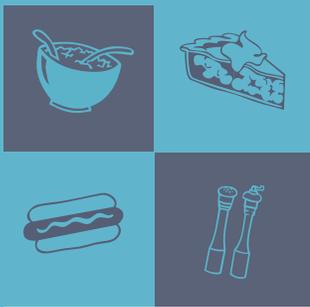


FoodBytes



Spring Growing Should Start With a Food Safety Plan

Spring planting season is upon us and because of recent foodborne outbreaks from fresh produce, food safety should be a high priority for farmers. Whether you are a large farmer who has thousands of acres to plant or a small farmer growing specialty crops in your backyard, making a plan to minimize microbial contamination is a must.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are in high demand at the grocery stores

and farmers markets because of the many health benefits. There is also a renewed entrepreneurial spirit in growing your own food and selling it at market.

Many locally owned restaurants have made it a mission to buy locally grown produce. The thought of buying local means fresher food since most local produce is sold very quickly after harvest. It also supports the local economy and allows for changing menu selections based on the available seasonal items.

Schools are turning to locally grown produce so children can experience the connection they have with the food they eat. In 2009 the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), started an initiative to help



school administrators in providing local produce in schools. The USDA also has a program called “Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food” designed to strengthen local and regional food systems (1).

Several organizations have come along in recent years urging families to buy local produce for their families for many of the reasons mentioned above. These organizations are also partners with the USDA and the

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) working on sustainability issues, food safety, local economies and education.

Buying local produce can be a great thing, it's healthy and fresh, it benefits the local economy and educates our children. Producing the food safely must be a priority.

Outbreaks involving cantaloupe, cut leafy greens, tomatoes and berries have been difficult for regulators trying to make sure food from farm to fork is safe for the public. The United States has the best food supply in the world and it is because of the emphasis on food safety.

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Epidemiology Updates

In March 2012, a new GII.4 norovirus strain was identified in Australia. Named GII.4 Sydney, this emergent strain has since caused acute gastroenteritis outbreaks in multiple countries. In the United States, GII.4 Sydney has spread rapidly nationwide, causing an increasing number of outbreaks. During September–December 2012, a total of 141 (53%) of the 266 no-

(19%) of 21 outbreaks in September 2012; 22 (46%) of 48 in October 2012; 70 (58%) of 120 in November 2012; and 45 (58%) of 77 in December 2012. Most (72 [51%]) of these GII.4 Sydney outbreaks resulted from direct person-to-person transmission; 29 (20%) were foodborne, one (1%) was waterborne, and the transmission mode was unknown in 39 (28%) of the out-

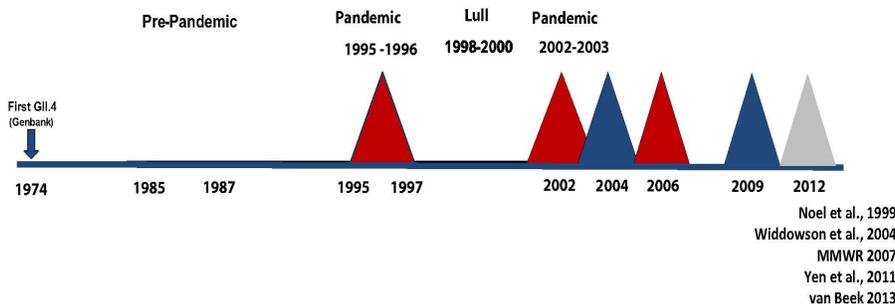
son.

GII.4 noroviruses remain the predominant cause of norovirus outbreaks, and the GII.4 Sydney strain appears to have replaced the previously predominant strain, GII.4 New Orleans. Compared with other norovirus genotypes, GII.4 noroviruses have been associated with increased rates of hospitalizations and deaths during outbreaks. Proper hand hygiene, environmental disinfection, and isolation of ill persons remain the mainstays of norovirus prevention and control.

For questions, please contact Sarah Slette, ISDH Enteric Epidemiologist, at 317-234-2808 or sslette@isdh.in.gov.

GII.4 Norovirus Pandemics

Winter Season	GII.4 Strain	Increase of outbreaks in US
1995-96	Grimsby (US95/96)	Yes
2002-03	Farmington Hills	Yes
2004-05	Hunter	No
2006-07	Minerva (2006b)	Yes
2009-10	New Orleans	No
2012-13	Sydney	??



rorovirus outbreaks reported to CaliciNet were caused by GII.4 Sydney. The other outbreaks were caused by 10 different GI and GII genotypes, including GII.4 New Orleans. A statistically significant increase in the proportion of outbreaks caused by GII.4 Sydney was noted: four

breaks. Long-term-care facilities and restaurants were the most frequently reported settings, accounting for 91 (65%) and 18 (13%) of the GII.4 Sydney outbreaks, respectively. At present, it is too early to make an assessment of the relative magnitude of the current sea-

Sources:

- Information was obtained from the CDC COCA Conference call on Stopping Norovirus in its Tracks- What Every Clinician Should Know found at: http://www.bt.cdc.gov/coca/calls/2013/callinfo_011713.asp
- CDC MMWR Notes from the Field: Emergence of New Norovirus Strain GII.4 Sydney-United States 2012 found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pre-view/mmwrhtml/mm6203a4.htm>.

**by Sarah Slette, Enteric Epidemiologist*

* Please note the change in name, formerly Sarah Popovich is now Sarah Slette and her new email address is sslette@isdh.in.gov

Spring Growing Should Start With a Food Safety

(Continued from page 1)

Growers, packers, and shippers need to take a proactive role in minimizing food safety hazards potentially associated with fresh produce. Operators should encourage the adoption of safe food handling practices by their partners along the farm-to-fork food chain, such as distributors, exporters, importers, retailers, food service operators and consumers, to ensure that each individual effort will be enhanced.

FDA and USDA have worked together to produce a guidance document for industry that breaks down farm and produce safety into eight main principles designed to prevent microbial contamination.

Principle 1. Prevention of microbial contamination of fresh produce is favored over reliance on corrective actions once contamination has occurred.

Principle 2. To minimize microbial food safety hazards in fresh produce, growers, packers or shippers should use good agricultural and management practices in those areas over which they have control.

Principle 3. Fresh produce can

become microbiologically contaminated at any point along the farm-to-table food chain. The major source of microbial contamination with fresh produce is associated with human or animal feces.

Principle 4. Whenever water comes in contact with produce, its source and quality dictates the potential for contamination. Minimize the potential of microbial contamination from water used with fresh fruits and vegetables.

Principle 5. Practices using animal manure or municipal biosolid wastes should be managed closely to minimize the potential for microbial contamination of fresh produce.

Principle 6. Worker hygiene and sanitation practices during production, harvesting, sorting, packing and transport play a critical role in minimizing the potential for microbial contamination of fresh produce.

Principle 7. Follow all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations, or corresponding or similar laws, regulations or standards for operators outside the U.S., for agricultural practices.

Principle 8. Accountability at all

levels of the agricultural environment (farm, packing facility, distribution center, and transport operation) is important to a successful food safety program. There must be qualified personnel and effective monitoring to ensure that all elements of the program function correctly and to help track produce back through the distribution channels to the producer.

These principles were made with industry in mind; however, regulators can benefit from understanding each principle. Retail food establishments are looking for ways to incorporate fresh local produce; therefore, food safety inspection officers must be prepared to understand all aspects of food safety, from farm to fork.

Sources:

1. http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=KYF_PARTNERS
2. <http://www.fda.gov/Food/guidanceCompliance/regulatoryInformation/GuidanceDocuments/ProduceandPlanProducts/ucm064574.htm>

by Lisa Harrison, ISDH

Coca-Cola Freestyle Machine

Can't decide what you want to drink, there's no problem with the revolutionary Coca-Cola Freestyle. This touch screen soda fountain is able to dispense 100 different brands in any combination you desire.

According to Coke, this machine uses cartridges of micro-dosed ingredients that fit inside the machine.

It's new, which makes anyone want to see and use it, but the



sleek design and push button display make it look space age.

It is unknown how many may be in Indiana restaurants, but Coca-Cola is planning for these machines to be in your favorite restaurants. For more information about the Coca-Cola Freestyle go to:

<http://www.coca-colacompany.com/stories/everything-you-need-to-know-about-coca-cola->

New ISDH Food Safety Farm Consultants

The Food Safety Farm Consultants will be providing outreach and education to growers of ready-to-eat produce for wholesale distribution. They will be trained to provide technical assistance in good agricultural practices and on the new FDA Produce Safety Rule as it becomes federal law. They will be partnering with all stakeholders, such as growers, trade associations, Purdue Extension, local health departments and anyone else who can help make a difference for food safety. They will be visiting farms and working with growers to help them reduce or eliminate food safety hazards and avoid another costly outbreak, such as the Salmonella associated with cantaloupe outbreak of 2012. They are intended to be a resource for all stakeholders and are available to consult and train as requested.



Jennifer Coleman joins the ISDH as a Food Safety Farm Consultant for

northern Indiana, based in Fort Wayne. She began her career in public health at the Wells Coun-

ty Health Department as an Environmental Health Specialist, conducting retail food establishment inspections, public pool inspections and addressing various environmental complaints. With a degree in Natural Sciences from the University of Pittsburgh, she looks forward to utilizing both her science background and public health experience in her role as a Food Safety Farm Consultant.

She will be involved with implementing a program that uses a multifaceted approach to strengthen food safety efforts regarding the growing, harvesting and packing of fresh produce in Indiana. Jennifer is excited to be working with the Food Protection Program and the agricultural industry to help growers develop farm food safety plans that focus on prevention strategies. You may contact Jennifer with any questions at 317-476-0059, or send her an email JenColeman@isdh.in.gov

Jennifer Parker joins the ISDH as a Food Safety Farm Consultant. Jennifer is stationed out of Vincennes and covers the southern portion of the state. She attended Purdue University and graduated with a degree in Food Science.

She possesses a diverse



background in food safety and has been employed in various food processing facilities,

most recently at a USDA milk plant. She has written sanitation programs and provided audits for nationally recognized food processors. Jennifer also has on the farm experience from growing up on a farm and worked on produce farms until she graduated from Purdue.

Jennifer's goal as a Food Safety Farm Consultant is to use her education, knowledge of sanitation and her on the farm experience to assist growers with food safety on the farm.

In addition to working with farmers, Jennifer will work with local health departments and various stakeholders concerning food safety on produce farms.

Please feel free to contact Jennifer if you have any question, at 317-476-0056 or send her an email at

jepaker1@ishd.in.gov



Free Training Opportunities

Every professional needs additional training to meet the demands of ever changing responsibilities. In the field of Public and Environmental Health, rapid change just goes with the territory, as well as the lack of funding to get the training needed. The need to travel across the United

States to receive valuable training opportunities is not necessary because training is available close to home with a click of the mouse.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) provides training from experts in food safety through the Office of Regulatory Affairs University (ORAU). The

goal of FDA ORAU is to provide cost-effective training to state and local regulatory officials. An online module gives you flexibility to learn at your own pace and provides your agency with quality training without the cost. ORAU can be found at: <http://www.fda.gov/Training/ForStateLocalTribalRegulators/>

New Manufactured Food Regulatory Program Standards Coordinator



The ISDH Food Protection Program (FPP) has been awarded a FDA five year cooperative agreement for the Manufactured Food

Regulatory Program Standards (MFRPS). MFRPS is much like the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards, but address the wholesale food protection program.

Krista Click is the new MFRPS Project Coordinator. Some of you may know Krista from the Hendricks County Health Department, where she has worked since

2000 as an Environmental Health Specialist and Foods Team Leader. Krista graduated from IUPUI with a degree in Environmental Health and holds the Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) and Certified Professional – Food Safety (CP-FS) credentials. She has been active with the Indiana Environmental Health Association (IEHA) for the last 12 years.

MFRPS are a set of standards promoting continuous improvement for state manufactured food regulatory programs. Utilizing these standards, ISDH will be identifying potential gaps in the program and developing and implementing improvement plans. The standards focus on the state's regulatory foundation; training, inspection, auditing, compliance and enforcement programs; food-related illness and outbreak re-

sponse; industry and community relations; program resources; program assessment; and laboratory support.

As the MFRPS Project Coordinator, Krista will be working with ISDH FPP staff in implementing MFRPS and ensuring deliverables and timelines are met for grant funding. Documentation is crucial in ensuring the standards are met. In addition to doing the work of a quality food protection program, a strong foundation of standard operating procedures and written plans must be maintained. "The ISDH staff has been very welcoming and I look forward to working with them to continuously improve Indiana's Food Protection Program," said Krista. You may reach Krista by email at kclick@isdh.in.gov

Melon Food Safety – 2012 and Beyond

Purdue University Extension hosted a workshop, "Melon Food Safety – 2012 and Beyond," on Jan. 29, 2013. The meeting, held in Vincennes, opened with a presentation by Jill Stauffer from the ISDH, with an epidemiological synopsis of the 2012 Salmonella Outbreak on cantaloupe. Scott Gilliam, ISDH FPP Director, provided insight into what we know about the 2012 Salmonella outbreak on cantaloupe and the Food Safety Initiative for produce farms in Indiana.

Trevor Suslow, UC Davis presented information on food safety practices for cantaloupe and watermelon. In addition, Michael Horrall, Melon Acres, William Harriman, Harriman Farms and Scott Monroe, Purdue Extension, discussed the Eastern Cantaloupe Growers Association and the ben-

efits of third party certification. Amanda Deering, Purdue University, spoke about the food safety research she is conducting and Jennifer Stefancik and Chris



Clark, Purdue Extension, presented opportunities for teaching consumers about produce safety.

The workshop closed with Brad Johnston, Illiana Watermelon Association and Brad Won-

ning, Winning Farms presenting "Learning From the Rocky Ford Experience." They discussed details of their trip to Colorado, and what they learned from Rocky Ford.

Comments by the growers in attendance were supportive of the new initiative by the ISDH with the placement of Food Safety Farm Consultants in the field.

Great information was shared with all attendees, providing an excellent educational opportunity. The workshop also provided an opportunity for cantaloupe and watermelon growers to network and ask questions.

by Jennifer Parker, ISDH

New Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards Coordinator



Laurie Kidwell was recently hired as the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards (VNRFRPS) Coordinator for Indiana.

She is excited to be working in the ISDH FPP where she will be increasing conformance to retail program standards. This position is available through an FDA cooperative grant; which entails furthering retail program conformance for the state, as well as assisting local health departments in their conformance to retail standards.

Laurie has an extensive background in public health and has served on active duty for ten years in the United States Air Force. During her time in the military, she was stationed at the 366th Medical Group, Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, the 506th Air Expeditionary Medical Group, Kirkuk Regional Air Base, Iraq, the 341 Medical Group, Malmstrom AFB, Montana and the 88th Medical Group, Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio. She has spent much of her public health career managing food protection and epidemiology sections.

She intends to use her vast knowledge of developing and implementing written policies, as well as interpreting and complying with standards to better conform

the ISDH FPP to retail program standards. Currently, written policies detailing program improvements are being developed, and will be implemented in the near future. The ISDH FPP will share policy templates and information to assist local health departments with furthering their own conformance with retail program standards. She is available for meetings with, local health departments in regards to their own VNRFRPS programs.

Please feel free to contact Laurie with questions at 317-351-7190 or email at lkidwell@isdh.in.gov

ISDH Food Protection Program Moves to the Government Center

As previously announced, the FPP has moved to the Indiana Government Center -North. The FPP is sharing space on the 8th floor with the Environmental Public Health Program. Our new address is: Food Protection Program, Indiana State Department of Health, 100 N. Senate Ave., N855, Indianapolis, IN 46204. The new phone numbers are 317-234-8569 and 317-233-9200 (fax). Current e-mail addresses for staff members will not change.

The move offers several advantages over the existing office at 2525 North Shadeland Avenue. There is additional floor space to accommodate anticipated future staff expansion required for the Manufactured Foods Regulatory Program Standards. In addition, greater broadband speed will be

realized from being on the state IT system. This will greatly facilitate the completion of day to day work in addition to enhancing the performance of the new CodePal data management system. Being locat-



ed on the main government campus will also give the program access to a number of meeting rooms located in the Indiana Government Center - South Conference Center. This will be especial-

ly beneficial for hosting larger numbers of people for special programs and training opportunities.

The FPP will not have facilities to receive samples at this location. Samples should be submitted directly to the State Food Laboratory as is currently being done.

Accessibility to our offices will be through a reception area on the 8th floor just off the elevators. Parking will be available in the Government Center parking garages or on the street. Specific questions relevant to our move may be addressed to Scott Gilliam or George Jones who can be emailed at

<http://www.in.gov/isdh/20640.htm>

by George Jones, ISDH

Updates From the Indiana Horticultural Congress

The Indiana Horticultural Congress is held every January to provide educational sessions to help improve business performance by providing updates on production practices, pest disease management, food safety, produce quality, specialty crops, market opportunities, and new regulatory requirements. On the agenda this year were presentations from Scott Gilliam, Director, Food Protection, and Sarah Slette, Enteric Epidemiologist, discussing the *Salmonella typhimurium* outbreak associated with cantaloupes in 2012. Gilliam also presented information about the new Produce Safety Initiative that was rolled out at that time. He covered the

new requirement that wholesale produce growers of ready-to-eat produce are now required to be registered and will be subject to food safety and defense inspections. “The aim is to help the growers make improvements in food safety to avoid another costly outbreak like last year”, said Gilliam. The two new Food Protection Program (FPP) Food Safety Farm Consultants, Jenny Parker and Jen Coleman, will be doing extensive outreach and education to help the growers realize this goal. Already, many of the leading watermelon and cantaloupe producers are embracing this opportunity and are working toward ensuring that the product they produce will be

as safe as possible and they want all of the growers to do the same. The new FDA Produce Safety Rule was posted for public comment in January and will most likely become a new regulation yet this year, so there is a sense of urgency to incorporate the food safety principles into their operations. The FPP looks forward to continuing to work with this segment of the food industry to ensure the economic development of these products as well as ensuring implementation of these new principles at the farm level.

by Scott Gilliam, ISDH

Aseptic Sampling and Submission Training

The Indiana State Department of Health Public Health Laboratory and the FPP provided regional training opportunities for local health departments early this year. Aseptic Food Sampling and Submission was a collaborative effort with the lab and the FPP to provide an informative practical learning opportunity for Food Safety Inspection Officer’s (FSIO’S), nurses and regional epidemiologists.

Sampling food is not something that FSIO’s do on a regular basis however, there are times when samples must be collected such as a foodborne illness outbreak event or surveillance. It is important that when samples are collected, aseptic techniques are used and the food is transported safely to the lab. Those who were in attendance for this training learned proper sample collection techniques, proper shipping protocol and maintain-

ing the chain of custody. Attendees also got hands on experience by filling out forms, mock sampling drills and practice with packing coolers for sample submission to the lab.



**LaPorte County Aseptic Sampling and Submission training pictured are attendees from local health departments*

In addition to the training, local health departments were advised of a new initiative from the lab and the FPP to provide them with coolers and sampling supplies. Local health depart-

ments will be receiving coolers of different sizes, based on the sampling activity from 2011. Counties will also receive Whirl Pac bags, sample scoops and gel packs so that a sample collection kit may be maintained at the health department. When a sample is sent through the mail in one of the provided coolers, the lab will then mail the cooler back with additional supplies.

As a reminder, if you need to send samples into the lab, or you are in need of additional sampling supplies and forms please notify Dan Gala, ISDH Consumer Specialist at 317-351-7190.

by Lisa Harrison, ISDH

**Special thanks to Patty Nocek, LaPorte County Health Department for the pictures provided*

Food Protection Program

Indiana State Department of Health

Food Protection Program

100 N. Senate Ave., N855

Indianapolis, IN 46204

Phone: 317-234-8569

Fax: 317-233-9200



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or at www.foods.isdh.in.gov



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William C. VanNess II, MD
State Health Commissioner

Jim Huston
Chief of Staff

James Howell, DVM,
MPH, DACVPM
Assistant Commissioner,
Public Health and Preparedness
Commission

Editorial Staff
Lisa Harrison, BS
FoodBytes Editor

Scott Gilliam, MBA, CP-FS
Food Program Director

Email
food@isdh.in.gov

Send your questions and comments to the e-mail
or postal address on this page.

Did You Know?

Are you an avid farmer with a green thumb or are you a little more of a throw the seeds on the dirt and hope it grows something edible type of farmer? Don't be ashamed if you are the latter type of farmer because there are always local farmers with green thumbs that can help you out.

Did you know that the Indiana farming industry in 2008 sold crop and livestock commodities for \$10.9 billion? Also, in 2009 Indiana ranked 15th nationally for total sales in the United States.

- ◆ Indiana ranks 5th nationally in the production of corn; producing 960 million bushels in 2007.
- ◆ Indiana ranks 4th in the production of soybeans with

211 million bushels produced in 2007.

- ◆ Indiana is the 2nd largest producer of popcorn in the nation.
- ◆ Indiana ranks 2nd in tomatoes for processing 249,000 tons.
- ◆ Indiana ranks 4th in peppermint producing 293,000 lbs. and 5th in spearmint producing 81,000 pounds.
- ◆ Indiana ranks 2nd in the number of layer chickens. The state is also 3rd in the nation for total number of eggs.
- ◆ Indiana produces more ducks than any other state in the nation.
- ◆ Indiana ranks 2nd in the production of both regular and fat free ice cream.

So get out there and start planting something. Go outside and get active with the family while you plant some wonderful Indiana produce!

Source:

<http://www.agclassroom.org/kids/stats/indiana.pdf>

