



Food Safety Monthly Update

Information from the desk of State Extension Consumer Food Safety Specialist

November 2013

Welcome to the third edition of the Kansas State University/University of Missouri Extension Food Safety update. This update is intended to provide timely, credible food safety information to county/district FCS agents, regional Food and Nutrition Specialists, as well as anyone else interested in such information. I hope this is helpful to you- please let me know any comments or questions you may have on this newsletter or any other food safety matters.

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Thanksgiving food safety-related resources

The holiday season is rapidly approaching, which usually involves lots of eating, and thus food safety concerns. A few resources that may be useful:

- Press release on Thanksgiving food safety tips: www.ksre.ksu.edu/news/story/Thanksgiving_cooking110513.aspx
- A blog posting on why you shouldn't wash your turkey (or other meats) before cooking: <http://nutritionmythbusters.blogspot.com/>
- A [video with Temple Grandin](#), animal welfare expert at Colorado State U, showing a turkey farm and processing plant to provide transparency of how turkeys are raised and processed.

- A [Food Safety shopping list](#) of items to be sure to have on hand before the Holidays from Fight Bac! I plan to publish another holiday food safety press release and blog posting (will be at the same URL as above) in early December, but wanted to get these Thanksgiving resources to you before Thanksgiving, so stay tuned for those future resources.

Press release on Food Safety in Pregnancy

A [press release](#) on food safety in pregnancy was published in October, based on the fact sheet on the same topic I mentioned in the previous newsletter.

Food Safety Modernization Act/ FDA Food Code

Some of you may have been hearing recently about new federal food safety legislation.

- 1) President Obama signed the Food Safety Modernization Act into Law in January 2011. In January 2013, proposed rules were released on Produce Safety and "Preventative Controls" (affecting food processors and food storage facilities). The comment period for these rules was recently re-extended to November 22, 2013. Information on FSMA is available from [FDA](#) (including how to comment) and [University of Vermont Extension](#) (my previous job). Produce growers, processors, consumers,

and anyone interested in the food chain and food safety are encouraged to comment. We will provide more information when the final rules are published (which may be a while).

- 2) The FDA released the 2013 Food Code on Nov 14, 2013. The Code provides information on the most up-to-date food safety practices based on science for food retail and foodservice operations (stores and restaurants, etc.). States need to then decide if they will adopt part or all of the Food Code. The entire Code and a Summary of Changes from the previous (2009) version of the food code is available [here](#).

I wanted to at least provide you all with this general information, but please feel free to let me know if you would like more detailed information or have specific questions.

Food Allergies in Schools resource available

On October 31, the CDC released a new food allergy resource, *Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies in Schools and Early Care and Education Programs*. It was developed in consultation with USDA, the US Department of Education, and other federal agencies, to ensure consistency. The publication also includes definitions of a food allergy and a useful list of things that kids might say which may indicate that they have a food allergy. It is available from: www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/foodallergies/

Pathogens in spices- FDA risk profile

In early November, FDA released a [draft risk profile of Pathogens in Spices](#). The information in that document is very similar to that which was published in a scientific journal article this summer, from which I developed a [Food Contamination infosheet](#). NPR also recently

published an [interview with a McCormick spice buyer](#) that provides useful information.

Food Safety Q&A

Q. Is it safe to cook in unlined copper pots? How about using copper cookie cutters for cookies?

Copper cookie cutters should be safe and not toxic, particularly if the dough is not too acidic (which is not common in cookie dough). In fact, recent research is looking at the antimicrobial properties of copper as a food contact surface:

www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0740002011002735.

However, cooking in unlined copper pots, particularly if the food is acidic, can cause copper toxicity. Unlined copper can be relatively easily dissolved by acidic foods, which may cause nausea, vomiting and diarrhea with sufficient quantities. Copper pots lined with tin or stainless steel are safe. More information is available: www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/food/food_safety/handling/hgic3864.html.

Q. Is it safe to cook an entire chicken or large piece of meat in a slow cooker?

USDA recently revised their recommendations that it IS safe to cook an entire chicken or whole pieces of meat in a slow cooker. However, they do specify that you should check with the slow cooker instruction book on the maximum size of meat that would be safe in your particular slow cooker. One of the most important food safety considerations for cooking meat in a slow cooker is to be sure that the meat is thawed before cooking. More information is available [in USDA's slow cooker fact sheet](#) (updated in 2012).

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