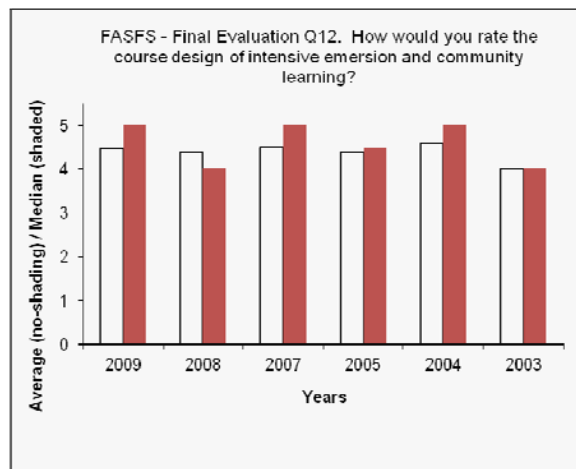
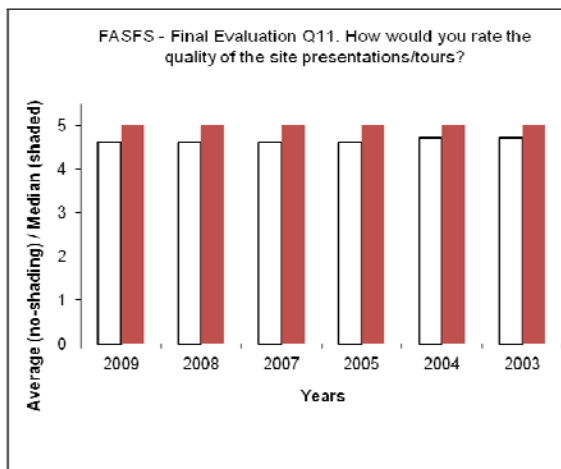
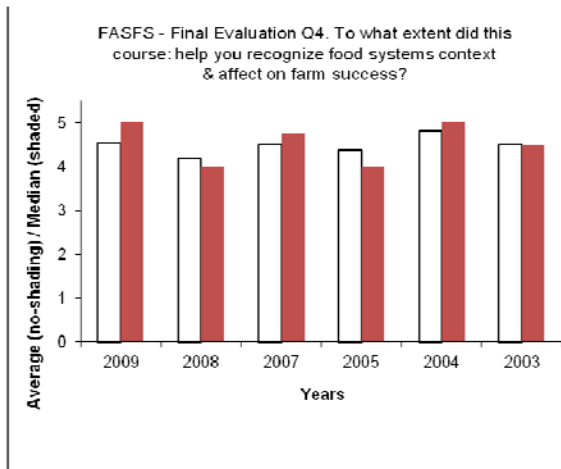
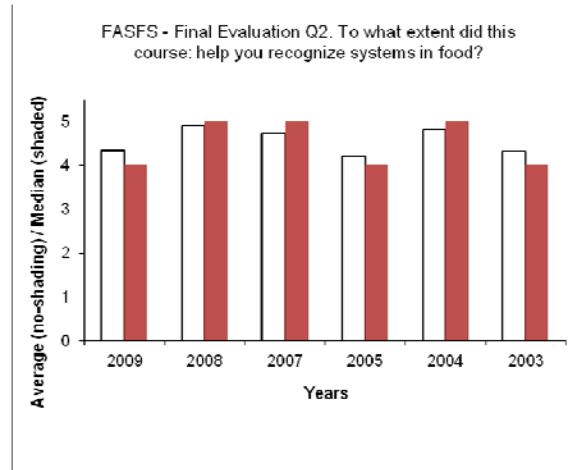
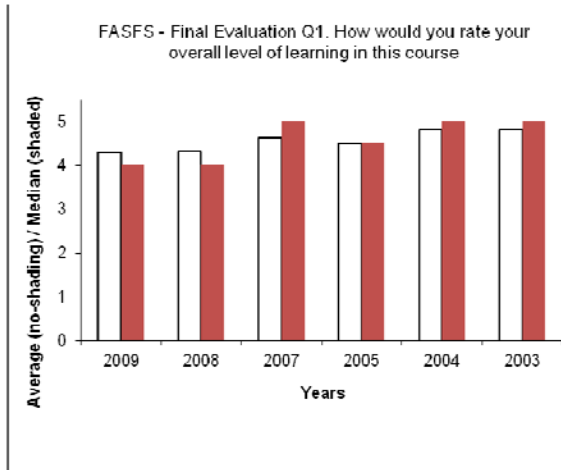


Summary of Key of End of Course Evaluation Results (Field SFS course)

A. Short-term impacts: Responses to key end-of-course evaluation questions related to this project



B. Medium to longer term impacts – Representative responses from former students who took the field course over five years prior (open-ended questions, though several individuals also gave numerical responses: 1= very low to 5 = very high)

- 1) What was the value [of the Field SFS course] of learning from stakeholders on their turf (e.g., from farmers on their farm, retailers in their store, etc.) compared to having learned about the sites in a classroom setting?

“I mentioned [former student, now extension educator]’s career with Extension. I believe that his experience may have triggered his enthusiasm for such work, out in the field, connecting farmers/processors, with others. This is what he does now. And, he excels in it. I just witnessed it last week ... a great blend of producers and food safety agency people to experience the actual challenges of preserving food safety while not putting the farm out of business while it tries to conform to the stringent food safety (GAPs) program.”

“The value is in the real-life settings, the heartfelt sharing of success/failure/challenge/disappointment/new ideas- what works and what does not- all of this is what is valuable. It comes from those who are actually doing it.” (Numeric rating- 5.)

“I think this puts the presenter more at ease when addressing the students. Surely some of the same folks could have inhibitions about doing a planned/typical classroom presentation that may not allow them to open up as they would when we are on their turf.”

- 2) Value and longer term impact of the course (if any!) on you a) personally, and b) professionally

“Because of my experience as a participant in the Field Course, I:

- Broadened my “world view” of agricultural systems
- Discarded biases that only “small” or organic could be sustainable
- Was able to define sustainable agriculture based on concrete, visible, examples
- Realized the importance and value of local agriculture in our communities
- Gained a much greater appreciation and respect for the work of agricultural producers and the challenges they face

[The] experiences [in the course] impacted my consequent education and even now still shape how I perform my County Extension work every day.”

“I have benefitted greatly, with a much deeper understanding of the educational process being more permanently embedded in a student’s mind when the “book-learning” meets the reality of the farming/ranching/agribusiness worlds. It is invaluable. How can we measure it?” (Numeric rating- 5.)

“[T]he biggest impact that the course had on me was to see the excitement of the people that we visited. I expressed this then but their enthusiasm and passion for what they did taught me more than the techniques they employed. Every one of the stakeholders seemed to be truly enjoying what they were doing and that was infectious.”

- 3) How taking that course has affected (if it has) your program delivery regarding sustainable agriculture and/or direct marketing (if relevant to you)?

“I grew exponentially as an effective educator in those years, and now, as a regulator ... of farms, ranches, and food processors. I also think that empathy, or at least a deeper understanding, of the enormous challenges of farming/ranching, value-added food processing, was gained as a direct result of [the field course].” (Numeric rating- 5.)

“As an ag educator I now try and involve producer to producer education whenever possible. I first learned the value of this method in the field class.”

“I learned so much in that class! One of the best aspects of visiting a farm and talking in-depth with farmers is how the economic aspect of sustainability enters into the conversation. For example, some of the farmers we visited farmed both conventionally and organically. The farmers explained how this was an economic decision for them. They could use less labor on the conventional acreage, but still take advantage of capital (tractors, etc) used in their organic operation.”