



FoodBytes

Indiana State Department of Health

Food Security Top Fair Concern

Inspections at the Indiana State Fair had a new twist this year. For the first time, food security was made a priority along with food safety.

Two Food Security Specialists, Travis Goodman and Mark Mattox, recorded observations of security lapses during the 12-day event that could have allowed improper access to food to be served to the public.

“One of the security weaknesses,” said Mattox, “was that many times food was

delivered early in the morning, and was left unattended until someone connected to the food stand arrived to take care of it.”

That problem was remedied by asking that food deliveries be coordinated by each individual food vendor.

Goodman and Mattox also looked at how easily food could be accessed by the public during the fair.

The two specialists were hired for the



The padlock on this ice freezer next to a food vendor at the state fair prevents unauthorized access to any food stored inside.

newly created positions to deal with food security issues within the food industry statewide.

Vol. 5, No. 3

Fall, 2004

Inside this issue:

Good relationships part of plan reviews 2

Hep A threat shows it can happen here 3

More than hood systems need cleaned 3

Better Process School offered 4

Breeding mixtures now OK at room temp 4

Revised code set for early '05 release 5

FIRMS coming soon to locals 5

Indiana State Fair by the numbers

While other state fairs are declining in attendance, the Indiana State Fair continues to grow.

There are no shortage of vendors provid-

ing food, with food purveyors numbering over 200.

One challenge for inspectors was the number of vendors providing food sam-

ples, but not equipped to do so safely.

While not quite reaching a million visitors, the fair did set an attendance record of over 900,000 during the fair's 12 days.

“Building relationships” integral part of plan review

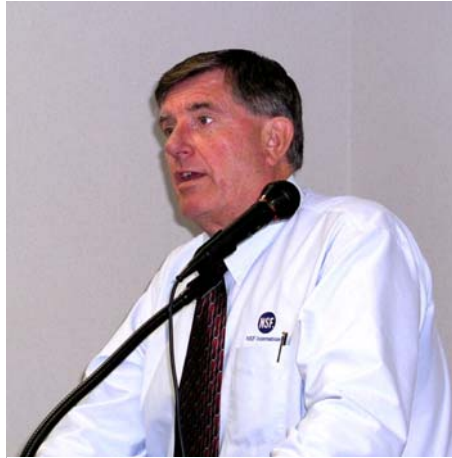
Getting off on the right foot is key to gaining long-term compliance with new food establishments. This was the message brought to attendees at the recent Plan Review Workshop sponsored by NSF International and hosted by the Indiana State Department of Health

Instructor Harry Grenawitzke told local health department food inspectors and others present that correcting problems “on paper” before an establishment opens for business will make their jobs easier by achieving compliance with food safety regulations at the start.

“Once the business opens and the permit has been issued,” Grenawitzke said, “it becomes more difficult to gain compliance.”

Grenawitzke said to ask the right questions on the plan review application. The NSF Application Review form numbers a dozen pages, intended not only to seek complete information, but to serve as a way to inform the new food operator of the law requirements.

Plan review starts with the



Harry Grenawitzke of NSF International explains the importance of a thorough and proper plan review for new retail food establishments.

proposed menu. One must know which foods are intended to be served in order to determine what equipment is required and what storage space will be needed.

Grenawitzke told the group they must get the restaurant operator to make an educated guess as to the number of meals to be served.

He offered that the answers to questions about menu and numbers of meals are necessary to deter-

mine if there will be adequate storage space and the right equipment to support the food to be served.

“Is there enough storage space to hold all the food between deliveries?” he asked rhetorically. “Is there enough of the right equipment to keep all potentially hazardous foods at the proper temperatures?”

Attendees were led through exercises to show them how to determine hot water needs for a food facility, and to determine if the proposed storage space would be adequate for the foods intended to be prepared and served.

Speaking from the NSF perspective, Grenawitzke reminded the group that having the NSF mark did not mean that equipment can be used beyond the scope of its design.

“For example, NSF approval doesn’t mean food holding units can be used to heat or cool foods. That’s contrary to its design approval.”

Certification of equipment means high standards met

What does the NSF symbol signify on a piece of equipment? In the case of food establishments, the mark means the minimum food protection and sanitation requirements have been met for materials, design, construction, fabrication, and performance.

This “mark” is highly prized by industry but is awarded only af-

ter rigorous testing of the equipment in order to be approved.

Although not specifically required under the food code, equipment with the NSF mark is accepted as meeting all the design and construction requirements.

Presently there are more than three dozen written NSF “standards” that spell out the quali-

ties of approved equipment, utensils and other items or systems.

The NSF approval is not valid if any equipment is used in a manner for which it was not designed.



Hepatitis A threat shows it could happen anywhere

The diagnosis of a food worker in Grant County this July with the Hepatitis A virus resulted in one of the state's largest mass vaccination clinics.

Although the employee usually worked at the cash register and handled only cups, the timing of the diagnosis led officials to offer the vaccinations to any customer who wanted it. The worker who began showing symptoms while on the job was hospitalized when the diagnosis was revealed. Since

Hepatitis A can be present for 30 days or more before symptoms appear the shots of Immune Globulin were made available.

The Grant County Health Department, working with the Indiana State Department of Health epidemiology staff, held the clinic at the county fairgrounds. At times, lines of people waiting for the shots stretched around the



building, then doubled back. Because of the anticipated wait, some brought lawn or camp chairs.

The clinic covered two full days and involved 85 nurses and 70 non-medical volunteers. Shots given totaled 5,839, according to ISDH statistics.

So far, only the original one Hepatitis A case has been reported.

Hood systems not the only vents needing cleaned

Inspectors normally check the operation and cleanliness of vent hoods over fryers and ranges. But how many realize that there is a second vent system in many restaurants that often goes unchecked?

This problem was brought to light recently when the cause of a fire at a fast food restaurant in Lafayette was traced, not to the range hood, but to the dryer vent in the utility area.

In this case, an internal fire ignited within the dryer itself, which was part of a "stacked" washer and dryer system. This unit was intended for domestic light duty use and not as a "commercial" washer and dryer.

Steve Cornelius, an inspector from the Lafayette Fire Department, said that such units are being constructed more often than ever with plastic components.

The fire got so hot it melted the inside of a TV monitor near the front of the building.

"When plastic gets hot, it will melt," he said. "Add to this the fact that the towels being washed may contain grease and oil that adds an additional element to the mix that could result in spontaneous combustion."

He added that this would be especially true if all the oil were not removed during the washing process due to overloading of the undersized equipment.

In the case of this fast food restaurant fire, the dryer lacked a cool-down cycle, which allowed the towels to tumble into a pile inside the dryer retaining heat. The last employees left the restaurant at around 11:30 PM. A passing police officer noticed the fire about an

hour and a half later. The police report indicated that the fire had burned through a wire connecting the security system so the alarm did not alert anyone. The laundry unit was by the back door, but the fire got so hot it melted the inside of a TV monitor near the front.

Although not confirmed in this case, similar fires have been traced to the lint igniting inside dryer exhaust vents and connecting pipes that were not cleaned regularly.

Inspectors should notice the laundry area during routine inspections, and ask the operator what the cleaning schedule is for the vent system. The dryer exhaust should be through a metal tube, not plastic tubes as is often used in homes. Inspectors should pay attention to the point where the vent connects to the dryer, as this is the hottest spot.

*Contributed by
Dave Drinan, Tippecanoe Co. Health Dept.*

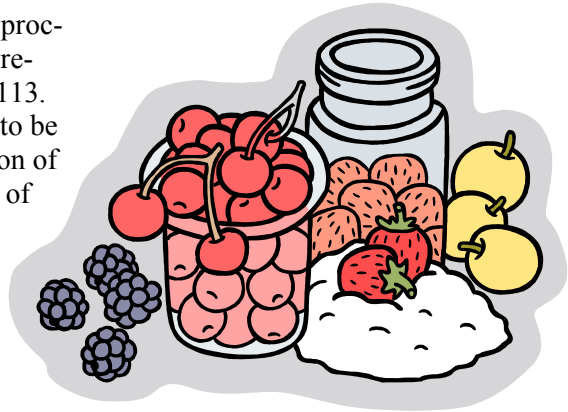
Better Process Control School offered this fall

The Indiana State Department of Health Food Protection Program and Purdue University's Food Science Department have teamed up to offer a "Better Process Control School" on November 3 and 4 at the Hampton Inn in Plainfield. The class is intended for business operators who are producing acidified and/or low-acid foods and marketing those foods to the public.

The Wholesale Rule, 410 IAC 7-21, requires that all operators who process acidified foods attend a Better Process Control School. Section 119 of 410 IAC 7-20 (the Retail Rule) requires that any food in a hermetically sealed container come from a food processing plant that is regulated, or from a retail food establishment that meets all applicable state or federal require-

ments for processing. Retail processors of low-acid foods are required to meet 21 CFR Part 113. This FDA-approved course, to be taught by Prof. Richard Linton of Purdue University, meets all of these legal requirements.

Low acid canned food products could be produced at restaurants or individual businesses and sold at festivals, farmer's markets, craft fairs, or distributed to other businesses. These products can pose a public health risk unless proper control is maintained during processing. The goal of the Food Protection Program is that anyone processing acidified or low-acid food be in compliance with the law.



Because Prof. Linton has secured a USDA grant, there is no cost for this class. This course will be offered to local food inspectors, if space allows. Contact Shirley Vargas at 317/233-7718 for registration information.

Contributed by
Shirley Vargas, ISDH

FDA: Breeding mixtures not potentially hazardous

Because of scientific data submitted by industry, the dry breeding mixtures typically used for raw chicken and fish are no longer considered potentially hazardous, as long as certain conditions are met.

FDA officials also conducted their own tests and determined that *Salmonella enteritidis*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, or *Staphylococcus aureus* showed no significant growth in breeding mixtures after seven days, held at either 71°F., or 80°F.

Local health department in-



spectors had been advised to mark such mixtures, once used and, if held above 41° F., as a critical violation under Sec. 172. This will no longer be a violation, as long as specific conditions are

met, according to FDA.

The mixture must be sifted at a minimum of every four hours to remove any moist dough balls. This action will keep the water ac-

tivity below the level needed for bacterial growth.

The containers of breeding must be covered in a clean and dry area when not in use, and the used mixture must be replaced and the equipment cleaned and sanitized at least once every seven days.

Also required is a plan to show how the operator intends to comply with these requirements.

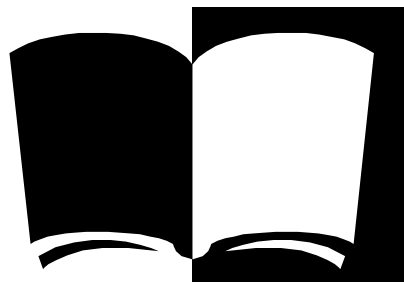
Note that this applies to dry breeding mixtures only and not to batters that may contain milk, eggs, or other ingredients considered to be potentially hazardous.

Revised food code on track to be effective late 2004

Following the September hearing before the Indiana State Department of Health Executive Board, the successor to 410 IAC 7-20 remains on track to become a stare rule. Still to come is the review by the Attorney General's office, and the Governor's signature.

While most of the content remains unchanged, section numbers are different, and the layout is improved. Here are some of the changes that will occur:

The hot holding requirement



Because of the number and types of changes, the updated food code will have a new number.

for potentially hazardous foods is reduced to 135° F. Any place in the code where 140° F. is now used

will be changed to 135° F. For example, the cool down requirement will be changed to reflect this change.

Hot water, when required, will be defined as at least 100° F.

“Demonstration of Knowledge” will now be addressed as well as exclusions and restrictions, and illness reporting by workers.

A revised inspection form is planned that will eliminate item numbers. Sections numbers will still be marked for each violation.

FIRMS: Phase 1 coming soon to local health departments

Food Inspection Regulatory Management System, or **FIRMS**, the new software program, promises to revolutionize food program work in Indiana's local health departments.

By now, most inspectors have heard this term mentioned at a meeting or from the Retail Food Program directly. It has been a slow process, but a major rollout of the program is coming soon. Over the last few months, health departments in LaPorte, Grant, Allen, Dearborn, Vanderburgh, and Wayne counties have been testing the Retail Licensing Program. IU Bloomington is also using it.

The software has been tested in issuing permits and receipts, and maintaining a database of retail food establishments. Very few problems have been discovered so far.

While this program was being tested, the software development contractor has been working on phase 2 of the project, called the Complaints and Samples Program. Complaints and Sample Reports will soon be able to be completed on-line directly into the system. This will have the added benefit of allowing the tracking of complaint data statewide. Computer-generated reports will eliminate the problem of poor hand writing legibility. These features will be rolled out over the winter and throughout next year county by county.

Phase 3 of the project is the Inspection Program. The inspection part of the software program has been tested by ISDH field staff. Small tablet computers and printers are expected to arrive soon, allowing the latest version of the software to then be actually



field tested by Retail Foods field staff. Again, the same benefits mentioned above will be realized, including on-line access to data and report generation. This will be presented to the county health department at no cost later in 2005 as funding is allocated to provide the equipment. The ISDH food staff sees this as a tangible service and real benefit for local health departments. Retail Foods field staff will have more information.

Scott Gilliam, ISDH



How to contact us:
FoodBytes
Indiana State Department of Health
Consumer Protection - 5C
2 N. Meridian St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Telephone: 317-233-7360

e-mail: food@isdh.state.in.us

We're on the web!

[www.in.gov/isdh/
regsvcs/foodprot](http://www.in.gov/isdh/regsvcs/foodprot)

Official newsletter of the Indiana State Department of Health Food Protection Program, intended to provide training support for local health departments.

FoodBytes is published quarterly by the Food Protection program, Indiana State Department of Health.

Gregory Wilson, MD
State Health Commissioner

Liz Carroll, JD
Deputy State Health Commissioner

Editorial Staff

Ed Norris, MS, CFSP
FoodBytes Editor

Scott Gilliam, MBA, CFSP
Food Program Manager

Bits, Bytes, and Blurbs

Send your questions to the e-mail or postal address above.

- ◆ **The Food Protection Program has filled the vacancy created when Lee Bray accepted a position in the Epi Program. Natalie Stoops began working in the ISDH central office in September.**
- ◆ **The Indiana State Department of Health web site is attracting millions of visitors. The ISDH web site is the largest single web site in the "Access Indiana" portal, with 85,000 pages. Margaret Joseph, Director of the Office of Public Affairs says that last year, the ISDH web site received 6.5 million hits and processed more than 600,000 downloads of material.**

- ◆ **The Food Handler Certification Law will take effect January 1 of next year. The majority of food establishments in Indiana will be affected by this rule that requires a "certified" person be employed by all businesses that come under the law.**
- ◆ **The "Consumer Complaint Report" form provided to local health departments by the Food Protection**

Program has been revised. The current form is identified as "State Form 14993 (R3/6-04)." Previous versions should not be used.

Calendar

Better Process Control School

November 3, 4, 2004

Hampton Inn, Plainfield

Orientation for Local Health Departments

November 30, December 1 at ISDH

"FIRMS" rollout coming soon!