

FoodBytes



Indiana State Department of Health

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First food workshop gets thumbs up

Workshop offers topics requested most by local health departments

From plan review to plumbing, from cultural differences to the consumer advisory, the first food protection workshop hosted by the Food Protection Program of ISDH covered a broad range of topics and received high praise from those attending. Inspectors came away with a greater understanding of the part they play in the uniform enforcement of the food code, thanks to topics programmed for them.

“Attendance exceeded our most optimistic projections,” said Program Manager Scott Gilliam, “which led us to our biggest problem - standing room only.”

Over two dozen presenters provided tips and techniques on numerous topics ranging from citing proper violations during inspections, to the application and permitting process for new food establishments.

Britt Pratt, Southeast



State Health Commissioner, Dr. Gregory Wilson, welcomes nearly 200 attendees to “Food Safety: The Main Ingredient.”

Region Food Specialist with FDA, was a highlighted speaker on Day Two of the workshop, with a discussion on plumbing and backflow prevention, and dish machines. As a special added topic, Pratt also talked about how FDA inspectors handled inspections at the Olympic Games in Utah, where nearly 150,000 meals were served from temporary facilities.

Other featured speakers included Gloria Webster-French, Director of Cultural Diversity and Enrichment at ISDH. Webster-French discussed verbal and nonverbal methods to achieve positive communication with establishment operators from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Carrie Van Dyke of WENS radio presented the “ten commandments” in dealing with the media, and Kim Rhoades, JD, Risk Assessment Manager, ISDH, discussed elements of a local ordinance.

Three task forces have been established in an effort to meet the changes required by the passage of Senate Bill 404.

The three task forces are “Civil Penalties,” “Food Handler Certification,” and “Amendments To The Rule.”

Language in the new law charges the Indiana State Department of Health with “adopting rules” to implement the provisions of the law.

The three task forces comprise members from local health departments, industry, and ISDH. The three groups are meeting on a regular basis throughout the year.

Notifications now come via e-mail only

Because of the state’s budget concerns, mass communications to local health departments such as food recalls, are no longer being faxed or mailed. Last fall, all local health department food programs were notified that unless otherwise instructed, ISDH would only send food recalls electronically in the future.

“It is crucial that all local health departments receive and respond to food recalls, and our agency relies on local efforts to disseminate this information.”

Each health department was given the option of using GroupWise to receive e-mail or notifying ISDH of a preferred e-mail address to which recalls and other announcements could be sent. Several departments responded to this notification; all others just remained on the GroupWise system for receiving recalls.

ing recalls.

“It is crucial that all local health departments receive and respond to food recalls,” said Scott Gilliam, Food Program Manager. “The federal food regulatory agencies depend on local assistance in assuring the public’s safety, and our agency relies on local efforts to disseminate this information.”

Gilliam said that faxing was very time intensive requiring a separate telephone call to each recipient, whereas the information can be sent by GroupWise to all those on a predetermined list with just a few mouse clicks. Recalls ceased being mailed and faxed as of March 1st.

Gilliam stressed that local health departments may receive these e-mails at more than one address. Notify the Food Protection Program if you wish to have an e-mail address added, changed, or removed.

Did you know...?

Tomato juice was first served at a French Lick hotel in 1925.

Mark your calendar

Beginning in May
New “Standardization”
program introduced

June 5, 6, 7
FDA workshop
“Temporary Events”

More information will be
mailed to local health depart-

Web source of useful food safety info

The Internet can be a valuable resource to find information on food safety. Here are just a few sites that might be of interest.

www.cdc.gov

official site for the Centers for Disease Control

www.foodsafety.gov

links to food safety groups, news, alerts

www.cfsan.fda.gov/mow/intro.html

handbook about pathogenic microorganisms

www.fsis.usda.gov/oppde/larc

info on labeling

www.umass.edu/umext/nutrition/foodsafety/index.html

access to foreign language food safety training materials

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Should you re-evaluate inspection process?

The FDA model code has outlined what it calls five key public health interventions to protect public health. Specifically, these are:

Demonstration of knowledge, employee health controls, controlling hands as a vehicle of contamination, time and temperature relationships to control pathogens, and the consumer advisory.

During the recent food safety workshop, Scott Gilliam, Food Program Manager, stressed the importance of inspectors understanding and applying these concepts.

“If you are not conducting inspections based on these concepts, then you are not inspecting based upon today’s standards,” he said.

Highlights from the 2002 food workshop

Paul Leu with Advanced Fresh Concepts demonstrates the art of making sushi to the workshop audience. Those who wanted to, could sample the finished product.



Liz Shultz (center left) and Chris Menze (center right) from the Johnson Co. Health Dept. try to make a sushi roll as Chef Paul Leu (right) shows them how.

Mary Weseman and Bob Skidmore, Dearborn Co. Health Dept., perform the skit, “Do’s and Don’ts Of A Food Inspection,” to the delight of the crowd.



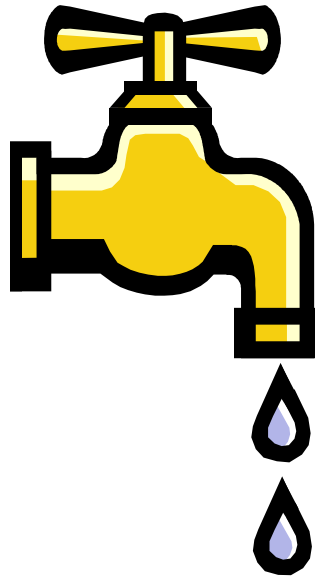
Bottled water checked by Wholesale Division

The Wholesale Section of the Food Protection Program is responsible for inspecting water bottlers to insure compliance with safety guidelines.

In Indiana, both municipal and private source water bottlers are inspected. The bottled water firms are required to conduct tests on their water sources and bottled products and to maintain records of the results.

These are the tests required:

- ◆ **Chemical and physical contaminants yearly,**
- ◆ **Radiological contaminants every four years,**
- ◆ **Microbiological and bacteriological tests on the finished product water every week that the firm is in production, and**
- ◆ **Bacteriological swab or rinse count every three months on four containers and four closures and selected prior to filling and seal-**



ing of each product .

During the inspection, test records are reviewed using the *Code of Federal Regulation for Bottled Water* as a guideline for contaminate levels and testing methods. A sanitation inspection is conducted on the

processing area and warehouse. The labels on the finished product water are reviewed to confirm the required information is provided, along with a check of the equipment maintenance records.

At the conclusion of the inspection, samples of the firm's finished product water are collected to be analyzed for chemical and physical contaminants at the ISDH laboratories.

Since the evaluation program began, inspectors have found no serious problems at the water bottlers. Hank Wolfe is responsible for inspections in the southern part of the state and Rhonda Madden covers northern Indiana.

Rhonda Madden



The "GRAS" gets greener with hand sanitizers

Section 109 of the food code specifies the criteria that hand sanitizers must meet before being considered safe for contact with food. This section requires the product to be either rinsed off, or a glove used.

Until now, no hand sanitizing product on the market met these conditions. That is, none were "generally recognized as safe" (GRAS). But that has

now changed.

The FDA has now determined that certain products do meet the qualification as GRAS and may be used in a food service.

The approved products all come from Kay Chemical Company (ECOLAB) and use these brand names:

ACTIGEL, McD, Eco-Care 550S, Sanigizer, Puritan, Digisan, and AL-PHASAN.

This in no way affects the requirement for proper handwashing or the necessity to use proper utensils. The requirements of Food Code Sections 107 and 136 must still be met.

This change only allows these specific products to be used when contacting food without hands first being rinsed. It would be a very rare situation to find utensil use to be impractical.

Indiana ranks high in tomatoes, products

Indiana ranks second among all states in the tons of tomatoes processed each year with distribution throughout the U.S. and eleven countries.

Indiana annery owners, who produce about 25 different products, have been awarded "The Best Tasting Tomatoes in America" by the 25,000 member American Tasting Institute in San Francisco.

The smallest cannery in the United States is located in Milroy, while others are located in Bluffton, Elwood, Geneva, Hobbs, and Orestes. The most common products are whole peeled tomatoes, diced tomatoes, crushed tomatoes, tomato juice, catsup,

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puree, tomato paste, chili sauce, spaghetti sauce, Mexican salsa and bar-beque sauce.

The fresh pack begins in August and ends in October. Two Wholesale Division inspectors make inspections at each cannery three times during this period.

Raw stock in the dock area, on sorting lines, and at the juice chopper is observed for "rot." If an excessive number of tomatoes containing rot are used, high mold counts will be present in the finished product. Product samples are collected during each inspection and submitted to the ISDH lab for mold analysis. Products with mold counts that exceed FDA standards cannot be sold and must be disposed of by the firm. No

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Highlights from the 2002 food workshop

Shirley Vargas, Supervisor of the Wholesale Section, discusses the interaction between wholesale and retail operations, and what inspectors must look for.



The importance of proper plan reviews and pre-opening inspections is covered by Mindy Waldron, Allen Co. Health Dept. (left) and Margaret Voyles, Retail Coordinator, ISDH (right).



Scott Gilliam and Dan Miller discuss marking specific code sections and date-marking (left). Later, Hank Wolf, talks about what inspectors should look for in honey and cider operations (right).

"Ask Scott"

Q. Recently during an inspection I found hot foods (potentially hazardous) that were too cool. The person-in-charge responded that they were "watching the time." Is this OK?

A. The default is that hot, potentially hazardous foods will be held at 140 degrees F. or above. To use time as a control as outlined in Section 175 of the food code would require written procedures provided to the local health department including evidence the food was properly prepared. If there is no clear indication

when the food was removed from temperature control, mark a violation under Section 173.

Q. At the recent ISDH Food Workshop, I heard you mention the "five public health interventions" as the basis for conducting inspections. Where can I read more about this?

A. The FDA Model Food Code is an excellent reference source for this and many other topics covered in our code.

(Tomatoes continued from page 5)
unsatisfactory mold counts have been found in recent years.

Maintaining a clean building and clean equipment, providing satisfactory screening and other measures to exclude insects and vermin from the building, and good employee sanitation practices are very important. These and other food manufacturing practices are evaluated during each inspection. Any unsanitary condition observed during the inspection must be corrected immediately.

Thorough inspection coverage assures consumers that tomato products produced in Indiana canneries are clean, wholesome products.

Don Courtney

Tip of the month

Having trouble remembering to ask the right questions to address the five public health interventions during inspections? Then make yourself a check list and place a copy in the establishment file. Not only will this help you remember, it will provide a record of the operator's answers.

Send your questions to Scott Gilliam at <food@isdh.state.in.us>, or use the address on page 2.

