of this class.

Feedback from Teachers
“The high school FBLA students who participated in the Kids, Compost, Crops and Consumption activities benefited in a variety of ways. Being able to move, laugh, and learn together established a bond between the two groups. The FBLA students submitted this project as part of their Partnership with a Business competitive event and the project went to the FBLA National Leadership Conference.”

Follow-up Feedback from Students
One year later, participating students shared the important things they learned in the class.

“I learned that you can take vegetable peels, paper and cores of apples and make compost.”

“I learned what compost was and how to do it. I also learned where our food comes from and vegetables that I didn’t even know of!”

“I learned what we eat and where it comes from.

Public Value Statement
Educating students about food production and the nutritional requirements of a balanced diet can empower them to make healthy choices and begin to provide food security.

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