BBQ Bootcamp to Educate North Carolina Youth on Beef Food Safety

A New Food Safety Initiative for North Carolina Youth

Article and photos by Mary Yavelak

This summer, youth ages 8-18 in North Carolina will have the opportunity to attend a new program about beef-specific food safety and safe grilling practices. The new program, titled BBQ Bootcamp, is provided by North Carolina Cooperative Extension through North Carolina State University and takes place from 9:00 am -1:00 pm.

During BBQ Bootcamp, youth will learn about the fundamentals of beef food safety, such as the 8 beef primals and beef cuts that derive from each primal, the incidence of Shiga toxin-producing E.coli in beef products, and the proper cooking temperature for beef products. All food safety information is incorporated into activities, challenges, and hands-on demonstrations that make youth love learning. Youth end the fun-filled camp by grilling their own burger lunch, which puts their newly acquired knowledge and skills to the test.

This camp was first piloted in Wake county in 2017 and Gates county in 2018, but will be launching statewide starting in 2019. State and county extension personnel will offer camps for up to 25 youth starting in June. BBQ Bootcamps will be taught on summer weekdays and weekends and teacher workdays or student holiday breaks in the fall and spring.

Registration for BBQ Bootcamp is free and includes educational materials and lunch.