

# Using Technology to Strengthen a Family's Food System

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## Introduction

There is a need to adopt more “resilient food systems, reduce food waste, and strengthen local food production.” (Lal, R. 2020). “Deep change of food systems towards sustainability is an ongoing learning process drawing on a broad spectrum of expertise” (H. Weber et al, 2020).

## Methods

A weekly, online, 5-part food systems series, *Food Systems in Season*, was presented in Winter, 2022 on YouTube LIVE via StreamYard.

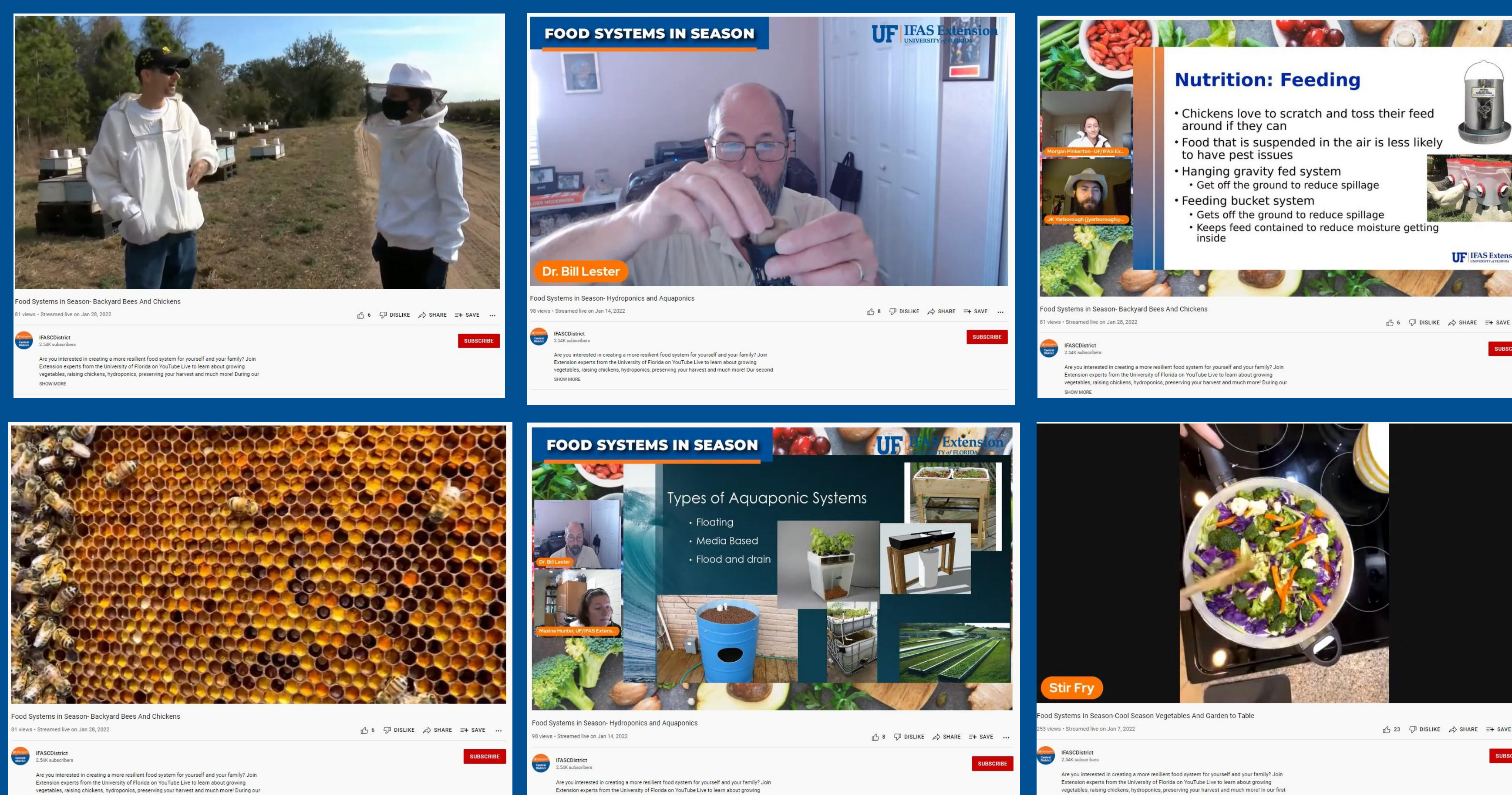
UF/IFAS Extension County Faculty from five counties participated in the food systems outreach project; Experts in Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ and Urban Horticulture, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Sciences, Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems, Sea Grant, and Lawn and Garden.

*Food Systems in Season* sessions included:

- Home Vegetable Gardening
- Selection, Storage, and Preparation of Winter Vegetables
- Hydroponics and Aquaponics
- Bay Scallops in Florida
- Water Quality and Safety
- Livestock: Bees and Backyard Chickens

The series included experiences such as cooking demonstrations, creating a hydroponics system, a trip through a home garden, and seeing inside a hive.

## Learning self-reliant food systems practices “may have positive benefits for food security and conservation implications” (Niles, M.T., 2021).



Take a picture with your smart phone to view each of the *Food Systems in Season* episodes.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/IFASCDistrict>

## Results

- 149 participants
- 599 additional YouTube views
- 79% (n=10) of respondents reported increased knowledge of food systems and self-reliant food system practices.

## Discussion

*Food Systems in Season* used a digital approach to reach communities throughout the Central District, providing education to improve a family's food system.

## Future Plans

- Adapted approach to evaluation
- 5-part, weekly online Spring Series begins March 4, 2022
  - Topics: Herb Tower and Bucket Systems, Spring Vegetables – Selection, Storage, and Preparation, Reducing Food Waste, Youth Food Systems Projects, Mindful Eating, In the Garden, and Preserving Your Harvest.



## References

- Lal, R. Home gardening and urban agriculture for advancing food and nutritional security in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. *Food Sec.* 12, 871–876 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12571-020-01058-3>
- Weber, H. et al. What are the ingredients for food systems change towards sustainability?—Insights from the literature. *Environ. Res. Lett.* 15 113001 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/ab99fd>
- Niles, M.T., Wirkkala, K.B., Belarmino, E.H. et al. Home food procurement impacts food security and diet quality during COVID-19. *BMC Public Health* 21, 945 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-10960-0>