

Developing a Mobile Poultry Processing Resource for Small Farmers in North Central North Carolina

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Background

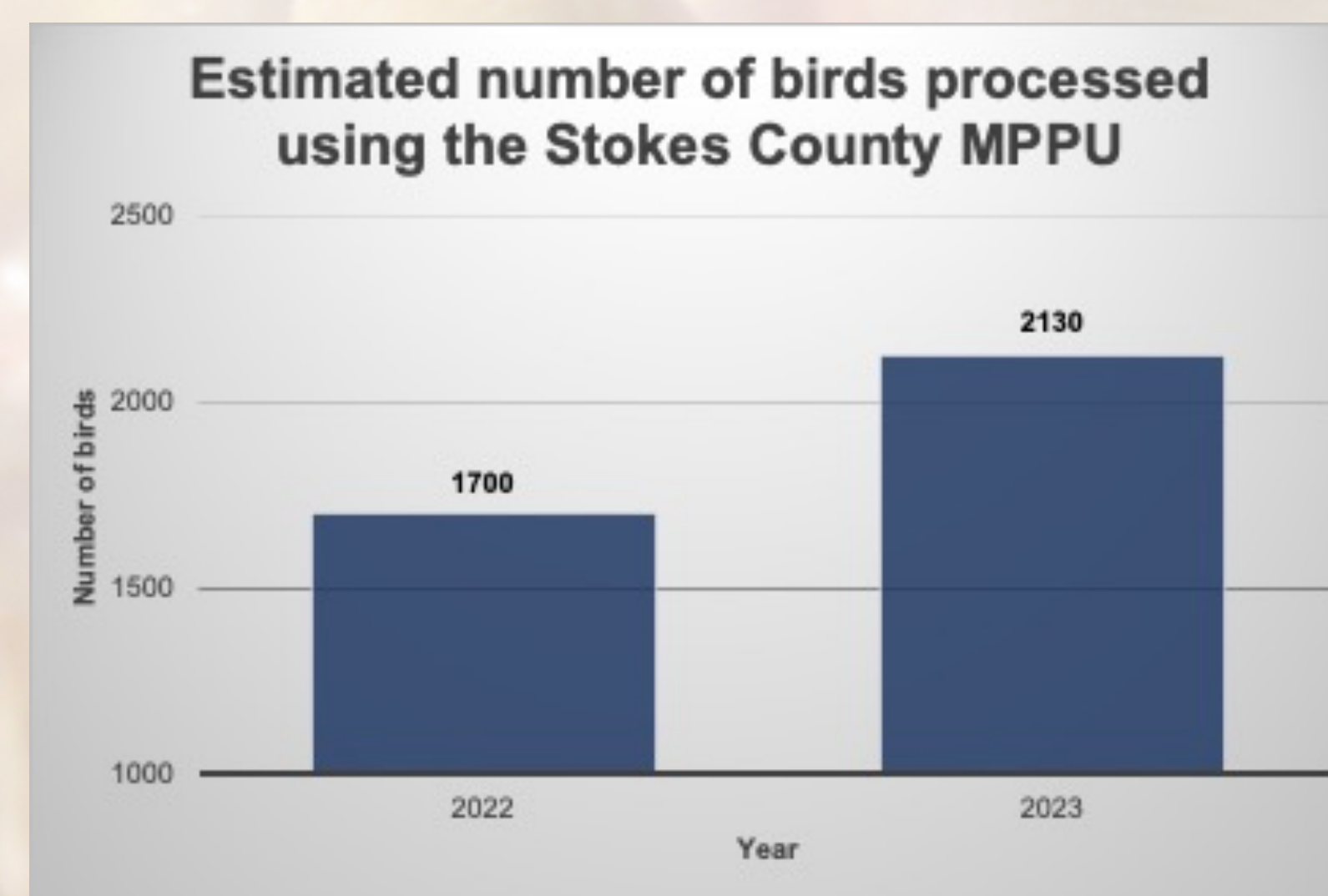
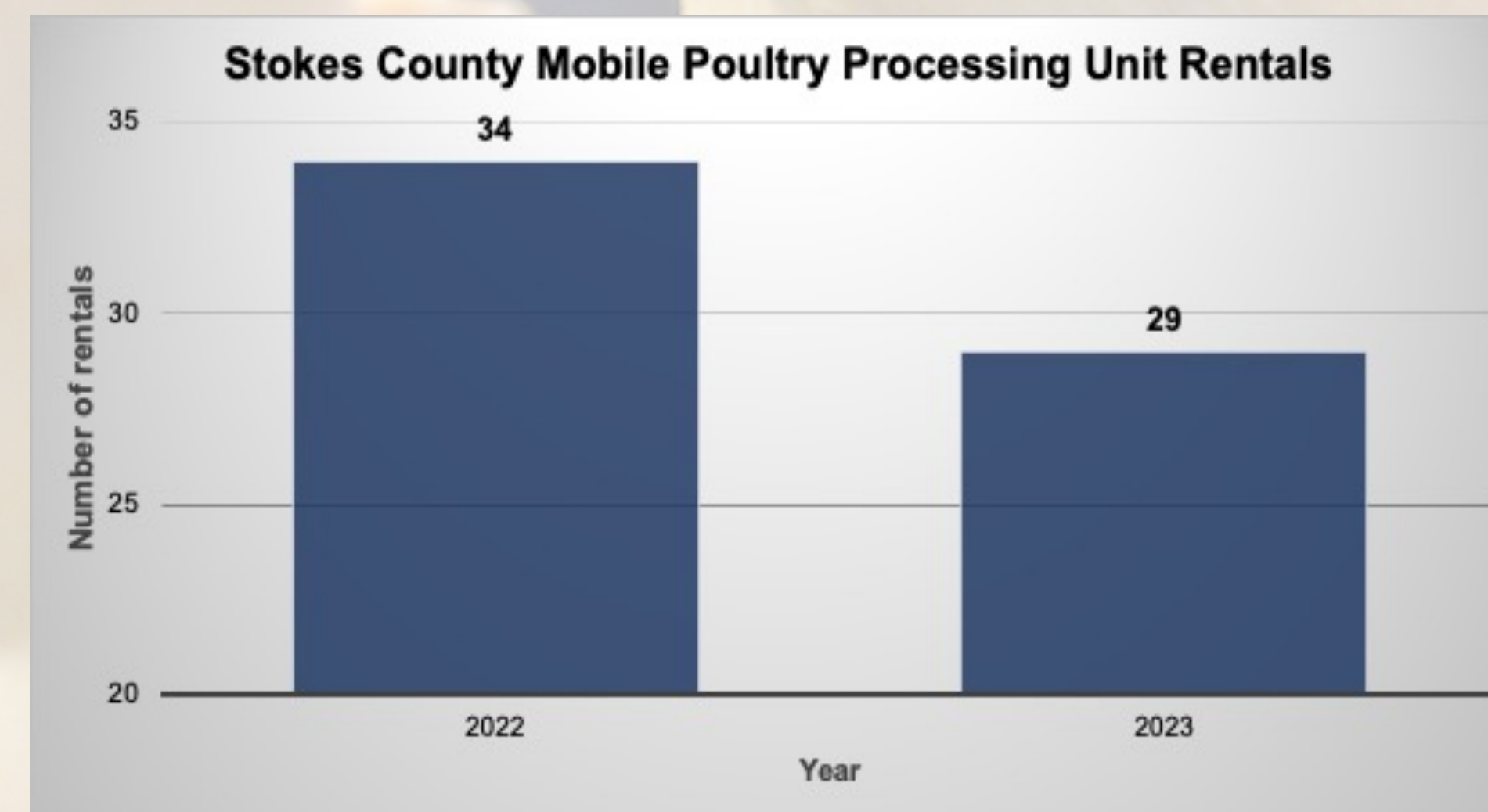
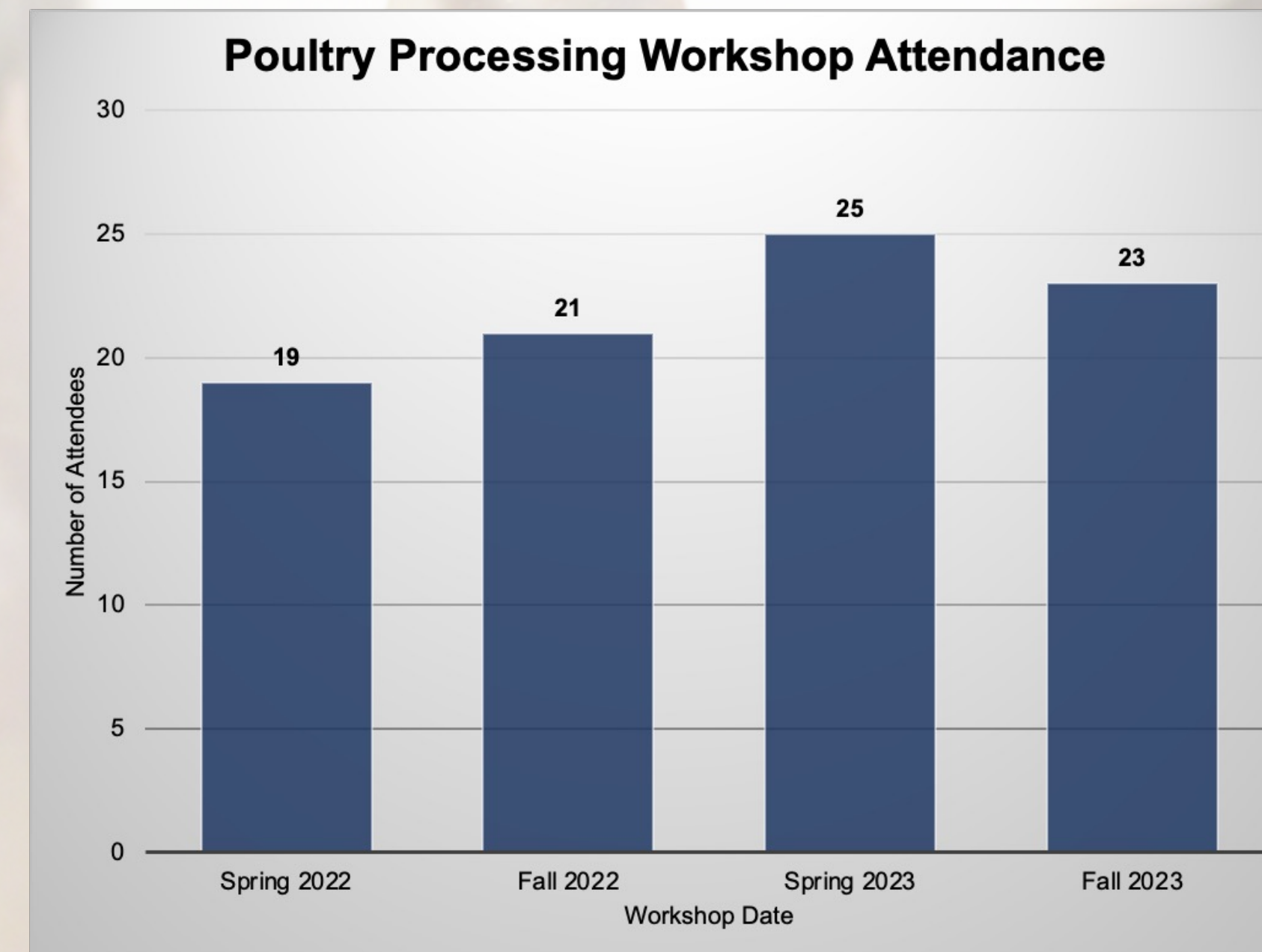
In 2017, the last USDA inspected slaughter facility accepting poultry in North Carolina ceased operation. This left producers no option but to take birds to South Carolina for commercial poultry processing. The North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) Meat and Poultry Inspection Division responded to this closure by creating the opportunity for producers to become poultry exempt operators, allowing them to process birds at home under state inspection for sale in North Carolina. Stokes County received funding to purchase a mobile poultry processing unit to enable producers in the region to utilize of this exemption.

Objectives:

1. Educate producers on: proper small flock poultry management, including nutrition, housing, and biosecurity
2. Promote poultry production as a viable option for small farmers to become involved in animal agriculture
3. Train individuals to process poultry at home using NC Cooperative Extension owned equipment with emphasis on humane slaughter and food safety

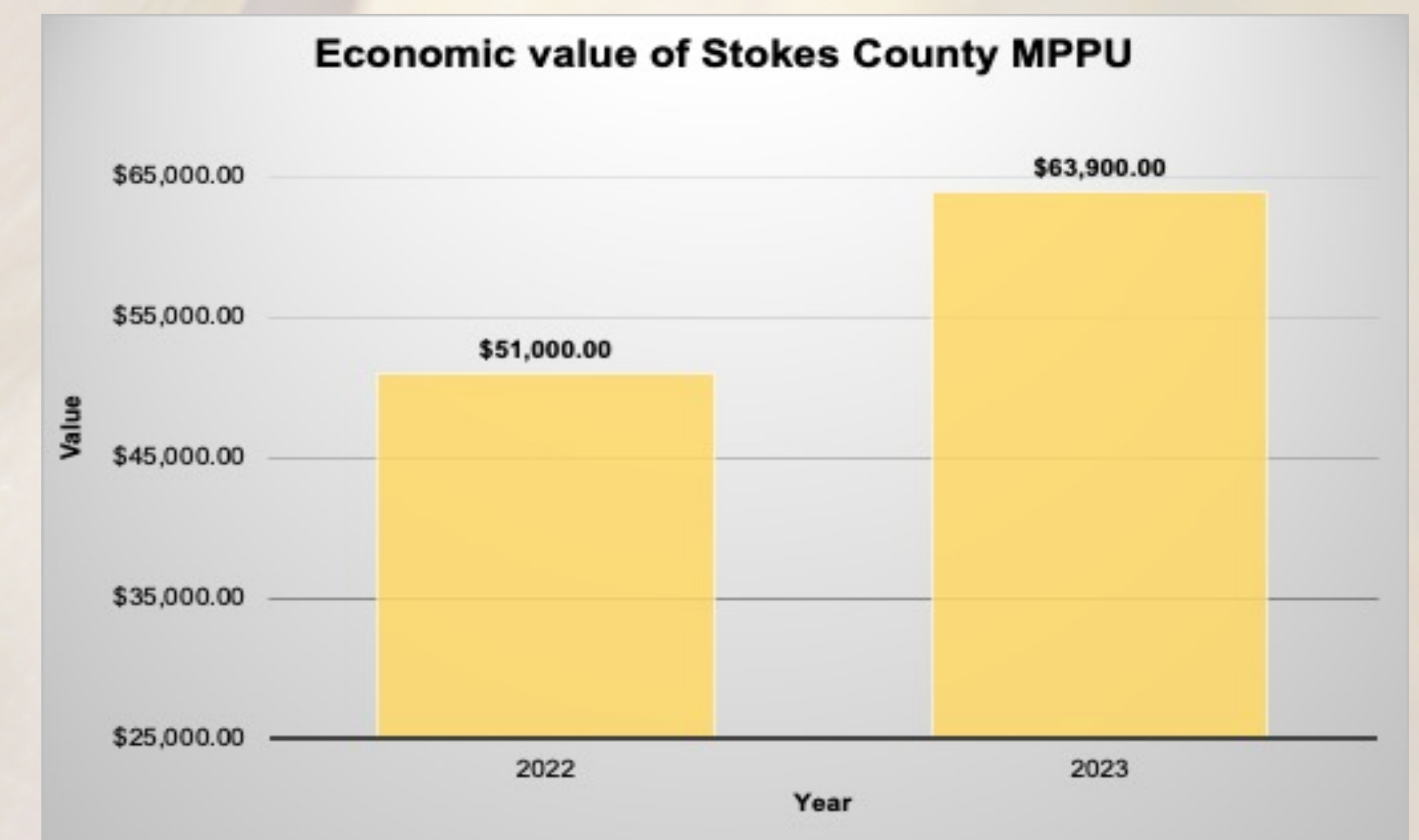
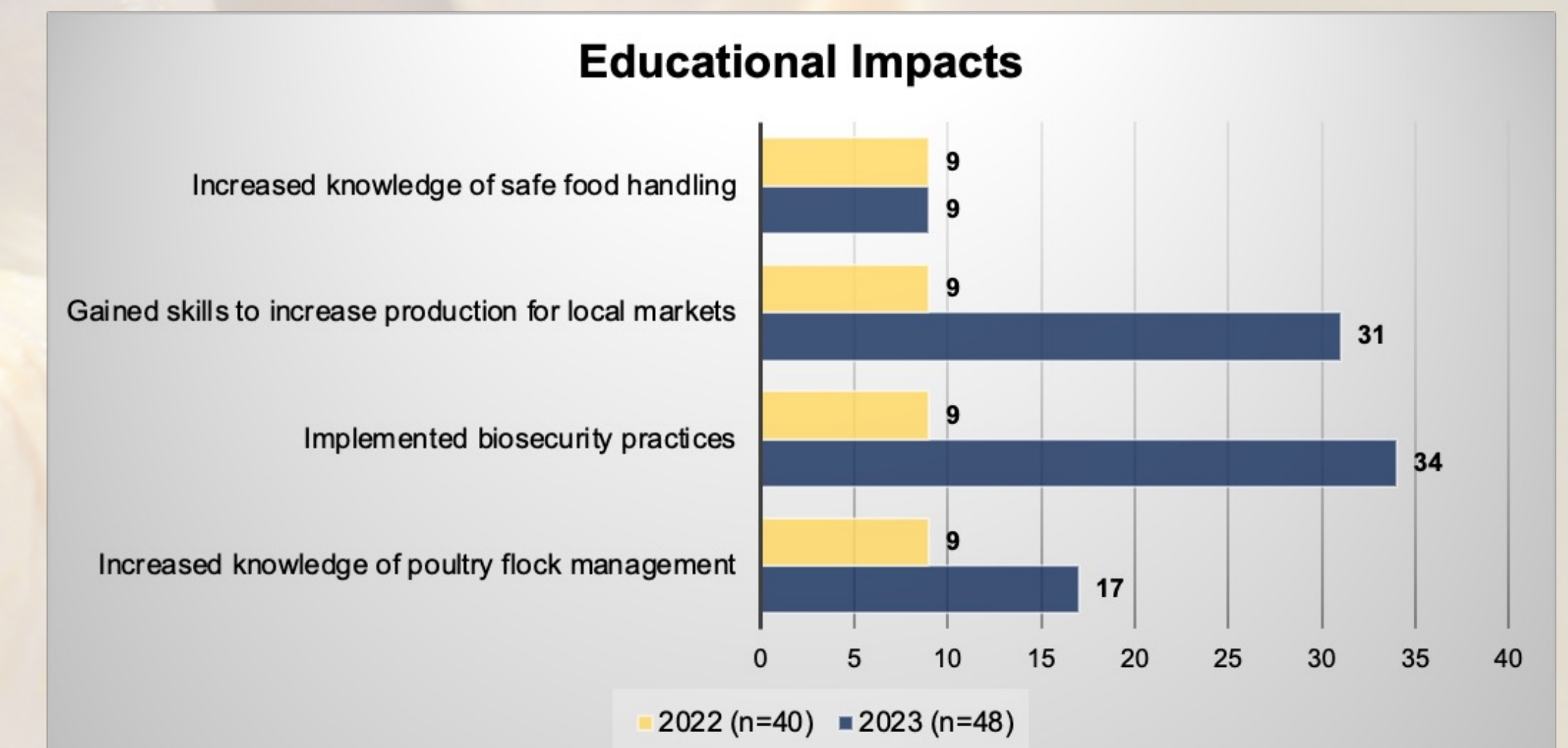
Methods

- Three-year adaptive development of marketing strategy, reservation system, and standard operating procedures for Extension owned mobile poultry processing unit (MPPU) in Stokes County
- Four poultry processing workshops held in Stokes and Guilford Counties
- Workshops averaged six-hours with classroom instruction in the morning and hands-on processing practice in the afternoon
- Workshops registration fees varied from \$15-\$25 per participant depending on supply costs
- Workshop registration limited to 25 attendees to ensure adequate, individual instruction
- Instructors included NC Cooperative Extension agents and NC A&T University Poultry Unit staff



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Impacts



Value calculated assuming each bird produces five pounds of product valued at \$6.00 per pound

Conclusions

- There is a large population in NC interested in home poultry processing
- MPPUs have large economic potential in NC
- Increased marketing efforts using social media, Extension webpages, print, and word of mouth increased workshop attendance
- Collaboration with university staff outside of Extension can increase programmatic impacts