



FoodBytes

Indiana State Department of Health

Food Symposium agenda detailed

The 2006 food symposium, sponsored by the Food Protection Program at the Indiana State Department of Health, and titled "Recipe for Success in Food Safety," will be held in a new location. The Emergency Services Education Center (ESEC), a non-profit subsidiary of the Wayne Township Fire Department, can host gatherings of up to 500 persons and should be ideal for this event.

Agenda topics will be wide-ranging, many at the suggestion of local health department inspectors.

Day one will include discussions on the Value-Added Task Force and farmers' markets, plan review procedures, commercial sewage disposal systems and private drinking water issues.

How to get there

The easiest way to find the symposium location is to take I-465 on the West side. Exit West 10th Street and make an immediate left turn onto High School Road. (If you would turn right, the street is Glen Arm Road.) The address is 400 N. High School Road. ESEC entrance



The second day will include talks about food establishment inspection procedures, certification, and pest control.

The final day will focus mostly on food defense and emergency response procedures.

Kris Moore, Regional Retail Food Specialist with FDA, will be on hand to talk about current topics involving her agency.

The three day event runs March 7th through the 9th.



is located between 10th Street & Rockville Road, just south of the pond.

Ample free parking is available next to the facility.

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EHS orientation remains popular ISDH offering



Those attending the orientation included:

Front Row: Rebecca Robinson, Mike New, Natalie Stoops, moderator.

Second Row: Jan Hyden, Paul Cummings, Lynete Corp, Yen Dang, Jennifer Coleman.

Third Row: Jennifer Berkemeier, Nettie Malcomb, Shari Harrington, Rachel Garrison, Kris Thomas.

Fourth Row: Kimberly Younger, Graham McKeen, Greg Polston, Tony Guzman, Raymond Carrillo.

Last Row: Kiplangat Mibey, Peter LeBlanc, Ron Lipinski, John Gensic, Brad Kessans, Christopher Cunningham, Brook Milburn, Kevin Stark. Not Pictured: Heath Butz, Joshua Rose.

Environmental Health Specialist Orientation, sponsored by ISDH attracted more than two dozen attendees, who learned about the various services offered by the agency.

Deer meat going to food banks now legal

In a carefully worded legal interpretation, it is now OK to “harvest” deer and donate the meat to food banks and similar entities.

The interpretation of IC 14-22-38-4 supercedes the prohibition in IC 16-42-2 of selling adulterated meat to the public because the later laws can pre-empt earlier ones,

when no other clarification is available.

The killed deer is to be processed by Pen Products, but the meat is not inspected for safety by the Board of Animal Health. The recipients will be responsible to assure that the meat is safe.



Biofilms can get in the way of effective cleaning

Biofilms are composed of communities of microorganisms that will adhere to an environmental surface. They are usually encased in an extracellular polysaccharide that they themselves synthesize and can be found on any surface where moisture is present, and other factors like pH and temperature are favorable.

This ability for microorganisms to form biofilm on virtually any surface provides a challenge for establishments to keep food



contact surfaces properly cleaned.

It takes time for biofilm to form so frequent and effective cleaning is a must. Layers of microorganisms and biofilms have an insulating effect from sanitizers and can also become resistant to sanitizers over time. Surfaces not correctly cleaned will likely not be able to be effectively sanitized.

Research shows that, in some cases, eight hours may be suffi-

cient time for biofilms to grow on a food contact surface.

Surfaces of cutting boards are especially prone to problems because of their propensity to score after sharp knives are used to cut foods. Cleaning with a stiff brush is needed to remove the soil *before* sanitizing can be fully effective.

It may take some force to remove an established biofilm, but if the biofilm is not removed, the sanitizer cannot kill all the microorganisms.

(Information from *NEHA Region 6 Newsletter*)

2005 Model Food Code addresses PHFs, allergens

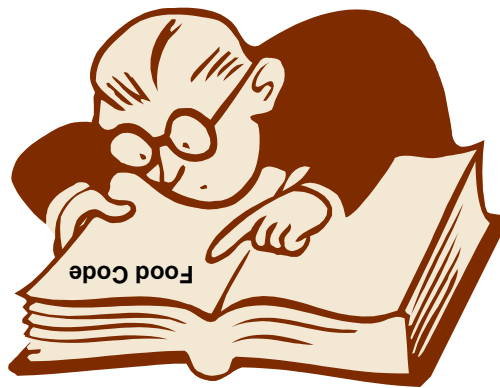
As it does every several years, the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has released its latest version of the Model Food Code.

Although most of the 2005 language remains the same, there are notable changes in the way potentially hazardous food is defined, and more specific wording about allergens.

There are changes and additions to the Definitions section. Among the important ones is "Major Food Allergen," defined as including "milk, egg, fish, shellfish, tree nuts, wheat, peanuts, and soybeans, or a food ingredient that contains protein derived from such food."

FDA's Demonstration of Knowledge section has been expanded to include the requirement for the person in charge (PIC) to be

One major change is the definition of Potentially Hazardous Food that refers to acidity and water activity.



able to identify food allergens and the symptoms they might cause in an individual.

However, one of the major changes is to the definition of "Potentially Hazardous Food." This definition is now based upon

the scientific data that takes into account the water activity (aW) and acidity (pH) of various foods. The definition includes any food that requires time/temperature control for safety.

FDA's definition now includes a chart that compares water activity and acidity of foods to determine if the food might be a potentially hazardous food (PHF). The definition still includes those food items that are currently considered to be PHFs.

Sections involving "exclusions and restrictions" have also expanded. Dozens of other changes were included to clarify previous code language.

Nothing in the FDA code is binding upon Indiana, but it does provide an indication of the areas where the Indiana food code may change in the future.

If you can't stand the heat... it might be the vent!

One of the more overlooked components of a retail food establishment prep area can be the exhaust system. This can be evidenced by the excessive grease and dust buildup on the outside of the vent hood, showing that exhaust system maintenance is not a priority in the establishment.

The purpose of the exhaust vent hood is to capture as much as possible the excess heat, vapors, smoke, and grease resulting from cooking, and vent them to the outside via the correct filter.

Flash fires from cooking can spread quickly to grease deposits in exhaust systems. Improperly designed or maintained systems are especially prone to trouble.

Without the right filter, grease will accumulate in vents, and on fan motors and blades, most of which is out of view of the operator and inspector. Grease buildup will attract dust and the accumulation can add to the wear on the entire system, thus reducing performance.

Inspectors should look at vent systems and check cleanliness and proper operation during routine inspections. A visual inspection will quickly show if there is an excess of grease and dust accumulated on the outside of the hood. There should be no grease drips along the front edge.

Food contact surfaces of equipment and prep tables near the vent hood should not have an accumulation of grease.

The food code says

If the hood, filters, and adjacent equipment are soiled with grease, these can be marked as violations. Sec. 307 or 309 may be marked if the vent hood is not adequate or not functioning properly. If there is an excess of grease and dust buildup, inspectors may cite Sec. 295.

Ventilation hood cleaning contractors will nearly always place a sticker on the hood with their contact information and when



the system was last cleaned. Inspectors should look for this sticker.

Ventilation hoods installed by qualified contractors will meet all code design requirements. Those hoods fashioned by other contractors may not. An improperly designed hood may be more difficult to clean and maintain.

Smoke test

Some folks believe that if the vent hood makes enough noise, it must be working! But noise is no indication of proper air flow. Here is an easy way to check for proper air flow through the vent hood.

Light a match or candle, then snuff it out while holding it near the front edge of the hood. The smoke should trail up under the hood toward the filters. If not, then the air flow is insufficient and it should be checked out by a qualified ventilation contractor.

Professional exams now available in state, on-line

The Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) and Certified Food Safety Professional (CFSP) professional examinations are now available in Indiana.

LaserGrade will offer proctored exams around Indiana allowing candidates for these certifications more opportunities to qualify.

Interested candidates should go

to www.lasergrade.com and click on the right drop-down menu and select "National Environmental Health Association" (NEHA) to find a testing site. Then visit the NEHA web site www.neha.org to apply for the test desired and to get more information.



LaserGrade, based in Vancouver, WA, offers proctored, computer-based exam administration for occupational and professional licensure and certification, and operates over 1,000 testing centers in the United States. Unofficial exam results are available immediately after the tests are completed.

(Patty Nocek, St. Joseph Co Health Dept., contributed to this article.)

FDA urges CA produce growers to improve safety

Because of numerous food-borne illness outbreaks connected to produce, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has outlined steps it expects to be taken by California firms that grow, pack, process, or ship leafy greens.

Citing 19 illness outbreaks of *E. coli* O157:H7 over the past ten years, FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) believes a prominent number of cases can be traced back to California. These outbreaks resulted in 409 cases of reported

illnesses and two deaths.

CFSAN is asking producers to be more proactive in preventing contamination, quoting reports that said one of the growing areas was prone to flooding and irrigation run-off from nearby agricultural sources.

FDA considers ready to eat crops that are exposed to run-off to be adulterated due to potential exposure to sewage, animal waste, heavy metals, pathogenic organ-



isms, and other contaminants. There are no known methods to recondition these crops to make them safe, so such crops should be excluded from the human food supply.

CFSAN is asking the fresh produce industry to come up with an "action plan" to prevent contamination of its products, saying more needs to be done than in the past.

Lead discovered in food equipment leads to warning

It pays to look closely at equipment during retail food establishment inspections, especially pre-openings. Alert inspectors in Elkhart County spotted a suspect piece of food equipment during a pre-opening inspection and realized there could be a problem.

The equipment, intended to be used as a "mold" for making "Popsicle" type products, lacked the shine and appearance expected from stainless steel. The construction did not appear smooth, prompting the inspectors to test the materials.

Samples of similar molds were obtained from St. Joseph and Noble Counties, that when tested, were discovered to

contain high levels of lead. Lead is considered toxic and is prohibited if levels exceed safe minimum concentrations.

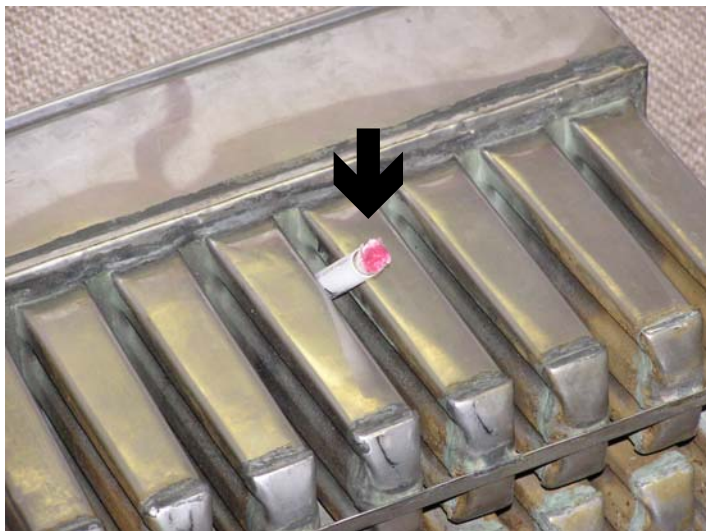
Besides unacceptable levels of lead on the equipment surface,

food that had been in contact with it also tested positive for lead.

The health department investigation revealed that the equipment had been imported from Mexico and did not meet the requirements

spelled out in 410 IAC 7-24 dealing with construction, materials, or cleanability. No materials may be used for food contact surfaces that may "allow the migration of deleterious substances" as noted in Sec. 205.

Other local health department inspectors should be on the lookout for sub-standard equipment that may show up in food establishments.



The test swab (shown at the arrow) indicated the surface of the dessert molds was positive for lead. The equipment, discovered in Elkhart County, was imported from Mexico.

(Photo courtesy of Elkhart Co. HD)



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We're on the web!

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Bits, Bytes, and Blurbs

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

- ◆ **CORRECTION:** A sharp-eyed reader caught an error last issue. It was incorrectly stated that Maryland had no state parks. Maryland does indeed have many state parks and state recreation areas.
- ◆ **Wholesale Foods Division Supervisor Shirley Vargas** was honored recently at the North Central Association of Food and Drug Officials. Shirley received the Meritorious Service Award in recognition of her years of dedicated service in the field of food protection.
- ◆ A high honor was also bestowed upon Margaret Voyles, Retail Compliance Specialist with the Food Protection Pro-

gram. She received the Tim Sullivan Memorial Award for her outstanding work in promoting food protection.

- ◆ **FDA says fish and shellfish coming from the gulf coast is safe. To gauge the impact of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, hundreds of samples were analyzed for chemical and microbiological contaminants. FDA still urges fishermen to use caution**

and not harvest seafood from obviously contaminated waters.

- ◆ **Without looking, can you name the seven steps of HACCP?**

Calendar

ISDH Food Symposium
March 7, 8, 9, 2006

Wayne Township Fire Dept. Training Center

Better Process Control School
April 26, 27, 2006

Indianapolis