

A Collaborative Project: Many Agencies - One Voice

Responding to Emerging Issues in Food Safety

Approved Sources of Meat and Poultry for Food Facilities

Minnesota Department of Agriculture; University of Minnesota Extension

Introduction
The purpose of this factsheet is to describe the conditions under which food facilities in Minnesota may safely and legally buy or accept meat and poultry from local or large-scale foodservice distributors.

This document may not answer every question that you have about these regulations. You will find links and contact information within the text of the factsheet for sources of additional information.

Definitions
Food facilities: restaurants, caterers, school food service, institutions, day cares, community centers, churches, hospitals, health care facilities, food shelves/banks, grocery stores, food markets, farmers' markets, cooperatives, bakeries, convenience stores, food stands, mobile food units, warehouses, and wholesale food processors and manufacturers.

Poultry Inspection Program (commonly called *Egg*) is the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Safety Inspection Service (FSIS).

What does "inspected continuously" mean?
This means that the meat or poultry business is inspected every day during operations to ensure that they are producing safe food. For example, every annual slaughterhouse inspection is a continuous inspection because the meat comes from an animal free from disease.

Harvest: alternate term for slaughter.

Hand Sanitizers: Not a Replacement for Handwashing in Food Service Settings

Minnesota Department of Agriculture; Minnesota Department of Health; University of Minnesota Extension

Introduction
Handwashing with soap and water is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of bacteria and viruses—the causes of foodborne illness. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are effective in killing bacteria and some viruses on clean hands. However, sanitizers may not be used instead of handwashing by food service employees.

WHY can't hand sanitizers be used instead of handwashing in food service settings?
The hands of foodworkers are often wet, often contaminated with fatty material or with food high in proteins. The presence of water, food, fatty materials, feces, and blood on the hands can significantly reduce the effectiveness of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Viruses such as norovirus are also a concern in food service settings. Norovirus is the leading cause of foodborne outbreaks. Hand sanitizers do not kill norovirus.

- Select a hand sanitizer containing at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Apply a dime-size amount of sanitizer on the palm of one hand.
- Rub hands together vigorously for 30 seconds on all surfaces of both hands. If hands are dry after 10-15 seconds, not enough sanitizer was used and more must be applied.

Safe Use of Salad Bars in Schools

Minnesota Department of Agriculture; Minnesota Department of Health; University of Minnesota Extension

Introduction
Research and experience have shown that school children significantly increase their consumption of fruits and vegetables when they are given a variety of choices at a school fruit and vegetable salad bar. This experience can lead to a lifetime of healthy food choices. Therefore, public and private agencies throughout the country are working together to expand the use of salad bars. (www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/ehp/cdnr/nutrition/FIS/saladbars-schools.html)

The Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture encourages schools to follow food safety standards and best practices with all foods served in school meal programs. The addition of salad bars to these programs raises new concerns. This fact sheet provides answers to frequently asked questions about regulatory and food safety matters related to salad bars in Minnesota schools.

Part One: Regulatory Matters
Can any school have a self-service salad bar?
Yes. There has been some confusion that salad bars are only allowed in elementary schools if the food is either pre-wrapped or served by a school nutrition employee. This is not the case.

When time and temperature sensitive foods are added to the menu, you will need standard procedures to support your HACCP plan for safely handling these items. Such procedures might include guidelines for purchasing, receiving, storage, washing, processing, holding, temperature logging, serving and re-serving of fresh produce.

What kind of equipment will we need?

Existing Food Facilities Planning to Can Fresh Foods for Sale or Service

Minnesota Department of Agriculture; Minnesota Department of Health; University of Minnesota Extension

Introduction
If your menu include fresh food items canned in your facility or do you sell these items in your business? Are you planning to expand your menu or business to include fresh food items canned in your facility?

There are a number of food safety and regulatory requirements to consider. Many of these requirements are the same for the fresh foods come from your regular commercial sources, or from new sources of locally produced food. You would like to sell your salsas, jams, or pickles as retail items as well as serving them, other regulations may apply. This fact sheet provides a brief discussion of these food safety and regulatory issues, and links to websites for more information.

Regulation and Licensure
Acid and Acidified Foods

Serving Locally Grown Produce in Food Facilities

Minnesota Department of Agriculture; Minnesota Department of Health; University of Minnesota Extension

Introduction
Can food facilities like restaurants, grocery stores, and school lunch programs legally buy or accept donated produce from a farmers' market or directly from a grower and serve it to their clients, students, or customers?

The answer is "Yes." In fact, this trend has been on the rise since 2003. This fact sheet provides answers to some frequently asked questions about how food facilities can use locally grown produce safely and legally.

Definitions
Food facilities: restaurants, caterers, school food service, institutions, day cares, community centers, churches, hospitals, health care facilities, food shelves/banks, grocery stores, food markets, cooperatives, bakeries, convenience stores, temporary food stands, warehouses and wholesale food processors and manufacturers.

This includes growers selling their own whole produce or produce with "limited processing" (as described below). (Minnesota Statutes 28A.15 and MN Constitution Article 13, Section 7.)

- People who sell or donate produce that is "processed" (as described below) are normally required to be licensed.
- People who wish to sell produce that they have not

Project Coordinators / Websites
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Deborah Durkin, MPH, MDH Department of Health
www.health.state.mn.us/foodsafety/
Jim Topie, REHS, Minnesota Department of Agriculture
www.mda.state.mn.us/en/food/safety/food-safety-resources.aspx

Can I buy and serve farm fresh eggs at my restaurant?

Can small children serve themselves at a salad bar and still be safe? Can any school have a salad bar?

We have chickens and a garden. We hope to sell eggs and produce at the corner market. Is it OK to do that?



Scan here for fact sheets

Abstract

Nine fact sheets were developed by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Minnesota Department of Health, and University of Minnesota Extension to address frequently asked questions, and to clarify a variety of exemptions, issues, rules and regulations related to selling and serving food in Minnesota.

These fact sheets serve as one voice to establish a more effective food protection model that achieves compliance through partnership, collaboration and training.

Background

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and University of Minnesota Extension have traditionally worked toward food safety among different but overlapping segments of Minnesota's population.

MDA food inspectors license and inspect groceries, bakeries, farmers' markets and food manufacturing plants. MDH food inspectors license and inspect restaurants, schools, youth camps and hotels. Minnesota Extension provides more consumer services (e.g., food preservation training and information) than the state agencies, and provides food safety training for the food industry.

Two 'movements' motivated this collaboration. The first is our statewide effort to create an integrated food safety system. The Food Safety Modernization Act calls on state and local officials to strengthen partnerships and to make the most efficient possible use of all available food safety resources. The second is the "local food" movement which has led to more farmers' markets selling more kinds of food, salad bars in schools, food swaps, tomatoes grown on rooftops, and a general blurring and mixing of the roles, functions, and players in the world of food.

These changing circumstances and concerns motivated project partners to work together to provide fact sheets on topics related to the work of all three agencies and those we serve.

Project Description

Minnesota Departments of Agriculture and Health and University of Minnesota Extension working with other partners, developed nine fact sheets on food safety topics.

Outcomes of the Collaboration

Partnership and Engagement

- Increased collaboration among participating agencies and better understanding of food safety standards by those we serve
- Review process that utilizes the skills and knowledge of technical, scientific, editorial and managerial staff

Information and Education

- Clear, accurate fact sheets regarding the science and regulation of emerging food safety issues, with reference to additional resources; posted on all three agency websites
- For the first time, fact sheets provide one answer from all three agencies for regulated industry, local regulators and inspectors, and interested stakeholders

Policy and Planning

- Assistance for public health and industry partners' efforts to apply new concepts to local economies and settings
- Providing multi-agency direction for sustainable trends in the food safety and broader communities

Project Evaluation

In March 2012, project partners developed a survey to solicit feedback on usage, application and helpfulness of the fact sheets, as well as suggested topics for additional fact sheets. The survey was sent to 2,297 individuals on the Minnesota Food Safety Partnership mailing listserv.

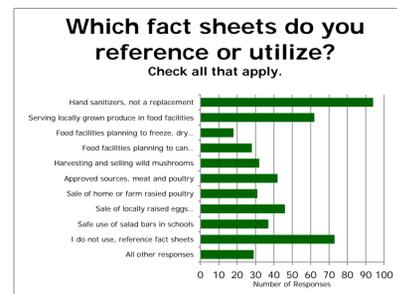
Two hundred twenty-two (10%) responses were received. Respondents included sanitarians/inspectors, compliance officers, educators, certified food managers and other individuals working in public health and the food industry.

Evaluation Results

Depending on the question, between 32 to 43 percent of respondents reported that they were unaware of the fact sheets or did not use them. Of those who used the fact sheets, respondents most often reported using the earliest developed and least specialized fact sheet, "Hand Sanitizers, Not a Replacement for Handwashing."

The survey also served as a marketing tool for the fact sheets. Upon completing the survey, respondents were linked to a website where all nine fact sheets are posted.

After being informed that the fact sheets exist and told where to find them, 58.5% (131) said they were "extremely likely" or "likely" to use them.



Evaluation Results, Continued

Fifty-five percent (120) of respondents reported using the fact sheets as reference materials. Others reported distributing them to food establishments, and using the fact sheets for training food workers, or regulatory staff.

Regarding impact, 48% (106) responded that the fact sheets had increased their awareness and understanding of state and local rules and regulations; 35% (78) said the materials had helped to dispel misconceptions regarding state and local laws. Twenty-eight percent of respondents indicated that availability of the fact sheets resulted in fewer questions from clients. Thirty-six percent (79) said they hadn't used the fact sheets.

Seventeen respondents listed other impacts such as, "Helps convince employees that hand sanitizers do not replace the mechanical action of hands in water. Without the fact sheet, I don't think the employees would just take my word for it." and "(Fact sheets provide) factual information from a dependable source for me to quote."

Next Steps

The three agencies will continue to work together to provide guidance on issues of common interest, guided by requests for new topics from this evaluation and other sources. They plan to better publicize future products.

