

# From Farm to Landfill: Results of a Campus-Community Awareness Event to Promote Sustainable Food Systems

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## Background

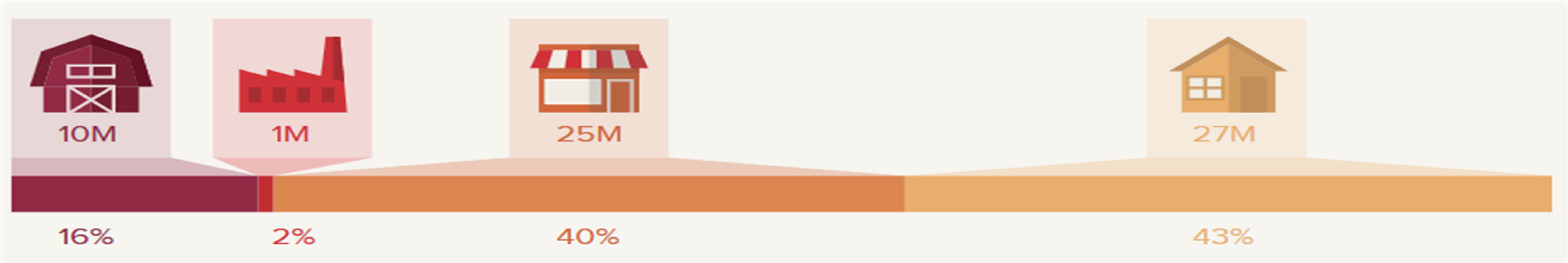
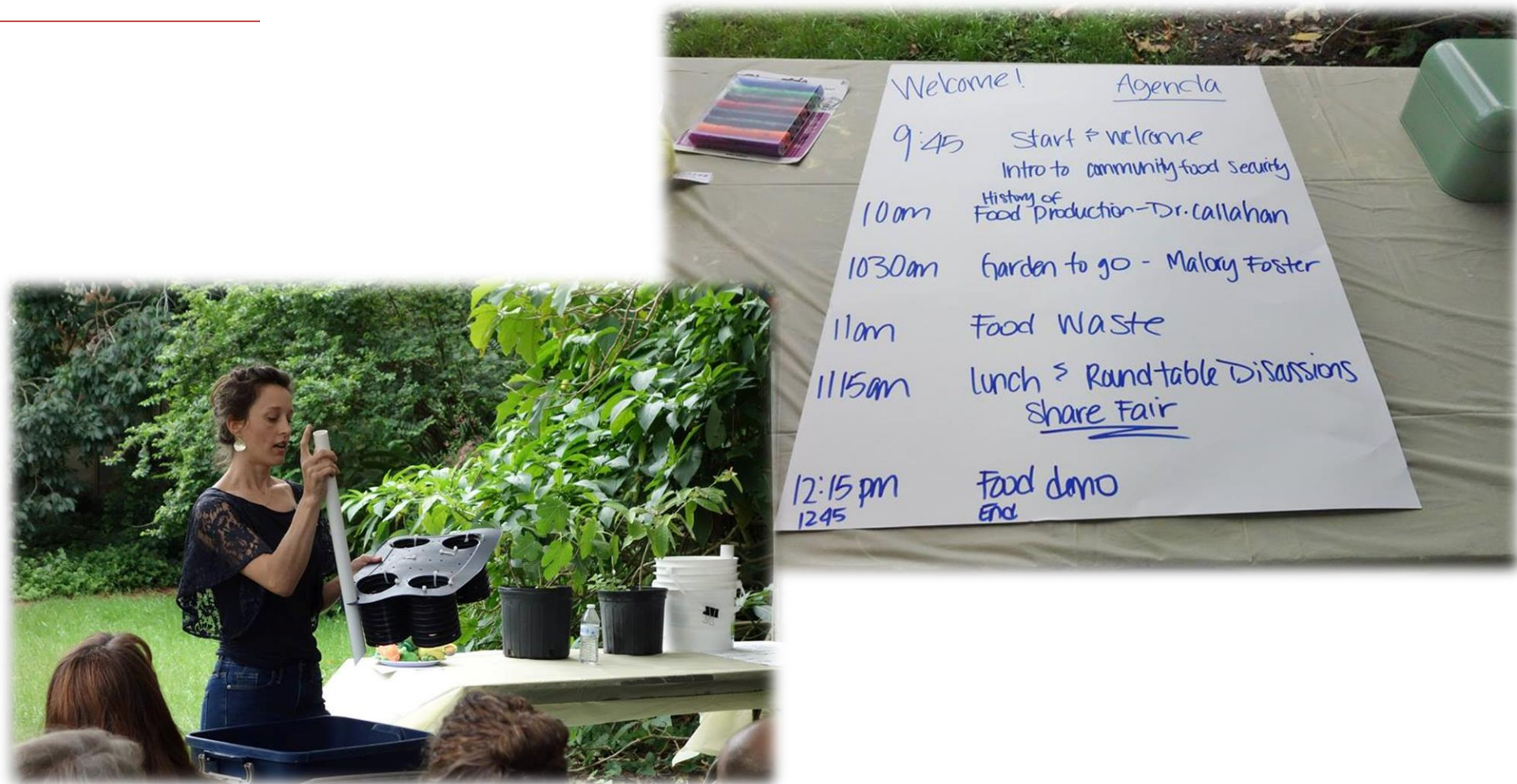


Figure 1. Food waste by percentage from farm to distribution/processing, retail outlets (grocery stores), and consumers' homes. Image source from ReFed (2018).

Research shows that consumer interest in locally grown foods is increasing<sub>1</sub>. However, opportunities to learn more about local food systems are scarce and rarely connected across research, teaching, and practice. Education on sustainable food systems is even more crucial now as our population rises<sub>2</sub>, food waste burden increases<sub>3</sub>, and more methane gas emission is produced in the landfill from food<sub>4</sub>.

## Methods

To increase awareness of local, sustainable food systems resources and student engagement in community efforts, a campus-community educational event was held in spring 2017. Event participants ( $N=42$ ) completed surveys to report on knowledge of food production, distribution, consumption, recovery, and waste management (missing data was excluded, total  $N=23$ ).



## Results

In a retrospective pre-post test, participants reported statistically significant increases in knowledge/awareness about sustainable food issues (mean increase= 0.93;  $p=.04$ ):

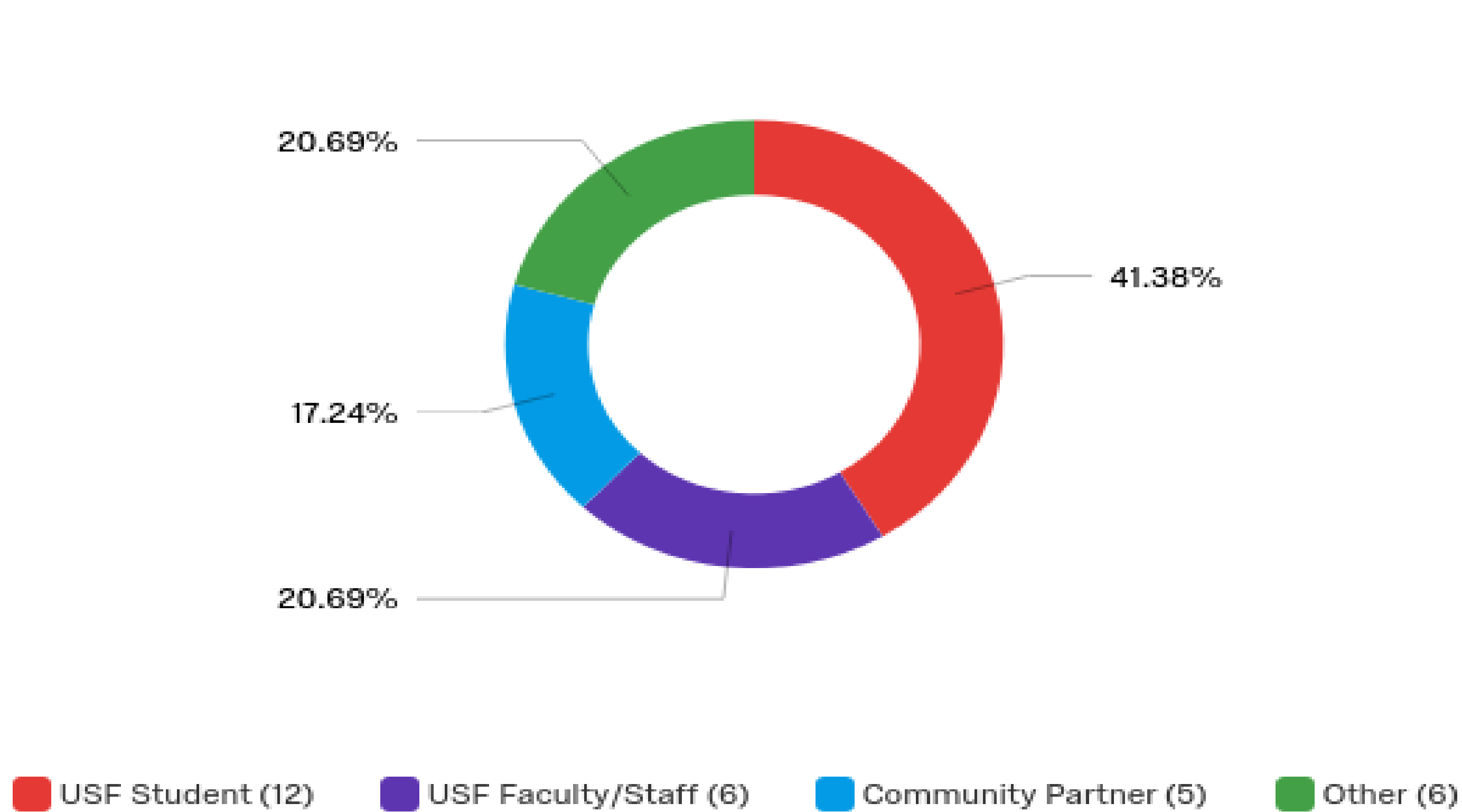


Figure 2. Participant affiliations ( $N=29$ ) that completed surveys.

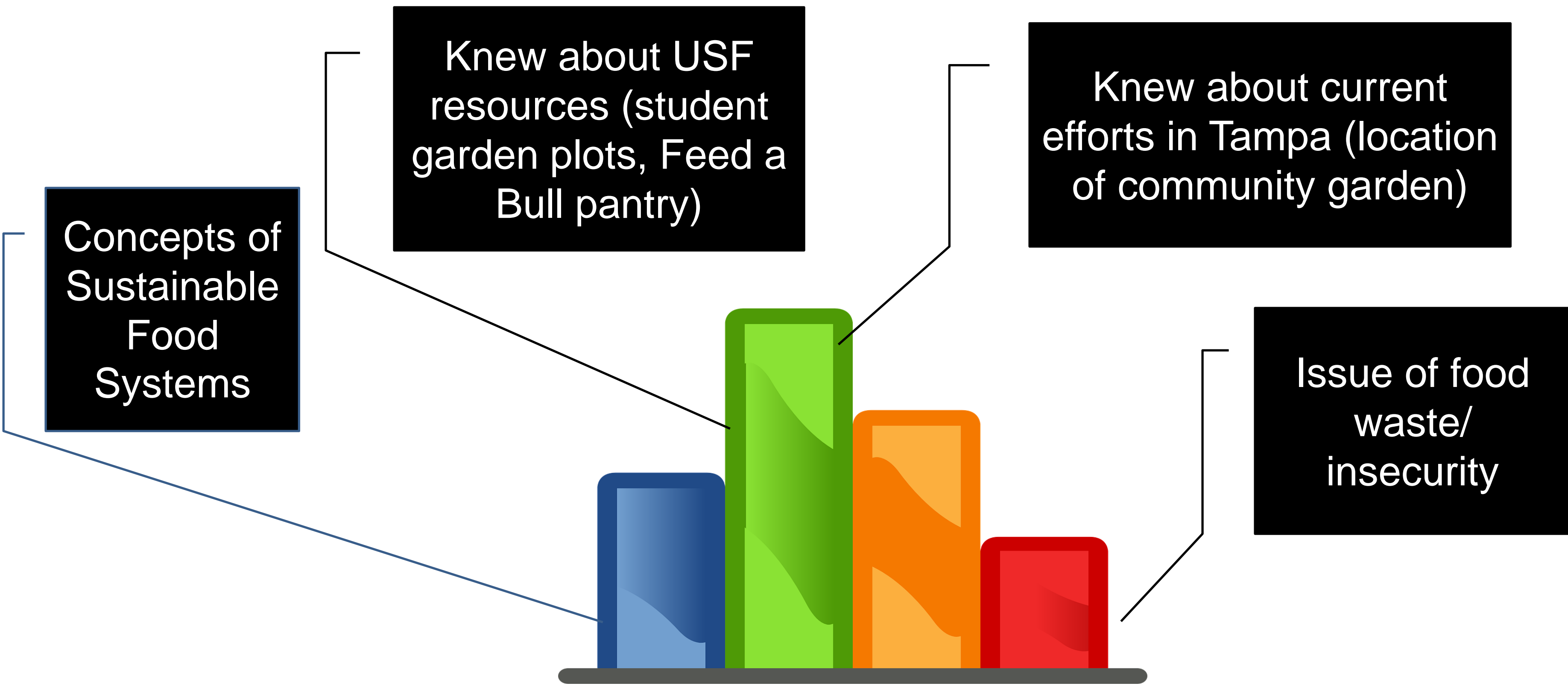


Figure 3. Paired t-test using mean pre-post scores on Likert scale (1-5) for strongly disagree to strongly agree on statements of knowledge/awareness of various concepts ( $N=23$ ). The largest increase was knowledge of efforts at USF (Pre:2.97, Post:4.7).

Participants (% of  $N=23$ ) reported intention to adopt these encouraged practices AFTER participating in the event:



## Discussion & Implications

- Event networking resulted in increased knowledge and intention to promote sustainable food systems in various ways and also promoted collaborations including an interdisciplinary campus sustainability project on food recovery, community engagement internships, and volunteer opportunities for students.
- Community-academic partnerships and initiatives can incorporate an educational component for students to apply course principles into practice-based projects and events to increase awareness and engagement.

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