



The Market News

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Winter 2003

Craven County
Health Department

It's The Most Wonderful Time of the Year!

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It's that time of year again and holiday get-togethers just wouldn't be the same without all of that good food! If your market is providing pre-packaged holiday meals please keep the following in mind:

*Pre-packaged meals take up a lot of refrigeration space. Plan ahead and make sure your establishment has enough refrigerated storage. Do not overload refrigeration units! The air must be able to circulate to keep foods 45°F or below. Monitor food temperatures in these areas regularly.

*Providing hot meals? Pre-cooked foods must be re-

heated to at least 165°F and then maintained at 140°F until picked up by the customer. Many customers may wish to pick up their meals at the same time so make sure you have enough equipment to heat all foods thoroughly. Steam tables may not be used to re-heat food!

*Packaging hot and cold foods together in the same carry-out box will cause hot foods to cool and cold foods to warm. Harmful microorganisms can grow best at temperatures between 45°F and 140°F. Packaging these foods separately will help keep them out of this



Food Safety is important during the holidays too!

temperature Danger Zone!

Provide customers with food safety literature which includes information on safe re-heating and hot/cold holding temperatures. Contact your local health inspector for more information 636-4936.



Hey, I think I'll share
The Market News
with
everyone in our store!

Up Front...

During the holidays the lines at the registers can really get long. Everyone just has to have that last minute item! However, rushing to get the groceries bagged and the customers out the door could lead to trouble. Remember that foods like raw chicken or turkey can cross-



contaminate ready-to-eat foods like fruit. Please remind your cashiers and baggers to place raw foods in separate bags! Remember that shell eggs are RAW! Also, when a package

of drippy raw meat comes through the line or an egg gets broken clean the conveyor or check out counter and have staff wash their hands or use disposable hand wipes and waterless hand sanitizer as soon as possible.

Keep the Pests Out!

Cold weather sends our furry friends, mice and rats, scurrying indoors looking for a warm place to spend the Winter months. Keep these pests out of your establishment by following a few simple guidelines:

*Make sure there is a tight seal around all exterior doors when they are closed. (Especially those which open to the back of the store by the dumpster!)

*Do not allow trash to accumulate or be stacked for long periods of time inside the store.

*Tightly bag items before placing in the

dumpster and keep dumpsters and trash cans clean.

*Keep dumpster doors closed and make sure trash is picked up as often as necessary.

*Do not store items on the floor or directly against the walls. Rodents like to travel



Could I bring my friends into your market for the winter?

along walls where they can remain hidden. Keeping these spaces open and visible removes their hiding places!

*Train employees to look for signs of infestation (droppings, chewed packaging, etc.) and have them notify management if there is a problem.

*If necessary, work with a licensed pest control operator to help prevent or control pests.

Safe Food Temperatures

When harmful microorganisms are present on food there are certain factors they need to grow. Two of the factors which we can control are time and temperature. These germs multiply the quickest when foods are stored at temperatures between 45°F and 140°F, known as the temperature DANGER ZONE. The longer a food spends in the DANGER ZONE (time) the greater the number of microorganisms and the greater the chance of a customer be-

coming sick! When preparing or storing foods it is important to keep them out of the DANGER ZONE. Make sure all coolers or hot-holding devices are maintaining food at proper tempera-

"Keep potentially hazardous foods stored at temperatures below 45°F or above 140°F. Avoid the temperature DANGER ZONE!"

tures. All coolers should have accurate thermometers that are easily visible. Defrost cycles should not allow foods to reach DANGER ZONE temperatures. When foods are stored on ice they should be protected from contamination and the ice should contact enough surface area of the food container to maintain proper temperatures. Use a clean food thermometer to monitor temperatures in your establishment.

Take a Look at Your Display Cases (Your customers do!)

The moisture found in meat and produce display cases provides a great environment for rust, mold and mildew. Dirty display cases not only turn customers off but these unsanitary surfaces could potentially contaminate the foods that are stored on them. Keep display cases in good shape so cleaning them will be a snap! Repair peeling paint and remove rust. If re-painting is necessary be sure to use a paint which is approved for use in food storage areas as

well as one that will hold up in the cold, wet conditions of a display cooler. Don't forget to clean the dividers used to separate items. Many times these can be removed and cleaned in the dish sink.

Don't forget to clean around those air vents. Dusty build-up in this area could prevent the cold air from circulating properly and allow foods to reach the temperature DANGER ZONE!



Show your customers you care and keep your display cases clean and sanitary!

Display cases have to be maintained so that they can be cleaned properly.

Seafood Safety

If your establishment sells shellfish or cooked crustacea in the meat or seafood market please keep the following information in mind!

*Shellfish and cooked crustacea meat must be purchased from an approved source.

*Shucked shellfish and cooked crustacea meat must be stored in its original container clearly identified with the name/address of the packer, repacker and the state or territory. Shucked shellfish containers must also be dated in accordance with 15A NCAC 18A .0600.



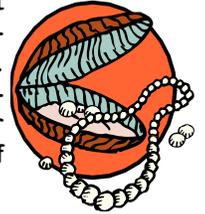
*Live shellfish must be stored in the containers in which packed at the source with the identification tags attached. Once the container is emptied, the tags must be kept on file for 90 days.

*Shellfish identification tags must include the following information: shipper name/address, certificate number, name of state and waters from which the shellfish were taken, kind and quantity of the shellstock in

the container and the name/address of the consignee.

*Shellstock must be stored under mechanical refrigeration at 45°F or below.

All establishments that prepare, serve or sell raw shellfish must post a consumer advisory in a conspicuous place where it may be readily observed by the public. Please notify our office or your inspector if you need copies of this advisory.



No Knife Dipping...

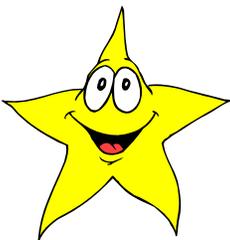
Inspectors across our state have noticed that some meat markets use buckets of sanitizing solution to dip or store their knives in while they are working. The intention is to sanitize the knives but the particles of muscle, fat, blood, etc that are present prevent the sanitizer from doing its job and the knife remains contaminated. In order to achieve a sani-

tized surface the knife must first be washed and rinsed. Also, the particles that are carried with the knife into the bucket of sanitizer may combine with the active chemicals (such as bleach) and deplete the solution to levels below those required for sanitizing. Remember that bleach water solutions must be at least 50 parts per million and quaternary ammonia

solutions must be at least 200 parts per million. Keep the proper sanitizer test strips available to make sure your sanitizers are mixed and maintained at the proper strengths.



Job Well Done!



Kudos to Wal-Mart for sending Jeff Driver to the Serv-Safe managers class and Michael Cope to the 8-hour food safety class presented by the Craven County Health Department. If a full-time employee in charge of operations in the deli or produce department successfully completes the Serv-Safe managers class your

establishment will qualify for two extra points on each health inspection for three years! If you have employees, new or old-timers, that you would like to send to a food safety training course please contact your local health inspector at 636-4936 for a schedule of upcoming classes. We also encourage you to provide food safety training to all employees (especially those new to food service). Whether your training is on-the-job, lecture or technology (computer) based it should allow trainees to

apply what they have learned, with feedback on their performance. Free food safety handouts are available from our office to use as visual reminders for your staff. Contact your local health inspector to request any of these items at 636-4936.

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Department**

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Working Together For Your Health.

**Wanted:
Your Comments**

Please use the contact information above to let us know of topics you would like to see addressed and/or what you think of the Market News!

**The Craven County Food and Lodging Staff
Wishes Everyone a
Safe and Happy Holiday Season!**

