



# FoodBytes

Indiana State Department of Health

## Food security exercise shows importance of proper planning

Can Indiana protect its food supplies against a terrorist threat? Representatives from government, industry, and academia gathered together in Indianapolis on March 8 in hopes of answering that question. The group participated in a daylong tabletop exercise that simulated an incident of deliberate food contamination. The exercise, sponsored by the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH), was the first of its kind to be developed and

executed in Indiana.

“This valuable training exercise was the culmination of months of planning and organizing by our Food Defense Specialists, Travis Goodman and Mark Mattox,” said Scott Gilliam, Food Protection Program Manager.

“We were pleased to be able to provide a forum and scenario for stakeholders to resolve issues that would surface in a food contamination emergency of this type,” Gilliam said.

More than a hundred participants and observers attended, representing federal, state, and local governments, food industry, trade associations, and universities. The event was held at the Wayne Township Emergency Services Education Center on the west side of Indianapolis.

For the exercise, attendees were divided into groups, based upon their job functions: federal,

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## Communication is essential

You have to talk to one another. That was one of the main lessons learned during the recent food defense exercise.

Attendees learned that communicating

key information and coordination of efforts are vital to handling any food safety emergency effectively.

Planning is necessary to assure the right emergency response.



## Food safety exercise (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

state, or local regulatory agencies; processors; distributors; or emergency responders. Then, with the exercise broken into four modules, each group was to determine what it would do at each stage of the emergency. This included communication with other groups to coordinate the proper response.

The outcome of the exercise will be published in a formal after-action report. The distribution of this report will be limited, however, due to the sensitivity of the topic.

This outcome will reveal shortcomings and assist in the planning of food security prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery measures. Results will show areas requiring more emphasis to ensure a safe supply of food “from farm to fork” for Indiana citizens.



**Mark Mattox, Food Defense Specialist, and a facilitator for the food defense tabletop exercise, guides members of the food industry in deciding what they would do at various times if there was a real threat to the food supply.**

Securing our food supply against terrorism through education and awareness training is an important public health priority

for the ISDH Food Protection Program.

*Mark Mattox, Food Security Specialist*

## Food code changes introduced at training programs

Some sessions were “standing room only” as the revised food code 410 IAC 7-24 was presented to local health department inspectors, state department of health personnel, and other interested persons.

The new code went into effect November 13, 2004, replacing the former code, 410 IAC 7-20.

The code was updated for several reasons. These reasons included adopting the current recommended language from the FDA Model Code, combining like sections, and separating sections that were too long into two parts.

The most significant change in the revised code is its organization, which required all sections to be

renumbered whether changed or not.

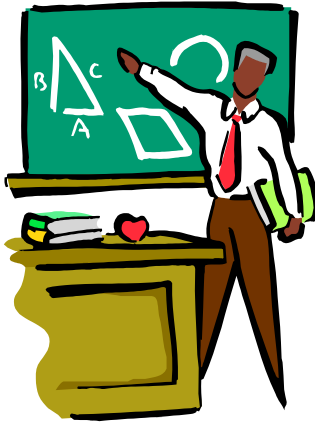
Other changes included revising the hot holding temperature to 135°F adding a requirement that hot water be at least 100°F and that hot and cold water be supplied to all sinks, and under pressure.

Seven training sessions were held around the state.

## NSF Plan Review Training Program coming again

Any one who didn't attend the last NSF Plan Review Training Class but still wants to, will have another opportunity in May.

The course will offer extensive information on all aspects of conducting a complete plan review on new and remodeled retail food establishments. Areas covered will range from proper sizing of water heaters and



The course is set for May 3 and 4 in the South Bend Holiday

dish machines to understanding the various NSF Protocols.

The cost will be \$160.00 per participant and includes all course materials. Meals are not included. State training funds can be used.

Inn City Center, located downtown, just west of the Marriott, at the site of the last IEHA Fall Conference. The Holiday Inn phone number is 574-232-3941.

Questions about the course can be directed to Nancy Quay, [nquay@nsf.org](mailto:nquay@nsf.org), or call 1-800-NSF-MARK, ext. 5782. To register online, visit [www.nsf.org/cphe](http://www.nsf.org/cphe)

The course is co-sponsored by the Indiana Environmental Health Association and Indiana State Department of Health.

## Having the “right stuff” important for inspectors

An inspector who regulates any retail food establishment will never be fully effective if he or she doesn't have the right tools to do the job.

The most critical “tool” is a proper thermometer capable of measuring all food temperatures. A thermocouple or thermister type thermometer is the thermometer of choice.

The old bi-metallic stem thermometers, although inexpensive, are too limited in their use to cover all situations requiring temperature measurements. They are unable to accurately measure certain foods because of the long sensing area of the probe.

The nature of the sensor requires the thermometer to be inserted about an inch and a half into the food product to be measured. This makes the measurement of “thin” foods almost impossible.

But only the probe tip needs to be immersed for an accurate measurement with a thermocouple. Thermocouples are more accurate and generally do not require



the user to calibrate them.

Bi-metallic stem thermometers will need to be recalibrated on a regular schedule, preferably prior to each day's inspections.

Here are the other items on an inspector's “must have” list:

- Required inspection forms and administrative materials
- Lab coat or equivalent protection to cover street clothes

- Head cover (baseball cap, hair net, or equivalent)
- Alcohol swabs
- Maximum registering thermometer or temperature sensitive tapes for verifying hot water warewashing final rinse temperature
- Chemical test kits for various chemical sanitizers
  - Flashlight
  - Light meter
- Device for measuring distances (tape measure, etc.)

A camera might also be useful to document serious violations.

A Retail Foods field staff member can answer questions on proper inspection equipment.

## Concentrating on risks should be inspector's focus

In the hustle and bustle of living today, food inspectors are always looking for a way to save time, especially on the job.

Risk factors have been identified by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, through epidemiological data, as improper practices or procedures that are the most prevalent contributing factors of foodborne illness or injury. Paying attention to risk factors during a retail foodservice establishment inspection comes into play, not only as a way to improve inspector efficiency but also to improve the operation of the establishment. Risk factors include:

◆ **1. Poor personal hygiene**

This includes personal cleanliness, not eating, drinking or using tobacco in designated areas by food employees, preventing discharges from the eyes, nose and mouth, and preventing



Assure proper cooking temperatures with a probe thermometer.

contamination from hands.

◆ **2. Food from unsafe source**

Food must be from regulated food processing plants and no home prepared or canned foods are allowed.

All shellfish must be from NSSP listed sources, and game animals and wild mushrooms need to be from an



Food must be from approved sources and received at the proper temperature.

approved source.

Other foods risks include food being received at improper temperatures.

◆ **3. Inadequate cooking**

Assure that

raw food is cooked to the proper temperature. Be especially vigilant in determining that raw animal foods reach the proper internal temperatures.

◆ **4. Improper holding temperatures**

Potentially hazardous food must be maintained at 135°F or above, or at 41°F or less.

◆ **5. Contaminated equipment**

Food contact surfaces shall be cleaned and sanitized using the correct methods and at the proper intervals.

By concentrating attention on these risk factors instead of old “floor, walls and ceiling” approach, operators can be helped in preventing the most prevalent factors that contribute to foodborne illness or injury.

*Edward Zglenicki, Retail Food Specialist*

## ISDH staff member activated

Linda McClure, recently hired by the Food Protection Program to oversee special projects, now finds herself faced with a major project of a much different kind.

McClure, a Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Naval Reserve, has been called to active duty for at least a year, and has been sent to Iraq, near Fallujah.

After a training period in North Carolina, she was deployed to Iraq to assist in the rebuilding of that country's environmental health programs.

McClure said being activated came as somewhat of a surprise. Her colleagues hope for her safe return.



## Food symposium planned for March 2006

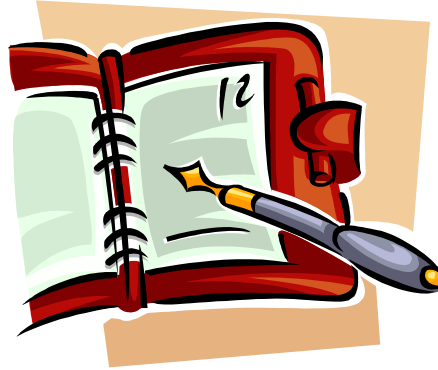
“Back by popular demand,” and “Standing room only,” are often over-use clichés, but might be appropriate to describe the March 2004 food safety workshops sponsored by the Food Protection Program of the Indiana State Department of Health. Attendees at the earlier programs expressed a strong desire for more of them.

### Topics being sought.

Health department inspectors have already expressed interest in topics like plan review procedures,

plumbing, and ethnic foodservice establishments. But the agenda is still open.

If there are specific topics that inspectors would like to be considered, those suggestions can be sent to Natalie Stoops at ISDH who is organizing the event. It appears that



there may be sufficient topics to extend the symposium to three days.

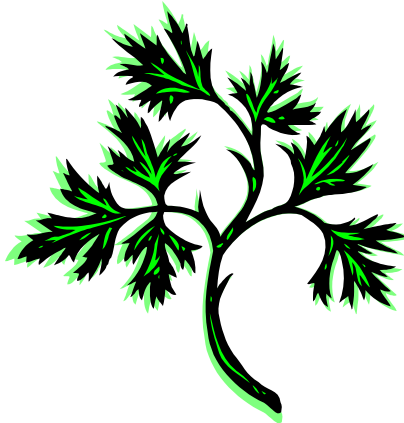
This symposium will count toward the contact hour requirement for standardized food inspectors and the CFSP credential.

Detailed information will be forthcoming as the date nears.

## Is that a “garnish” you’re holding in your hand?

Although the implementation of the revised food code has gone smoothly, the transition has not been without some questions from local health department inspectors. One area that has prompted clarification is Section 171, “Preventing contamination from hands.” One of the exceptions to the no-bare-hand-contact requirement is listed as “when applying a garnish.”

Scott Gilliam, Food Program



If all food employees do is pick it up and place it on a plate or glass, it is exempt. But the exemption does not apply to any preparation.

Manager at ISDH, has offered guidance to inspectors when interpreting this section for compliance.

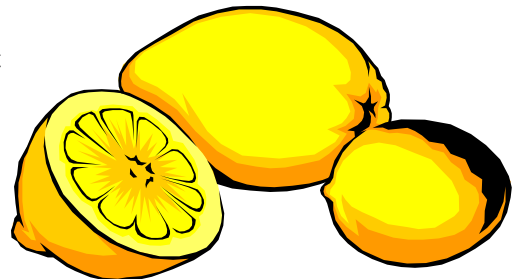
Gilliam says the provision is to exempt the bare hand contact exclusion for food employees who apply a garnish only. “Whether it is parsley, orange slices or anything else, as long as all they do is pick it up and place it on a plate, glass, etc., then it is exempt,” Gilliam says.

“The exemption does not include preparing a garnish, such

as slicing an orange, cutting up parsley, etc., as that is considered food preparation.”

Gilliam adds that all hand-washing requirements still apply. “Food employees cannot handle any garnish with soiled hands,” Gilliam says.

This is one instance when the language of 410 IAC 7-24 is more restrictive than the FDA Model Code.





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## Bits, Bytes, and Blurbs

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

- ◆ **Ecolab has announced a new quat type sanitizer, "Oasis 146 Multi-Quat Sanitizer."** Inspectors need to be aware that this product allows a concentration range of 150 to 400 ppm. If this product is found in a food establishment, a different test kit will be needed, rather than the one inspectors normally carry for measuring quats strength. This product does meet the requirements of 21 CFR 178.1010.
- ◆ **The Certification Rule is likely to be revised.** After legislators reportedly received complaints from not-for-profit organizations objecting to the law that required them to employ a certified food handler,

**several bills were introduced exempting such groups. There may also be some changes to the menu exemptions, but until the final bill is passed, the exact language will not be known.**

- ◆ **New plan review documents are in the works. The forms will have a new look and will be more extensive in scope. The changes were prompted in part by the revised food**

**code becoming law. Although not required, it is recommended that the plan review forms be used to promote consistency throughout the state.**

### Calendar

IEHA Spring Conference  
April 14, 2005, Greenwood

NSF Plan Review Training Program  
May 3, 4, 5, 2005, South Bend

EHS Orientation  
November 29, 30, December 1, ISDH