

# — COOPERATIVE — EXTENSION

Through Extension programs across the nation, Family and Consumer Science Extension Educators provide a multitude of educational opportunities to meet the needs of diverse audiences

## Food Safety

Food borne illnesses cause more than 48 million incidents, 128,000 hospitalizations, and 3,000 deaths in the United States each year with an estimated cost of \$1,850 per foodborne illness. Most cases of foodborne illness can be prevented by knowing how to properly cook or process foods to destroy bacteria.

Extension FCS agents help everyone from home cooks to farmers to restaurateurs keep food safe from farm to table. Here are some ways we do that.

### Food Safety for Food Handlers

**ServSafe** classes, developed by the National Restaurant Association, provide a curriculum and testing that gives consistency for certification across the country. In 2012, Extension educators, who were certified instructors, held over 900 **Serv-Safe** classes certifying over 36,000 individuals in **Arkansas, Alabama, Delaware, Utah, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, and Wyoming.**

Several states, developed their own food safety programs for state certification. In **Texas**, more than 791 food service employees passed the Certified Food Manager Exam taught by Extension educators.



### Entrepreneurial Food Safety

**Pennsylvania** and **Maryland** co-sponsored *Safe Food Handling—Food for Profit* entrepreneurship training that was customized to meet local needs with 1,176 entrepreneurs participating. Extension educators provide programs for organizations that work with food pantries and other non-profit groups that provide food for the needy.

**Pennsylvania** presented 45 workshops reaching 1064 participants from 217 non-profit agencies with food safety in the program, *Cooking for Crowds: A Volunteer's Guide to Safe Food Handling*. **Mississippi** provided safe food-handling workshops to over 35 non-profit organizations that work with food pantries.

**Georgia, Virginia,** and **South Carolina** trained 217 farmers and 55 farmers market managers through a program called *Enhancing the Safety of Locally Grown Produce*. Up to 59% of farmers and 75% of managers identified specific changes that enhanced the safety of their produce. **Michigan** hosted *Cottage Food Law Food Safety* training in 22 counties. In 26 **North Carolina** Counties 780 market/vendors were trained.

### Home Food Safety

Along with certifications for food service, food safety for households is a concern. Food Safety for individuals is critical for keeping family meal time safe. We offer food preservation classes, pressure canner gauge testing and rapid-response via electronic information to meet families' food safety needs.

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## Home Food Safety continued

### *Food Preservation Classes*

Educators in **Florida** taught over 190 classes in 2012 reaching 2,880 participants. In **Maine**, 83 series/workshops reached 1,557 participants and over 93,000 viewed a seven-part series of "How-To" food preservation of popular **Maine** foods via web based videos.

Consumer interest in growing produce and/or purchasing locally grown food, has increased the need for canning, freezing and food preserving information. 70% of **Ohio** food safety participants used produce from their backyard garden. **New York** developed "*The Canning Core*" food preservation curricula. In **Alaska**, 6 agents taught more than 80 safe food preservation classes and workshops in 20 communities reaching 949 people, including 125 youth. **Wyoming** Extension Educators reached 401 individuals with home food preservation training.

More than 800 canner gauges were tested to insure the gauge accuracy for equipment used for home canning in **Alaska**. **Mississippi** tested pressure gauges and held "hands-on" workshops across the state in local offices. **Alaska** Extension was "centerfold" with a featured article on canning in "Alaska Magazine", an internationally distributed magazine with a readership of 260,000 people.

### *Electronic, Television, other Media*

Along with traditional classes and programs, use of video conferencing, blogs, and other media allows Extension educators to reach families and businesses "where they are" and answer direct questions for individuals. Interactive video allows instant ability to teach and answer questions.

Television and web programming create awareness of accessing Extension's expertise in food safety, food preservation, and home preparation. Through exhibits, newspaper articles, publications, radio, television, and web sites, more than 244,885 contacts were made in **Tennessee** and over 11,100 individual contacts in **Wyoming**.

**eXtension.org** continues to be a well utilized resource for all Extension educators on Nutrition, Food Safety and Food Preservation as educators have contributed fact sheets, programs, and resources to this site. In addition, information covering child care; drinking water and human health; families, food and fitness; family care giving, parenting, and personal finance. New research-based resources are added continually for consumers and professionals.

**NEAFCS** is the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences.

**NEAFCS** provides professional development for Extension professionals who improve the quality of life for individuals, families, and communities and provide education in:

- Food preparation, food safety, and nutrition
- Financial management
- Healthy lifestyles
- Home and work environment and safety
- Relationships and parenting skills

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