



FoodBytes

Indiana State Department of Health

Food Symposium gets high marks

Local health department food specialists may come from counties of all sizes, but nearly all of them evaluated the "Food Protection Symposium" as "excellent" following the event.

Held over three days this past March, the symposium was the second such educational effort by staff of the Food Protection Program at the Indiana State Department of Health. More than 200 persons from local health department and other agencies attended to learn more about food handler certification, and proposed changes to the current food safety rule.

Since the passage of 410 IAC 7-22, Certification of Food Handler Requirements, local inspectors have been asking for guidance as to how this rule will be imple-

mented. This rule requires passage of any of three national examinations that have been approved by the Conference for Food Protection.

One of the featured speakers, Cynthia Woodley, PhD, of Professional Testing, Inc. explained the difficulty in evaluating tests covering food safety.

Dr. Woodley noted that test evaluation is a lengthy process, as every question on a potential test may be scrutinized for accuracy and for proper choice of words while considering the educational level of those taking the test.

Representatives of the three approved



Food Program Manager Scott Gilliam advises symposium attendees of proposed changes to the food code.

Dr. Cynthia Woodley, of Professional Testing, Inc., explains the challenges in designing tests.



testing organizations also addressed the group to show their

(Continued on page 5)

Vol. 5, No. 1

Spring, 2003

Inside this issue:

Inspectors welcome at Purdue Conf. 2

SureBeam shuts down operations 2

Civil Penalties rule introduced 3

Researchers look for Listeria cure 3

Should you offer a food safety class? 4

Is there a data logger in your future? 5

Bits, Bytes, and Blurbs 6

Inspectors, pests welcome at Purdue's Conference

For 68 times, Purdue University has been home to a world-renowned pest control conference designed to educate applicators and regulators alike in methods to keep rodents and insects under control. Regional Wholesale and Retail Food Specialists from ISDH frequently attend this 4-day conference in January along with hundreds of others from around the world.

While the conference is geared toward Pest Control Operators (PCO), there are sessions about pest basics. Several seminars in the January event covered ants, flies and rodents. Speakers talked about pests' desire to seek food, water and shelter, and the means pests will employ to stay alive.

Jeff McGovern, the speaker who covered pest control in retail

food establishments, pointed out many overlooked areas that are prone to harbor pests. These areas include false ceilings, areas between large immovable pieces of equipment (like freezers), and parking lot islands. Islands provide rodent harborage in the shrubs and trapped debris. He emphasized looking underneath, behind, and on top of things that may look clean or innocuous.

Pest control operators (PCOs) are focusing on Integrated Pest Management (IPM), and the importance of the establishment's help in reducing and eliminating pest problems. The PCOs are encouraged to not just point out problems, but to offer solutions that involve an entire team of people. Management, sanitation and the



PCO should all be part of the solution. A pest control company can continually bait, trap and kill rodents and insects, but the problem will never be eliminated if the establishment does not adopt practices to clean up debris, eliminate sources of pest entry, and keep the facilities cleaned.

Purdue's seminar was well planned, and provided a learning opportunity for all of those who attended. This new knowledge can immediately be applied by regulators during food establishment inspections.

Julie Puterbaugh

SureBeam Corp. files bankruptcy, ceases operation

Grocery stores selling irradiated ground beef will have to find another irradiation source after the recent bankruptcy filing of SureBeam Corp. of San Diego.

By filing Chapter 7 bankruptcy, SureBeam turns itself over to bankruptcy court rather than trying to reorganize and survive as a smaller company. The company had been unable to reach a debt restructuring agreement with its senior lender and that lender had indicated its intent to accelerate repayment of SureBeam's debt. SureBeam had also been unable to secure additional funding from other

sources. A trustee is to be named to liquidate SureBeam's holdings.

The California company had been a leading supplier of electron beam food safety systems designed to irradiate foods and kill pathogenic organisms, and to extend shelf lives of treated foods. The irradiation process had been compared to milk pasteurization by some, but also criticized for creating undesirable chemical compounds in the irradi-



ated foods.

The bankruptcy has caused a scurry among processors to fill the void for retailers. CFC Logistics Inc., Milford, PA, is one competitor hoping for market share.

There were three SureBeam irradiation facilities in the US, Sioux City, IA, Glendale Heights, IL, (near Chicago) and Hilo, HI.

SureBeam stopped operations as of January 16th.

Press Release via FreshNews.com

Civil penalties rule introduced to local health depts.

Civil Penalty Rule, 410 IAC 7-23 is now law. Provisions of this new rule were introduced to attendees of the recent Food Protection Symposium by Scott Gilliam, Food Program Manager.

Gilliam emphasized that this rule must be used with care.

"It should be used as a last resort tool to gain compliance with the food rules after all else has failed, not looked upon as a means to enhance the local budget," Gilliam noted. "You must be able

to show any penalty assessment is reasonable or the penalty could be reversed by a hearing officer of judge."

By act of the Indiana Legislature, ISDH was required to develop a schedule of civil penalties for violation of various sections of the Retail Food Establishment Rule and the Wholesale Food Establishment Rule. The existing civil penalties law was repealed. The new rule became effective in January.

Gilliam said that a guidance



Civil penalties must be applied consistently, appropriate to the violation.

document will be out soon to describe the appropriate use of this rule. Local health departments must

adopt the Civil Penalties rule prior to issuing fines.

ISDH field staff can provide guidance on the appropriate implementation of this rule.

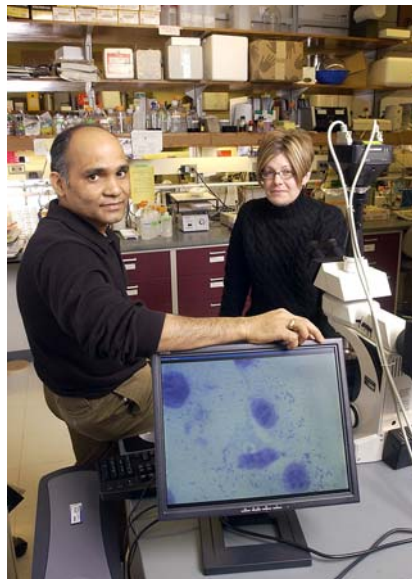
Purdue researchers seeking ways to prevent Listeria

A previously unidentified protein on the surface of intestinal cells is giving Purdue University researchers clues on how to prevent disease.

The scientists believe their results eventually could lead to a way to prevent foodborne Listeria monocytogenes infection, which has a 20 percent fatality rate, as well as other diseases. The study of the bacteria is reported in the February issue of the journal *Infection and Immunity*.

"This research reveals a detailed mechanism that allows interaction of Listeria with a cell-surface protein, or receptor, on intestinal cells," said Arun Bhunia, a Department of Food Science microbiologist. "Knowing the entry-way into the cell will allow us in the future to develop a method to prevent that interaction."

Jennifer Wampler, a postdoc-



A computer monitor in Professor Arun Bhunia's research lab displays a Listeria monocytogenes adhering to human intestinal cells.

toral student and lead author of the study, said, "Listeria often is implicated in patients with weakened immune systems, so we think that this research could also give us

clues as to how other diseases work."

Bacteria have proteins called ligands that bind with a protein molecule, or receptor, on cells in the body, which is like placing a key in a lock. This interaction opens the door that leads to a complicated series of biochemical reactions. These reactions allow the pathogen to enter cells, in this case in the intestine, and then move on into the liver, spleen, brain or placenta, causing illness and possibly death.

Listeria is responsible for about 2,500 recorded foodborne illnesses annually in the United States and is the deadliest foodborne disease, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Listeria thrives under refrigeration, and very few organisms are needed to cause illness.

Purdue News Service

Should you offer a food safety class for handlers?

A food safety class may be the solution for a local health department to ensure that food establishment employees have the knowledge of basic food safety principles covered in Section 95 of Title 410 IAC 7-20.

Persons who have responsibility for food safety must understand the 15 principles addressed in this section. When interviewing fails to give the inspector the answers he or she needs to determine compliance, and employees seem to lack understanding of basic principles of food safety, the inspector may recommend food handlers attend a class to gain the information to comply with Section 95.

This is independent of the Certification of Food Handler Requirements that take effect in January 2005, but is intended to help the person who is responsible for food safety in an establishment. The Certification Rule does not require that food handlers attend any one specific class. However, inspectors can offer a voluntary class put on by the health

department for the benefit of food handlers who want to learn safe food practices.

Classes can be as broad or as specific as one chooses. One could concentrate on a couple of areas that may be a problem in specific food establishments, or do a broader format that identifies several items out of compliance with the code. Cover all of the items mentioned in Section 95 with any curriculum.

There are a number of methods to get students to remember the main points of your class. Use colorful stories, illustrations, and demonstrations of procedures used in foodservice, like how to mix sanitizer solutions or how to calibrate probe thermometers. "War stories" of past inspections and even pictures of what not to do may promote understanding. But be very careful not to identify any facilities used to demonstrate problems. A certificate should be



given at the completion of the class so that food handlers feel they have accomplished something, and that there was value in completing this class.

The inspector can also use this as a means of proof that the individual is knowledgeable about food safety practices. A test at the end of the course may be used, but some students get nervous about testing, and a test may discourage people from participating in classes.

A food safety class offered by the local health department that is given several times a year will help with food establishments knowing the code and should result in better inspection scores. A local class would mean limited travel for those attending, and students will be with others they know.

The local health department plays a valuable role of educator as well as regulator and must promote an attitude of partnership to make local food establishments safe places to eat.

Lisa Harrison

Is there a data logger in your future?

Bob had completed his menu review at the full service restaurant he was inspecting, asked questions about their food processes, and was looking inside the walk-in cooler when he saw it. There was a large stock pot of chili that an employee told him was placed there last night at closing.

The manager told Bob he had

no way to monitor cool down because employees had gone home.

Now there is a reasonable solution to this problem - the data logger. These devices can be as small as a credit card on up, and will monitor the temperature of anything you tell it to.

An inspector could leave such a unit one day, pick it up the next,

and have a true picture of cool down time. Costs are in a similar range to good thermometers.



**How can you monitor temperature when you're gone?
With a data logger!**

Courtesy DeltaTrak

Should utensils be wrapped for customers?

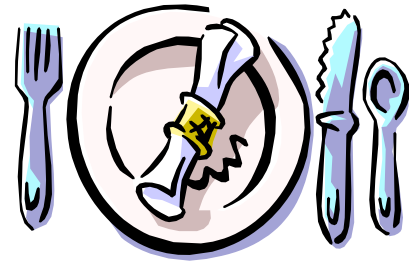
One thing that nearly all restaurant customers have in common is their faith in the system. Customers believe that all food is safe and the utensils they're about to put in their mouths are safe, too.

But many restaurant managers give too little oversight to how the knives, forks, and spoons are handled. Utensils, as discussed in Section 288, shall be handled so that contamination to food and lip contact surfaces is prevented.

Often, the task of wrapping

customers' utensils is performed by wait staff during "down" times. But in this situation, wait staff have become "food employees" so all the requirements of hand washing and preventing contamination would apply.

Inspectors who observe wrapped utensils must inquire about the procedures used. It should be stressed that hands must be washed and there should be no touching of the lip contact surfaces of the utensils. Handling clean



Is it OK to have place settings left out in dining areas? This is a judgment call by the inspector considering potential exposure to contamination.

forks and spoons with contaminated hands is a greater concern than exposed place settings.

Food Symposium gets high marks (continued)



Travis Goodman, Food Security Specialist at ISDH, discussed ongoing efforts to improve food security at Indiana's food suppliers.

(Continued from page 1)

products and services: Expor Assessments, ServSafe via the Indiana Restaurant and Hospitality Association, and National Registry of Food Safety Professionals.

Locally designed tests cannot be used for Certification according to the law because those tests have not been through the evaluation

process. Because of costs involved to gain examination approval, many training programs have decided to offer one of the approved tests with their courses.

Another highlight of the Symposium was a demonstration of the updated food safety database soon



Ron Thomas of Safe Food Handlers, (left) showed his company's training programs to Sue Norris, Howard Co. Health Dept., and JoEllen Trojnar, Lake Co. Health Dept. (right).



Lee Bray discussed bacteria, viruses and parasites that make people sick. He included electron microscopic pictures of common pathogens rarely seen.

to be released to local health departments. When ready, this database will keep track of permits, inspections, and complaints, along with all of the associated information. Margaret Voyles and Michelle Glunt, along with Joe Shierling and Srinivas Yaganti, showed the features of the program and how to best utilize them.



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/
regs/vcs/foodprot](http://www.in.gov/isdh/regs/vcs/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.

- ◆ **Inspectors: Remember that the form used during retail food establishment inspections is a legal document. If you make a written mistake, cross out the error once, initial it, then write the correction.**
- ◆ **Mark Mattox has joined the ISDH Food Program. He fills the Food Security Specialist position for Northern Indiana.**
- ◆ **Question: Whom should you call if you have a foodborne illness outbreak? Answer: Heather Vaughan at ISDH. Question: whom should you call if you even suspect you could have a possible foodborne illness outbreak? An-**

swer: Heather Vaughan at ISDH.

- ◆ **Heather says she'd much rather be called when there is nothing to report than to find out too late there was an outbreak when time is critical. Reach her at 317 233 7360.**
- ◆ **Food establishments can be used for no other purpose. In other words, if someone wants to convert a garage to food storage, the vehicles have to go!**
- ◆ **Pre-mixed sanitizers don't need**

directions for measuring on the label, since there is nothing for the user to measure.

- ◆ **Do you know who your ISDH field representatives are?**
- ζ **During the Symposium reference was incorrectly made to NSF Protocol 119 for food handler gloves. The correct NSF number is P155.**

Calendar

NEHA Annual Educational Conference
May 8-13, Anchorage, AK

IEHA Fall Conference
South Bend, September 27, 28, 29