The University of Arizona Offers Food Safety Education

**Food Safety Education Program**

The Food Safety Education Program in Yavapai County is a part of the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Family Consumer Sciences Program in partnership with the Yavapai County Environmental Health Dept.

**Food Manager Education & Assistance**

Leon Strenkoski (Lee), is the Food Safety Education Program Coordinator. He offers food safety education, research, training, and certification programs for Food Managers. He also works with managers to provide food safety education through personal assistance, food service network meetings, practical research-based seminars, and publications.

Lee is a Food Microbiologist with extensive research and development experience in food pathogen detection. lstren@ag.arizona.edu

**Employee Training & Education**

Miguel Gradillas, is the Food Safety Instructional Specialist. Miguel offers Entry Level Food Handler Certification Training for Spanish speaking employees. Food Safety Master Employee Training will be available in the fall. He is also available to assist restaurants and food services with employee food safety issues. Miguel is well known for his knowledge in food preparation and safety. He has been a chef for over ten years. He brings a depth of restaurant experience to our team.

miguelg@ag.arizona.edu

**Consumer Education**

Marta Elva Stuart, is the Family Consumer Sciences (FCS) Agent for the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Yavapai County. She is also the Project Director for the Food Safety Education Program. She provides public service research-based information, education and training for consumers as well as assists the Food Safety Education Staff in the program design of food safety training programs for managers and employees. Her expertise is in food safety education with an emphasis in practical research application to flow of food systems. As FCS Agent she also provides programs for families, youth, and children as part of her academic assignment with the University of Arizona.

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Regulation 6-1-103
Manager Certification
Yavapai County Health Code

A. Effective January 1, 2002 all food establishments that store, prepare, package, serve, vend, or otherwise provide potentially hazardous food for human consumption must employ at least one (1) person who has passed a test approved by YCHD. The certified person shall be available during all hours of operation by telephone, pager, or on the premises.

B. A food establishment with fewer than ten (10) employees may satisfy Regulation 6-1-103(A) by having a written Department-approved food safety plan or risk control plan in place, provided that:
   1. A certified person is available for a minimum of eight (8) hours each day that the food establishment is in operation or open for business, and
   2. The food establishment has at least two (2) employees that are certified.

C. Tests and organizations recognized by the Conference for Food Protection are approved by the Department. A certificate shall be issued by the Department to a food establishment employee who successfully passes a test recognized by the Conference for Food Protection.

D. Manager Certification
   1. All managers shall maintain their certification.
   2. Certification issued by the Department shall be valid for three (3) years from the date of the test, unless revoked.
   3. Certification issued by the Department may be revoked for violating one or more critical items of the Arizona Department of Health Services’ Administrative rules for food and drink.

Over 200 restaurants were visited throughout Yavapai County to introduce the new food safety education program offerings of the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension in Yavapai County. This program is funded by the County Board of Supervisors. Manager and employee food safety education is provided at no cost to all food establishments and restaurants in the county.

The Restaurant Manager Survey was conducted for a three week period during the month of May, covering 1,230 miles and taking over 100 hours to complete. A survey/questionnaire concerning food safety education needs were discussed and answered on site or were returned by mail.

SURVEY RESULTS
Of the 215 surveys taken/distributed, 99 were completed (46% completion rate). The sample of food restaurants visited concentrated on all sizes of non-franchised restaurants and schools. Some franchise restaurants were surveyed initially and it was found that most of these had their food safety needs met by corporate procedures. Approximately 300 restaurants were surveyed with 99 restaurants responding. The survey resulted in a responding sample of 33%.
## SURVEY RESULTS CONTINUED

### SURVEY CONCLUSIONS

1. Most respondents preferred to have education sessions on Mondays and Tuesdays from 8:00-12:00 Noon or 1:00-5:00 pm.

2. 60% of respondents indicated they have some type of food safety plan in place.

3. 50% of respondents indicated they would like to develop a food safety plan for their establishment or have their current plan renewed.

4. 86% of respondents indicated they needed information about obtaining Food Manager Safety Certification.

5. Respondents to a question concerning a wage increase for food workers completing an Advanced Master Food Safety Employee Training Program indicated they would support a wage increase for educated/trained employees.

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### MANAGER CERTIFICATION TRAINING

There are several options available to obtain Food Safety Manager Certification before January 1, 2002. The organizations providing manager certification training and testing in Yavapai County are listed below. Prices vary.

- **UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**
  - (520) 771-3385
  - (520) 445-6590

- **ARIZONA RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION**
  - (602) 307-9134

- **TRAINING ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM**
  - (Home Study Program)
  - 1-888-826-5222

- **ARIZONA FOOD SAFETY CONSULTANTS**
  - (520) 636-3899

- **WAGLEY CONSULTING, INC**
  - (520) 634-3390

The University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Workshop & Certification Exam Program consists of a three hour exam preparation workshop and the certification exam (1-1.5 hours) developed and processed by Experior Assessments. The schedule for the program and registration information can be found on page 2 of this newsletter.

Every food establishment in Yavapai County is required to have at least one employee pass a Food Manager Safety Certification Exam before January 1, 2002.

Be certified for excellence. Pass the Food Safety Certification Exam now!
SPANISH EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Miguel Gradillas, U of A Instructional Specialist, offers scheduled food handlers certification training in:

**Prescott**
1st Wednesday of month 9 am

**Prescott Valley**
3rd Wednesday 3 pm

**Cottonwood**
2nd Wednesday 9 am and 4th Wednesday 3 pm

He is also available to provide food handlers certification in outlying communities in Yavapai County. You can call and schedule a food handlers certification training in your area. He also offers other employee training programs.

Call to get more information and also to schedule a training session for your employees. Employee training is available in English and Spanish.

In Prescott, call 771-3385
In Cottonwood, call 639-8138

The Spanish Handlers Certification is $10 per person. Free for volunteers.

To schedule an employee training program for your restaurant employees call Miguel for scheduling. Miguel is also available to answer questions and provide you with educational information and printed materials to help with employee education and training.

FOOD SAFETY CONSORTIUM

The Yavapai County Food Safety Education Consortium is reconvening after limited activity for the past year. The first meeting for the year 2001 will be in July. The purpose of the Food Safety Education Consortium is to bring together a group of individuals from the food service industry and consumers to provide input and direction for the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Food Safety Education Program. This program is a partnership with the County Environmental Health Department. We are currently recruiting representatives from various food service establishments (restaurants, schools, health centers, resorts, supermarkets, etc.) as well as consumers. The consortia will meet three times a year. Some of the topics/issues to be addressed will include:

What training needs do food establishments have for managers and employees?
What type of recognition system would you like to see provided for food service establishments?

How can we make Yavapai County a Safer Place to Eat?

We are currently offering a consumer food safety education program, Fight BAC! What additional training/information can we provide for consumers?

Should the restaurant ratings be listed on the web or in the newspaper? What are the benefits? What are the risks?

How can we improve the reporting of food borne related illnesses in Yavapai County?

The University of Arizona Cooperative Extension is offering at a very low cost manager workshop and certification exam, Spanish Food Handlers Certification, Master Employee Level 1-2 (starts in November), and consumer education. What other training, education, and research should they offer?

If you are interested in participating in the consortium, please call Marta Elva Stuart, Food Safety Project Manager, at (520) 445-6590.
THE BIG THREE RISK FACTORS

According to the latest science-based studies discussed at the recent Southwest Food Safety Conference, May 9 and 10, 2001, in Laughlin, NV, three of the greatest risk factors for foodborne disease in food establishments are:

1. Improper holding of food with regard to amount of time and correct temperature.

2. Poor personal hygiene of food workers.

3. Contaminated cooking equipment and poor protection of food from contamination.

Improper holding occurs when the temperature of food to be served drifts into the Danger Zone (41 to 140 degrees F). Scientific Studies have shown that bacteria grow rapidly in this zone increasing to amounts that cause illness by infection and/or toxin production. Even though the food is cooked, spore-producing bacteria are still present and alive. Also, the food could have been contaminated with live bacteria when handled or transferred from the original cooking container.

Personal hygiene, including keeping hands clean, is very critical to food safety. Scientific studies show that unwashed hands carry and transfer hazardous microorganisms to food. The microorganisms involved could be Staphylococcus sp., Escherichia coli, Salmonella sp., Shigella sp., Hepatitis A virus, Norwalk virus and others. These organisms can cause serious illnesses, especially if the food is time or temperature abused after hand contamination. Examples of abuse are:

1. Food not cooked to the required temperature for the required time as indicated in the FDA and Arizona Food Codes.

2. Cooked food not cooled to 41 degrees F within 4 hours or from 140 degrees F to 70 degrees F in 2 hours and 70 to 41 degrees F within the next 4 hours.

3. Food not held at the required temperature; cold food at 45 degrees F or below (preferably 41 degrees F or below), hot food at 140 degrees or higher now (to be changed to 130 or higher later this year when the new Arizona Food Code is official).

Kitchen equipment must be washed, rinsed and sanitized after every use. This is especially critical for surfaces used in preparing raw meats. Laboratory studies have shown that improper cleaning leaves a thin film on surfaces. This biofilm contains millions of microorganisms. The microorganisms present contaminate the next batch of food being prepared. This creates the potential for foodborne illness.
Mission Statement

Our mission is to protect all residents of Yavapai County from food borne related illnesses due to food contamination and/or food intoxication by providing user friendly research-based education and training.

Goals

To provide practical research-based education, information, and guidance to retail food managers, employees, and consumers, in order to improve safe food practices in Yavapai County.

To educate restaurant managers and owners about safe food practices, practical research application, and assist in preparation for food manager certification testing.

To provide training and education to food service employees about food safety principles and sanitation practices by providing entry level & advanced training programs in Spanish and English.

To assist consumers in making informed decisions related to food safe handling and consumption by providing community workshops and information through food safety education programs including the national food safety program, Fight BAC.

To investigate, develop and publish new and innovative programs and information that will enhance the food safety system in Yavapai County.

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