

Reaching Consumers

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ASL-R691

Summary and Implications

The Food Safety Consortium (FSC) Web site project has expanded its content significantly this past year with new initiatives, a full set of HACCP procedures with examples for small meat processors and a biotechnology section. A presentation on biotechnology has been downloaded more than 300 times since its posting in a 3 month period. We have continued our partnership with the University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada, to provide daily international food safety news from newswires and scientific journals. More than 38,000 consumers have accessed and completed one of the four interactive food safety lessons. Additionally, more than 264,000 consumers had 467,000 page views accessed through the Food Safety Web site home page or one of its links for a total of 2,744,880 hits last year. Visitors from 77 countries accessed our site and used our information about the source, symptoms, and methods of preventing *Staphylococcus*, *Salmonella*, and *Listeriosis*. Companies or net providers accounted for 71% of the hits. Users visited the site for an average of 10-1/2 minutes per session, far above average.

- Improve understanding of risks and responsible practices in relation to food and health through increased knowledge.
- Maintain and enhance presence of Food Safety Consortium Web at www.foodsafety.iastate.edu/.
- Post research findings on the Consortium Web site as they become available.
www.foodsafety.iastate.edu/ and links to www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsafety

Materials and Methods

We provided people with information in various formats. News releases addressing current food safety concerns were posted to the World Wide Web (WWW) for immediate access by media. The WWW and print media enabled us to disseminate food safety information by providing access to links to Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP), food law information and government agencies, on-going research from the Food Safety Consortium, educational tools, such as "Ten Steps to a

Safe Kitchen," food safety news, descriptions of common foodborne pathogens, and probable sources of foodborne illness and seasonal food safety tips.

Interest in the information provided is high as visitors spend an average of 10-1/2 minutes per session on the site. The most visited topics were about *Staphylococcus*, *Listeria*, *Clostridium perfringens*, and the daily food safety news update.

Results and Discussion

The newest section of the Food Safety Consortium site is a HACCP demonstration site (<http://www.iowahaccp.iastate.edu>) for small meat processors. The purpose of this section is to provide meat processors with guidelines to facilitate the implementation of HACCP procedures in their operations as required by state and federal law. Content for the site was developed in partnership with Joseph Cordray, Ph.D., and Gustavo Gonzalez, Ph.D. of the Department of Animal Science, Iowa State University. Sample hazard analysis guidelines, critical control points (CCPs), process flow diagrams, control logs, and sample operating procedures are available for beef, pork, lamb, and poultry slaughter. Sample operating procedures are available for downloading by users of the site.

The Consortium Website continues to maintain and respond to inquiries on many topics, including biotechnology and food irradiation. A complete presentation on biotechnology issues (<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsafety/biotech/slideshow/index.htm>) for the livestock and meat industry by Marjorie Faust from Iowa State University Extension is available for viewing and downloading. Approximately 100 copies of this presentation are requested each month from site users around the world. The presentation was based on an Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) position paper.

Information on food irradiation (<http://www.foodsafety.iastate.edu/abstract.html>) includes a consumer friendly description of how it works, visual depiction of the Iowa State University linear accelerator, a history of irradiation, commonly-asked consumer questions, a glossary of terms, irradiation resources, and research findings. Consumers and professionals can request copies of Dr. Dennis Olson's IFT publication "Irradiation of Food: Scientific Status." Visitors are directed to contact Dr. Jim Dickson for additional questions about food irradiation and biotechnology.

A pilot program to assist child nutrition program (CNP) managers implement HACCP procedures in their operations was started. Seventeen managers were educated through a 2 day training course on HACCP and food safety principles. At the completion of the 1999-2000 school year, three CNP program directors had successfully implemented HACCP in their

operations which serve 36,000,000 meals annually. The FS&Q team is working to complete a Web based HACCP education model for commercial and institutional foodservice workers to complement this program and be available as a reference. The model and web-site will be resources for other foodservice managers as they implement HACCP programs in their operation.

The Consumer Control Points, based on HACCP principles, were highlighted on a colorful bookmark for distribution to consumers. More than 45,000 bookmarks have been distributed. Additionally, reprinting privileges have been given to numerous organizations. ISU Extension nutrition and health field specialists regularly access the food safety Web pages and links to the Food Safety Consortium site and use the material to develop programs, media releases, and portable displays for fairs, expositions, schools, and retail establishments.

The site has received recognition from WebMD through a question and answer session done by Dr. Jim Huss. Links2Go has publicized the site as a prominent food safety resource and the Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry has referenced the site as an international source of food safety information.

We have received accolades from consumers, educational institutions, organizations, and mass media in many states, including Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New Jersey, New York, Nevada, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia. We also received requests and accolades from international visitors from countries such as Australia, Chile, Croatia, Ecuador, Finland, France, Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, Romania, Singapore, and Sweden.