



# Farm Safety Dinner Theaters: Promoting Safety & Wellness

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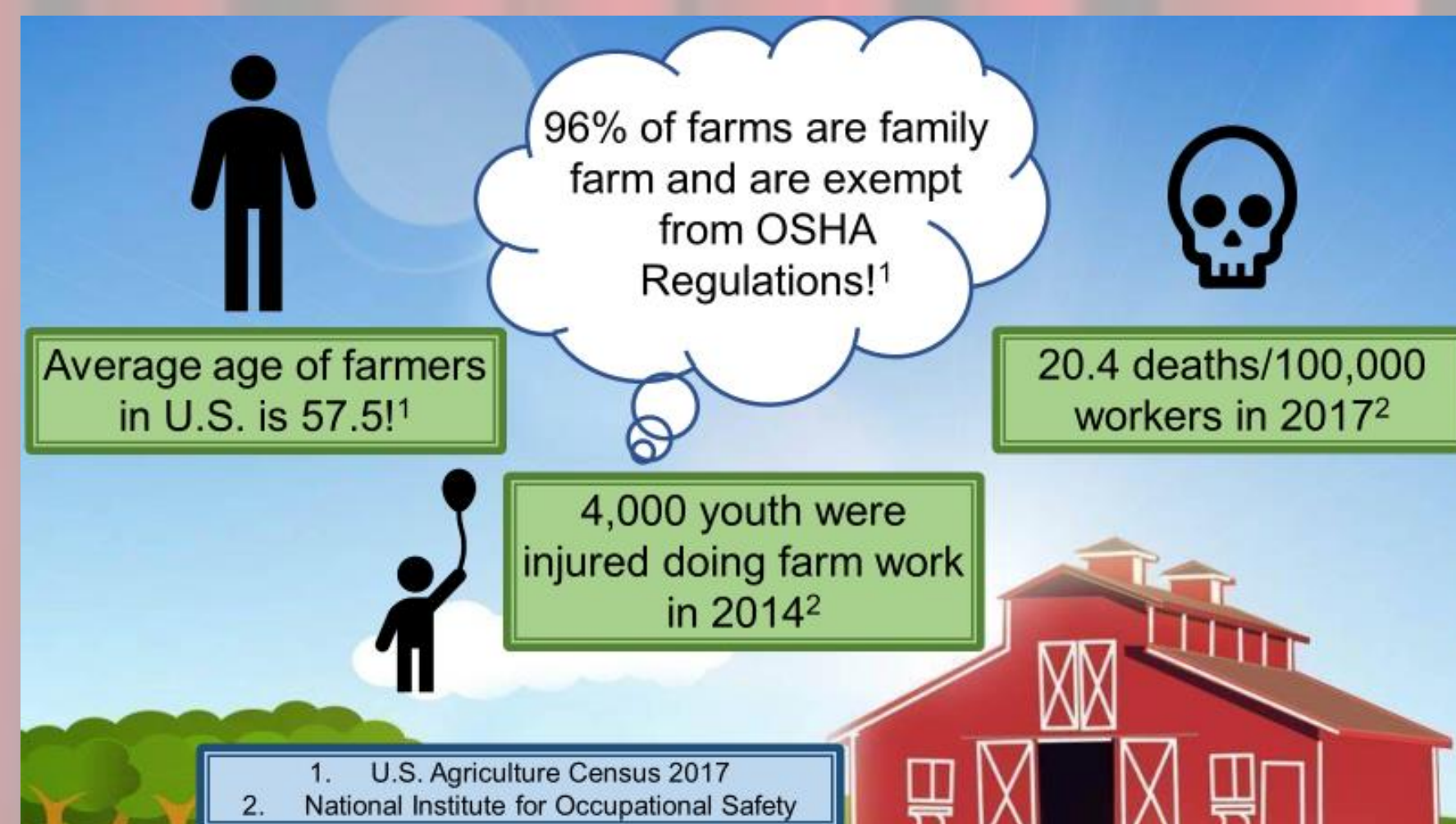


## Goal Statement

The goal of the Farm Safety Dinner Theaters is to provide a relaxed environment that farmers and their families can identify safety and wellness issues and watch as these issues are processed by the actors while simply eating a meal. In addition, the theater gives the audience the opportunity to think about how they would react in the situations. The event is set up for open communication to occur among the audience and their families.

## Relevance

With the average age of the farmer continuing to increase, safety and wellness issues include an older population working with heavy equipment and livestock. Farm workers are often family members including children leading to other potential hazards. Farm safety is a constant issue for the industry that is complicated by the fact that most farmers do not want to talk or think about the topic.



## Response

Dr. Deborah Reed from University of Kentucky started her idea of Farm Safety Dinner Theaters with funding from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health in 2014. Since that time, her research has shown increases in participants taking action on safety issues following attending a Farm Safety Dinner Theater. Dr. Reed created the Farm Dinner Theatre Tool Kit that includes plays that facilitators can utilize. The plays are designed to be simple one act plays where the actors sit down with their lines reading as needed.

## Response

In 2019, Dr. Kim Niewolny applied to the Southern Extension Risk Management Education for funding to expand the program into Virginia. Brad Jarvis and Amy Byington, Agriculture and Natural Resource Extension Agents, were selected to start the program in Virginia.



Picture 1: Madison County's Farm Safety Dinner Theatre at Graves Mountain Lodge with Dr. Reed facilitating discussion.

Brad Jarvis' Farm Safety Dinner Theatre took place on February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 with 60 participants at Graves Mountain Lodge, Syria, VA. Actors were from the farm community and the scripts were adapted from Dr. Reed's Farm Dinner Theatre Tool Kit. The plays were directed by Shirley Workman, local theater company.



Picture 2: Lee FFA members presenting their original play at the Women in Agriculture Conference in Lebanon, VA.

Amy Byington's Farm Safety Dinner Theatre took place on February 22, 2020 during the Women in Agriculture Conference in Lebanon, VA with 53 participants. The scripts were written by Lee FFA Members with assistance from Beth Shell and Amy Byington. The students took four weeks to research and write their plays. The FFA members were also the actors for the plays.

## Results

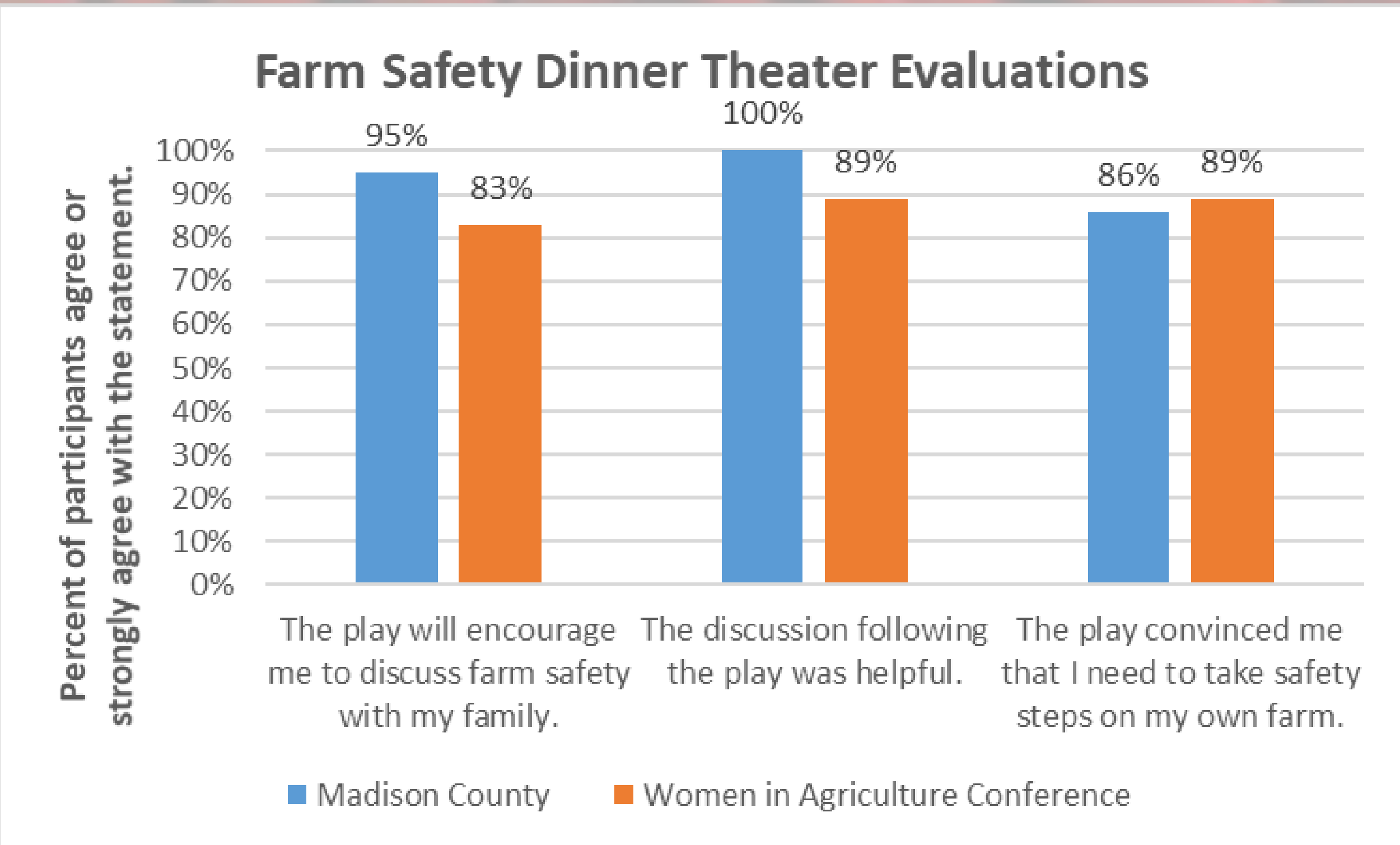


Figure 1: Evaluation results for the Farm Safety Dinner Theaters in Madison County and at the Women in Agriculture Conference.

Participants were asked to strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree with statements about the play. Figure 1 shows the percent of participants who either agreed or strongly agreed with the statements. Madison County had 42 evaluations and the Women in Agriculture Conference had 20 evaluations completed.

### Madison County Comments:

"Fantastic program and extremely informative. The information will be very helpful and keep me safer."

"Excellent idea and I will be discussing with my daughter and her family."

### The FFA Members and Advisor Comments:

"Being able to work with students on the plays allowed us to engage and openly discuss many of our competencies in our curriculum that deal with safety."-Beth Shell, Lee FFA Advisor

"Writing these plays was an amazing opportunity for our class. It gave us all a chance to sit down and actually contemplate some recent farm safety issues that we all need to consider when out on the farm." -Sarah Graham, Lee FFA Member

"Working on the farm safety plays made me consider safety more often while helping on the family farm."- Colton Wilder-Lee FFA member

