



FoodBytes

Indiana State Department of Health

“Standards” - a local perspective

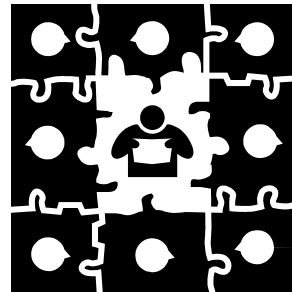
*Sue Norris, REHS, CFSP
Howard Co. Health Dept.*

My experience with FDA’s “Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards” program began in 2002. The Program Standards initiative is designed to promote national uniformity among local jurisdictions and to establish a framework that leads to a complete food program.

The nine program standards range from “Trained Regulatory Staff” and “Inspection Uniformity” to “HACCP-based Inspections,” “Foodborne Illness Investigation,” and “Compliance and Enforcement.” It does require commitment to write the SOPs, compile the source documents, and do the joint inspections with staff, but it is time well spent. Howard County’s food

program is taking shape and I’m sure that it is going in the right direction. My goal is to leave a model program when I retire.

Within 12 months of enrollment, we completed a program self-assessment. Prior to enrolling in the Standards Program, I was never quite sure if our food program was complete and contained all the elements it should. The assessment showed that it



Meeting nine Standards completes the picture.

(Continued on page 5)

Program Standards aim high

FDA is committed to supporting and promoting the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards, says Kris Moore, Regional Retail Food Specialist with FDA. She adds that the standards not only provide a guide to the design and management

of a retail food program, but they also supply the building blocks to form a solid foundation for a good food safety program.

Local health departments are given the tools to measure the effectiveness of their inspections.

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Inside this issue:

- Avian flu: how are locals preparing?** 2
- Scam artist claims ODH connection** 2
- Are waffle batters hazardous?** 3
- You want ice with that drink?** 3
- The art of using the 3 bay sink** 4
- The care and feeding of grease traps** 5
- Bits, bytes, and blurbs** 6

Avian flu: How are Indiana counties preparing?

On January 26, 2006, Vigo County became the first Hoosier health department to set up a Pandemic Influenza Scenario, and more such exercises are taking place throughout the state. The logistics of a pandemic would not only cause many deaths and untold numbers of people ill, but the health infrastructure intended to take care of such an emergency would be greatly diminished.

While the world waits to see if human to human mutation of the H5N1 virus responsible for bird flu occurs, health departments can still be prepared to offer educational information to people who will ask health department employees if it is safe to eat chicken, duck, and turkey.

Of all the people who have contracted the virus, none have contracted it from actually eating the infected birds. Instead they were infected from improper handling of the birds and associated waste.

According to the FDA Web-

site*, “The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has banned the importation of all birds from countries in Southeast Asia that may pose a risk of introducing bird flu virus.” For more information on this ban, see the CDC website: www.cdc.gov

So far, the domestic supply of chicken, turkey, and other edible poultry is not infected. However there is the possibility that will change as migratory birds come into the United States. At this time, CDC, USDA and other governmental bodies including the Indiana State Department of Health say there is no risk in contracting the virus if poultry is cooked to the proper temperature. Cook all poultry products to 165° F. (74° C).

The CDC says that since the bird flu causes severe disease in poultry, there could be a contamination of the egg shells and the inside of the egg. But hens infected with severe bird flu will usually stop laying eggs. The CDC has



stopped the import of birds from infected countries, including their eggs and egg products. In addition, the FDA discourages the consumption of eggs and egg products that have not been adequately cooked.

Other safety protocols for handling poultry would still apply. Proper hand washing after handling raw poultry and eggs, and washing and sanitizing all counters and utensils that have been in contact with raw poultry is essential to prevent cross contamination.

It is reasonable and responsible to be prepared for the bird flu, and

(Continued on page 4)

Scam artist claims Ohio Dept. of Health connection

Ohio Department of Health (ODH) officials say several callers have contacted them saying a man claiming to work for ODH has called them. Callers said that the man identified himself as “Frank Williams” and added that since this was ODH’s 50th anniversary, to celebrate, the agency was offering

free health cards and a \$1,000 shopping spree. He just needed the person’s bank account routing number for verification. ODH Director, J. Nick Baird, MD, said, “This person absolutely does not work for Ohio Department of Health.”

Dr. Baird offered the same

warnings that have been said before. Be sure you know who you’re talking to before giving out any personal financial information.

The Ohio Department of Health was established in 1886, taking it well beyond its 50th anniversary.

(From Toledo –Lucas Health Dept. web site)

Waffle mixes - potentially hazardous foods?

Motels compete for a higher market share of guests by offering more extras such as an expanded breakfast. Since most inspectors do not inspect motels during breakfast hours, many are just becoming aware of motels' growing menus.

It is now common to find food items well beyond the traditional fast food breakfast items like rolls, cereal, and beverages. One food that has found its way onto many motels' breakfast offerings is waffles with individual portions of



Self service waffle makers are becoming a common part of motel breakfasts for guests.

batter in single serve cups for the patron to make his own with the provided waffle maker. Is the batter hazardous (PHF)? It depends upon what's in it.

Batter made with added milk and/or eggs would be a PHF, whereas if only water is added to a flour mixture, probably not. Product labels will disclose ingredients.

Since breakfast hours are almost always limited, using time as a control could be the answer to protecting the batter mixtures.

You want ice with that drink? Maybe not!

A Tampa, FL, middle school student has won her local science fair by showing us something we didn't want to know. Ice from ice machines can be more contaminated than toilet water!

In a story reported on the website, Tampa Bay Online, 12-year-old Jasmine Roberts compared the ice used in drinks with water from toilet bowls in the same restaurants. She says she was startled by the results, which showed that the ice had more bacteria seventy percent of the time.

"I thought there might be a little bacteria in the ice, but I never expected this much," she said. "And I never expected the toilet water to be cleaner."

For her project, Jasmine visited five fast food restaurants near the University of South Florida. She collected samples from ice machines inside the restaurants as

Ice from three of the five restaurants tested positive for fecal coliform or *E. coli*, bacteria.

well as at drive-through windows. Samples were taken in sterile containers and delivered to a nearby laboratory for testing.

Of the bacteria found in the ice, three of the five restaurants tested positive fecal coliform or *E. coli*, organisms found in the intestinal tracts of humans and other warm-blooded animals. No levels of these bacteria are acceptable in water.

Jasmine, who has had an interest in water quality for several years, has her own theories for the contamination.

"The ice machines may not be cleaned properly, or employees are touching the ice with their bare hands."

Although the locations of these restaurants were not revealed, the 12-year-old did discuss the results with individual restaurant managers, many of whom said they were surprised by the results.

What can Indiana's food inspectors learn from this? Pay more attention to ice machines and the handling of the ice. Since ice is not potentially hazardous, it is all too easily overlooked as a potential food safety issue.

Inspectors should ask questions and make these observations during inspections. How often is the ice machine cleaned? What method is used? What containers are used to transport ice, and how are they cleaned and stored between uses.

Ice containers and ice machines are considered food contact surfaces and code sections dealing with maintenance, cleaning, and sanitizing all apply.

The art of using the three-bay sink correctly

Editor's note: A reader reported recently that she provides copies of FoodBytes to her county's food establishments. Although the intent of the publication is to address issues of interest to local health department inspectors, the FoodBytes staff thinks it's a great idea to share information with food establishment operators in a variety of ways. She requested more information about three bay sinks that she could distribute, hence this article.

The chart below illustrates the required steps in washing equipment and utensils in a three-compartment sink, along with the appropriate food code sections. Consult these code sections for a complete explanation.

If inspectors use this information for training with food employees, stress the importance of following all the steps in the order given. There also must be suitable

means to separate clean and soiled dishes and utensils.

The food code does allow for a two compartment sink to be used under very specific circumstances, but this can only be accepted if the conditions of Sec. 270 are met AND prior approval is granted by the local health department.

Note that *if* a dish machine can handle everything to be washed, a three bay sink is not necessary.

Manual washing of utensils and equipment

Pre-wash (Sec. 300)	Wash (Sec. 273, 301)	Rinse (Sec. 302)	Sanitize (Sec. 274, 294, 303)	Air Dry (Sec. 304)
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Refer to 410 IAC 7-24 for details on the referenced sections.

Quaternary ammonium compounds (quats) are applied according to product labeling and state and federal law, as per Sec. 443.

Concentrations, exposure times for sodium hypochlorite solutions.

Minimum Concentration	Minimum Temperature		Times (taken from Sec. 294)
	pH 10 or less °F	pH 8 or less °F	
ppm			
25	120	120	10 seconds
50	100	75	7 seconds
100	55	55	10 seconds

Avian flu: how are counties preparing? (continued)

(Continued from page 2)

Environmental and Public Health Professionals need to be armed with facts.

For more information on the bird flu visit these helpful websites: www.pueblo.gsa.gov, www.cfsan.fda.gov, www.usda.gov, and www.in.gov

[isdh](http://www.isdh)

* Information provided by: Questions and Answers on Avian Influenza ("Bird Flu") and Food Safety, updated March 21, 2006: www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/avfluqa.html

Lisa Harrison, Retail Food Specialist



Volunteer Standards program (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

didn't, but now I have a concrete guide, and I will be confident the program will be comprehensive when the nine standards are completed.

An audit will be performed every 36 months. We will measure our program against national criteria to see if we have reduced the occurrence of CDC-identified *risk factors*, since that is the whole point of what we do.

Currently, Howard, Dearborn,

and LaPorte Counties are enrolled. More food programs are needed to enroll so that training, sharing, and mutual support can occur. There is no pressure to meet the standards. One only needs to work toward improving your program. Kris Moore, FDA Regional Retail Food Specialist, is the contact/mentor.

Any size food program can enroll and benefit from participation. Anyone interested in making the commitment to building a model food program should send

an e-mail to Kris and request a packet of information. Her e-mail address is:

kris.moore@fda.hhs.gov

One thing to remember is that health departments are never penalized for not meeting any particular standard and there is no time limit. While the goal is to work toward meeting all the program standards, the true goal is for continuous improvement of your retail food safety program.

The care and feeding of grease traps

Grease traps may be visible or they may be hidden, but either way, they have an impact on food establishments that use them. But some inspectors are at a loss as how they should deal with them.

The only reference to grease traps in 410 IAC 7-24 is in Section 378, which says if a grease trap is used, it "shall be located to be easily accessible for cleaning." It is not required by food safety rules.

But it is often required by local sewage treatment utilities that process the waste and don't want grease, oils, and fats in their waste handling systems.

A grease trap is intended to remove used grease, fats, and oils and their related solids coming from food service establishments and prevent them from entering either municipal sewers, or commercial on-site systems. They are not wastewater treatment devices.

Grease traps may be required by utilities to prevent grease, oils, and fats from entering the waste stream.

The grease wastes are captured by the grease trap and "stored" until a waste hauler or other service can dispose of them properly.

Since some of the grease and fats could be hot, the grease trap should hold those wastes until they're sufficiently cooled so that the heavier grease particles settle to the bottom while floatable waste rises to the top.

The most common grease trap type likely to be encountered by inspectors is the passive interceptor placed in kitchens. The tank itself contains baffles that facilitate the separation of grease from water. Some grease traps may be installed in ground and are much larger.



Grease traps require regular cleaning to function properly

A grease trap must be checked and maintained regularly to ensure it is working properly. Strong odors, or failing to drain properly are signs that something is wrong.

The dish machine may be the greatest contributor to grease in a food establishment. Food employees can help reduce grease trap issues by dry-scraping food residue into the trash before placing dishes in the dish machine.

Ask operators about the cleaning schedule for the grease trap. Your local utility may also be interested to know of grease trap problems and can intervene.



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Bits, Bytes, and Blurbs

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

- ◆ **Just when you thought you'd heard it all, some Indiana not-for-profit organizations are hosting fund-raising events based upon the TV show Fear Factor. The concern for health departments is that "contestants" are being asked to eat items that may not be safe. At least two counties are known to have hosted such events.**
- ◆ **The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) of USDA has now revised its consumer guidelines for cooking poultry. FSIS now says that cooking to an internal temperature of 165° F. will control pathogens. The previous recommendation**

of 180° F. caused confusion because it differed from FDA and ISDH food codes.

- ◆ **"An inspection is an assessment of an establishment's Active Managerial Control of foodborne illness risk factors. It is not an intervention strategy." (FDA) Think about this statement.**

- ◆ **To get a more accurate picture of how well food establishment operators have control, try varying the inspection schedule. Instead of always visiting the**

same time of day, try a round of evening inspections. If you see different violations, the change was worth it.

Calendar

IEHA Food Protection Committee
August 25, 10:00 AM at ISDH
Speaker: Kris Moore from FDA

IEHA Fall Conference
September 25-27, West Lafayette

NCAFDQ Conference
Oct. 17-19, Indianapolis