

FoodBytes



Indiana State
Department of Health

Fall, 2001

Volume 2, Issue 3

Inside this issue:

Prevent pests to reduce health risks

2

Standardization program unveiled

2

Retail cider operators should be inspected

3

ISDH undertakes sampling initiative

3

Handling vehicle impoundments

5

September is Food Safety Ed. Month

5

"Ask Scott"

6

Who responds to vehicle accidents?

R-i-n-g!

It was 2:00 A.M. Saturday when the loud unmistakable sound of the telephone woke Bob from a deep sleep. He fumbled for the phone and finally placed it to his ear.

"Hello?" Bob mumbled into the phone, still looking for his voice.

"Hello. My name is Trooper Jim Jones, with the Indiana State Police. Is this the Bob Smith who works at the health department?"

"Yes," replied Bob, starting to wake up now.

"I am calling the health department to report an accident involving a semi-truck loaded with meat. The cargo is raw boxed beef and it has overturned on the State Road 18 exit ramp southbound off I-65. The trailer has been ripped open and approximately half the trailer's contents are spilled out on the highway and we need to know what to do with the meat right away!"

Bob got up, hurriedly dressed, then headed for the



Local health departments have jurisdiction over food transportation mishaps.

accident scene to conduct an investigation, knowing the correct handling of the food could be critical.

You may have already experienced a similar scenario. How did your health department personnel respond? How should they have responded?

Vehicle accidents and impoundment involving transportation of commercial food supplies have increased significantly in Indiana. In response to several recent incidents, a meeting was held in March at the Indiana State Department of Health with representatives from the Indiana State Police, Motor Carrier Division,

United States Department of Agriculture, Indiana State Board of Animal Health and ISDH Food Protection Program to discuss protocol when these situations occur.

(Continued on page 4)

"Be Prepared" should be local motto

It's not a matter of "if" a food vehicle accident will occur in your area, but "when". This scenario could happen in your jurisdiction and it would be necessary for an inspector to respond to assure that any unsafe food is handled appropriately.

It is important to remember that not only does the local department have jurisdiction, the local health department has an obligation under Indiana Code.

You can always call for help if you're unsure how to handle the situation.

Prevent pests to reduce health risks

Pests like rats, mice, and insects not only annoy retail food establishment managers, but can also create a health hazard. When infestation occurs, there are four questions that should be asked.

First, how are pests entering the facility? Entering an establishment is much easier than some might think. A mouse can enter through a quarter of an inch gap in a wall or door.

Second, where are they hid-

One mouse will produce 60 droppings per night and one pair of mice will give birth to approximately 50 offspring per year.

ing? Common hiding places could include a cluttered or secluded area in the establishment. Mice will forage for food only 10 to 30 feet from their home area.

Third, how are the pests surviving? Any food debris or other food items are strong attractants.

Fourth, how can the rodents or insects be eliminated or at least



minimized? All openings to the outside should be sealed to prevent entry. Weeds and unnecessary items stored outside should be removed. Snap traps may be used to control mice in addition to baits because mice like to accumulate food in one area.

Pests can grow to problem numbers quickly. One mouse will produce 60 droppings per night and one pair of mice will give birth to approximately 50 offspring per year. It is extremely important to control all pests.

Brad Beard

FoodBytes is published quarterly by the Food Protection Program, Indiana State Department of Health. Comments may be directed to:

**FoodBytes,
ISDH,
Consumer Protection - 5C,
2 N. Meridian St.,
Indianapolis, IN 46204.**

**Telephone
317-233-7360**

**e-mail
food@isdh.state.in.us**


**Gregory Wilson, MD
State Health Commissioner**

**Mary DePrez
Deputy State Health Commissioner**

Editorial Staff

**Ed Norris, CFSP
FoodBytes Editor**

**Scott Gilliam, MBA
Food Program Manager**

**Tara Renner, REHS
Consumer Specialist**



Standardization program unveiled

After a month delay, the long-awaited new retail food inspection “Standardization” program is now set to roll out in November. But to paraphrase an old advertising slogan, “this is not your father’s standardization.”

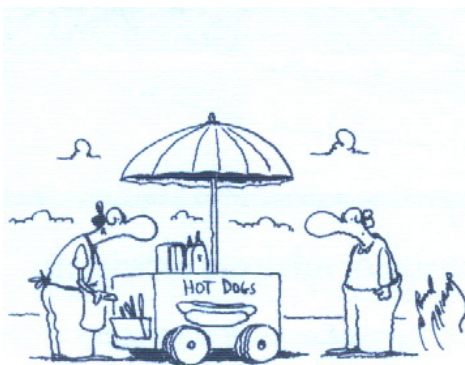
“An inspector will need to qualify,” says Lee Bray, Standardization Officer for the Food Protection Program.

“Standardization will only be offered to inspectors regularly involved in food inspection and not just to anyone.”

The program is being introduced with a series of one-day orientation sessions beginning November 28 in Jasper.

The rollout was to have begun October 16 in Chesterton, followed by sessions in Scottsburg, Chesterton, Lebanon, but had to be postponed.

All inspectors are welcome to attend, but just one or two from each department would be sufficient. Updated information will be mailed soon. Anyone planning to attend needs to pre-register.



“The mag wheels come in handy when I’m eluding the health department.”

Labeling laws apply to cider

Any products such as cider produced for retail sale must be properly labeled according to state and federal laws.

Labeling information needs to include the common name of the food, according to Sec. 180 of the food code. If there are added ingredients like colorings, flavorings, or preservatives, this needs to be on the label.

The label also needs to state the quantity, and the name and place of business of the manufacturer or distributor.

Labeling requirements are rooted in federal and state laws.

Retail cider operators should be inspected

It's almost time again for Hoosiers to enjoy fall, and for many, the season wouldn't be complete without a trip to the local orchard. Consumers eagerly purchase apples, pumpkins, gourds, honey, sorghum, and an always popular treat, apple cider.

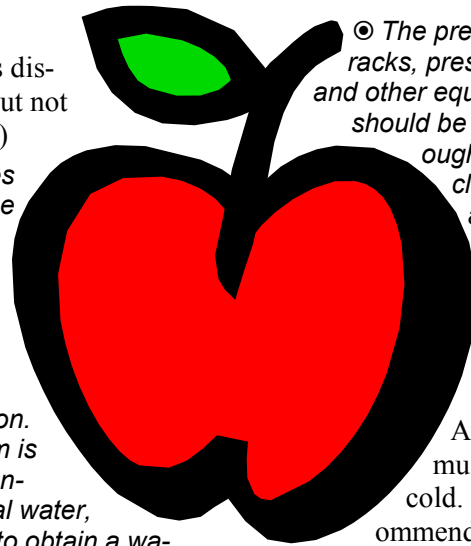
Because of the potential for foodborne illness associated with apple cider, inspectors have a special role to make sure the product is as safe and wholesome as possible. Here are some tips for inspecting a retail apple cider processor.

- ◎ Remember, #2 grade apples, which are small apples or apples with blemishes, are normally used for cider production. Make sure that rotten or decaying apples are not used in production since THOSE apples will contribute to high bacteriological/yeast and mold counts.

(Using apples that have been lying on the ground,

known as “drops”, is discouraged but not prohibited.)

- ◎ All apples should be sorted, washed, and brushed before going to production. If the firm is using non-municipal water, be sure to obtain a water sample for analysis. Ideally, apples should be chilled in cold storage before being made into cider.
- ◎ Follow the manufacturing procedure and examine the equipment for suitability of construction and cleanliness. Be very careful, as moving parts in the mill or grinder can be dangerous.
- ◎ It is not unusual for a press aid like rice hulls to be mixed with the pomace or ground apples before pressing.



◎ The press, press racks, press cloths, and other equipment should be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized as soon as possible after production.

Apple cider must be kept cold. It is recommended that cider be held between 32° and 36° F.

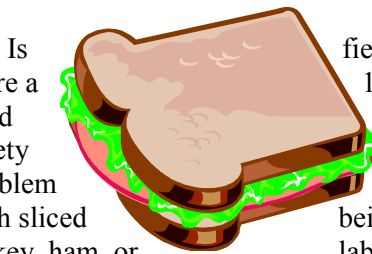
Any preservatives used must be declared on the label. Example: “1/10 of 1% Potassium Sorbate added as a preservative.”

If the cider is not pasteurized, or otherwise treated with ultraviolet light or ozonation to control pathogens, the product shall bear the following statement on the information panel or principal display panel of

(Continued on page 4)

ISDH undertakes deli meat sampling initiative

Is there a food safety problem with sliced turkey, ham, or roast beef being sold to customers from Indiana's retail food outlets? That's a question Tara Renner, Consumer Specialist at ISDH hopes to answer this fall.



Tara, along with ISDH

field staff, collected around 100 samples from randomly chosen retail food outlets across the state. The samples are being tested at the ISDH laboratory for the presence of E. coli, Listeria, and total Aerobic Plate Count (APC). Individual results will be shared with the appropriate establishment and the local health department.

“Thus far, we've found

some evidence of Listeria and no E. coli, but in many samples the APC has been high,” says Renner. “This is likely an indication of temperature abuse or mishandling by employees,” she added.

Sampling initiatives like this can help ISDH staff target establishments that need training in food safety. Follow-up samples may be taken where needed.

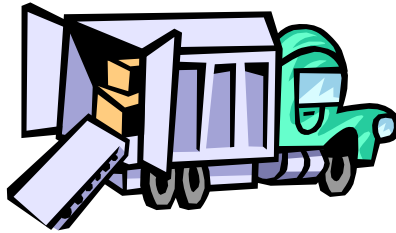
Who responds to vehicle accidents (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

Federal, state and local regulatory agencies play important roles in emergency situations involving commercial food supplies. Often, decisions must be made at the accident site by regulatory officials to determine if food products are to be destroyed, held for further evaluation, or returned to the manufacturer.

Truck wrecks involving commercial food supplies can occur during or after normal health department working hours. Accidents of this type usually require an on-site inspection to evaluate the condition of the food. The physical impact of the collision usually causes the most damage. Toxic items such as chemical supplies or vehicle fuel tanks may rupture, adding more contamination to the food and food packaging. Exposure to the weather may adversely affect the products. Removal of the wreckage may cause physical damage and contamination.

The possibility of food or food ingredient runoff contaminating nearby streams or waterways is often overlooked. For these reasons, it is imperative that a trained regulatory official be present to evaluate the situation. The types of foods involved and the location of the accident are important factors in determining if other agencies should become involved.



In many cases, the health department may determine at the site, that the food product(s) can be off-loaded to another vehicle and routed to an appropriate destination.

In our scenario, the food involved in the accident was an interstate shipment of beef products. A representative from the local health department and the Indiana State Board of Animal Health may have been called to the accident

location. The meat products left on the truck would be offloaded to another vehicle and taken to a USDA inspected facility for further evaluation. Unsalvageable meat products on the ground or road surface would be hauled to a landfill and destroyed. In this case, the following food safety measures were properly implemented.

When police reported the accident to the local health department, the health department contacted the ISDH Food Protection's after hour "Urgent Call" hot line because the accident involved a shipment of food products. The health department could have also reported the accident directly to the USDA or the Indiana State Board of Animal Health hot line.

Information regarding the amount and type of foods involved, description of damage, vehicle identification tags, license numbers,

(Continued on page 5)

Apple cider processing (cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

the label as required by federal law: "WARNING: This product has not been pasteurized and, therefore, may contain harmful bacteria that can cause serious illness in children, the elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems."

If you'd like assistance with a retail apple cider processing operation, please call your regional wholesale food inspector. If you do not know who your wholesale food inspector is, contact your retail food specialist, or call the Food Protection Division at 317 233-7360. *Hank Wolfe*



Don't overlook new concepts

When 410 IAC 7-20 went into effect it was not just an expansion of the "old" code. It also included new food safety interventions as per FDA guidelines.

Inspectors should be discussing these ideas with operators during each inspection: illness reporting, the "consumer advisory", no bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods, date marking, and the time / temperature relationship.

Every establishment should have been provided a copy of the code by May.

Training will continue to be offered by ISDH field staff.

Planning continues for first ISDH food workshop

The schedule of events is nearly completed for the first ISDH Food Workshop.

Topics include inspecting temporary events, addressing plumbing issues, and dealing with caterers and farmers markets. Speakers from FDA will augment the ISDH staff.

The conference is set for March 12, 13, and 14 at the Westin Hotel, Indianapolis.

The registration fee is \$20.00 for all days. Information will be mailed to health departments in October.

Handling vehicle impoundments

Situations involving impounding food vehicles create different problems from truck wrecks. Often the vehicle has equipment failure, or the driver is detained for some reason and the cargo must sit at a weigh station. If the shipment involves potentially hazardous foods, proper product temperature must be maintained at all times.

In order to salvage these shipments, arrangements must be made by the firm owning the product to keep the shipment properly refrigerated. The quality and temperature measurement of the food products being held must be evaluated and verified by the local health department prior to being released.

Assistance from the local health department may be requested in these areas:

- *Finding a secure location (if needed) having the capability of maintaining potentially hazardous food at proper tempera-*

- tures*
- *Notifying appropriate agencies*
- *Assisting with determining damage and/or disposition of food products*
- *Determining origin, destination or holding point of cargo*
- *Verifying product temperature and quality*
- *Verifying disposition or destruction of product*
- *Documenting the investigation appropriately*
- *Notify proper agencies*

Accidents and vehicle impoundment involving food products are occurring on a more regular basis, and it's only a matter of time before your health department is called to assist in an investigation. A preset plan of action in responding to these situations is recommended for all local health departments. Local health departments are supported (and can be obligated) by Indiana Code to take these food protection actions.

Lee Bray

Vehicle Accidents

(Continued from page 4)

and origin and destination of the vehicle was collected and reported to ISDH Food Protection.

ISDH forwarded the information to USDA and the Indiana State Board of Animal Health, and arrangements were made for the salvageable products to be taken to the nearest USDA inspected plant for further evaluation.

The local health department accompanied a clean-up truck to a nearby landfill where an inspector witnessed destruction (disposition) of the unsalvageable products.

An accident summary was completed and submitted to Tara Renner of the ISDH Food Protection Program by the local health department in conjunction with the appropriate disposition forms for the destruction of the products.

Lee Bray

September is National Food Safety Ed Month



“Be Cool—Chill Out! Refrigerate Promptly” is the theme chosen for National Food Safety Education Month 2001, an annual observance intended to focus attention on the importance of preparation and safe food handling at home and commercial kitchens.

This year’s theme stresses the need for consumers to keep food cold at 41° F or below, and to em-

ploy rapid cooling methods for leftovers kept from one day to the next. The use of a thermometer is also encouraged.

National Food Safety Education Month was created in 1995 by the foodservice industry and has gained support among federal, state, and local government agencies.

"Ask Scott"

Q. I understand there is a new rule about shell eggs in retail establishments. Could you provide some information?

A. As of September 4th, eggs that have not been treated to destroy *Salmonella enteritidis*, (SE) need to have "safe handling instructions" that state: "To prevent illness from bacteria, keep eggs refrigerated, cook eggs until yolks are firm, and cook foods containing eggs thoroughly." (See Sec. 118.)

This stems from the fact that SE continues to be a public health concern, even

though illness numbers are down. It's one part of the Egg Safety Action Plan to improve safety from "farm to table."

Remember, too, that Sec. 173 applies as to the refrigeration of eggs. Once delivered to the retail food establishment, eggs need to be held at 41° F.

For a more complete explanation, see the memo dated May 25, 2001 sent to local health departments.


Q. I still see a lot of food handlers touching food. Can I make

them wear gloves?

A. Sec. 136 says a "utensil" should be used. A glove is a utensil, along with tongs, deli papers, spatulas, etc. The "default" is that food handlers will not touch ready-to-eat food. The burden of proof is on them to show that using a utensil is impossible. You should mark this violation.

**Plan to attend the first ISDH
*Food Protection Educational Workshop***

March 12, 13, 14
2002



Westin Hotel,
Indianapolis

Workshop topics include:
temporary & mobile vendors, new code concepts, cultural differences, building relationships with others, plumbing, dish machines, and much more!

**Tip
of the
month**

It seems cut melons are being displayed more often on store displays than ever. Yet violations abound in the way cut melons are prepared and stored. Melons must be washed, then sliced only with a sanitized knife on a sanitized surface. Cut melons must be held at 41° F. *and* date marked if held over 24 hours. See Sec. 174.

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

