

IMPACT



Family and Consumer Sciences, PO Box 443183, Moscow, ID 83844-3183; 208-885-6972; Fax: 208-885-5751

Ready, Set, Food Safe: Preparing Teens for Safe Food Handling

The Situation

About one-third of employed youth, 15-17 years of age, work in food service. Over 70% of teens work in food service as their first job.

Increasingly, the foods Americans eat are prepared by others, via a variety of food service formats. Half of the total food expenditures in 2004 were spent on food away from home.

Many Idaho high schools have vocational food service programs, including in-school cafes or bakeries, where food is prepared for public sale.

It is important to food service customers and owners that the youth employed are well trained in food safety procedures and perform well on the job.

Our Response

University of Idaho Extension faculty teamed with high school teachers to develop and deliver Ready, Set, Food Safe, a food service food safety curriculum, in schools throughout Idaho.

The curriculum teaches the regulations of the *Idaho Food Code* and is approved by the state Food Protection Program. When students pass the certification test, they receive an Idaho food safety and sanitation certificate ("food handlers' card"), which meets *Idaho Food Code* requirements.

The *Ready, Set Food Safe* curriculum contains nine lessons to cover critical food safety topics, each with

PowerPoint slides to make it easy for teachers and extension educators to demonstrate the content. Sixteen of the slides contain imbedded audio or video clips to more fully illustrate the material. Student Fill-in Notes for each lesson provide a guide



for student study before the certification test. Experiential activities (26) throughout the lessons reinforce the food safety concepts. Examples of activities include collecting and analyzing data related to cooling foods, an activity to identify white powders to stress

the importance of labeling, disclosure of handwashing skills with UV-sensitive lotion, and cooking a hamburger to learn how to correctly use an instant-read thermometer.



The curriculum was extensively updated in 2005 to include new Idaho regulations and learning enhancements. One enhancement was the addition of nine food safety songs, as an aide to learning and to maintain interest in the topics. The songs are popular

tunes with the lyrics replaced with food safety information; the songs were written by a well known food scientist at the University of California-Davis.

Program Outcomes

Since August 2002, *Ready, Set, Food Safe* has been taught to 201 classrooms of Idaho high school students and 3,194 students have received an Idaho food safety and sanitation certificate. See table.

School Year	Number of Classrooms	Number of students participating	Number of students receiving a food safety and sanitation certificate
2002/03	34	723	520
2003/04	44	803	609
2004/05	68	1,697	1,228
2005/06 to Feb. 06	55	1,150	837

When students were asked open-ended questions about their food safety knowledge, attitudes and behaviors, the topics that they most frequently mentioned as most important were:

- Preventing illness in themselves or others.
- Hand washing and personal hygiene.
- Avoiding cross-contamination.
- Using/checking correct cooking temperatures.



Some comments received about *Ready, Set, Food Safe*:

"I do not want to make others sick. I want to take the precautions carefully because I wouldn't want to endanger them because of my mistake." Post Falls High School student

"I am so very appreciative of...the new food safety unit. It was a big hit with the students!! I was told by them to tell you they liked the songs. As for me—it broke up the seriousness of the subjects and made it easier to teach for an entire 90 minutes and keep them involved." Family and Consumer Sciences teacher, Kuna High School

"I am very impressed with this food safety program. The lessons are very well organized with wonderful visuals and well explained concepts. The content and hands on activities are very appropriate for high school students, and the review points at the end of each lesson reinforce the main concepts of the units. I like the fact that in addition to the food code updates, you included recommendations for consumers, so students can understand the differences. The exam questions are clear and understandable and at an appropriate level of difficulty." Peer Reviewer, Colorado State University

For More Information

Sandra McCurdy, Extension Food Safety Specialist
 School of Family and Consumer Sciences
 PO Box 443183
 Moscow, ID 83844-3183
 208-885-6972
 Fax: 208-885-5751
 Email: smccurdy@uidaho.edu

Joey Peutz, FCS Extension Educator
 University of Idaho Extension—Canyon County
 501 Main Street
 Caldwell, ID 83605
 208-459-6003
 Fax: 208-454-6349
 Email: joeyp@uidaho.edu

Laura Sant, FCS Extension Educator
 University of Idaho Extension—Franklin County
 561 W. Oneida Street
 Preston, ID 83263
 208-852-1097
 Fax: 208-852-2812
 Email: lsant@uidaho.edu

Carol Hampton, FCS Extension Educator
 University of Idaho Extension—Boundary County
 6447 Kootenai Street
 Bonners Ferry, ID 83805
 208-267-3235
 Fax: 208-267-3056
 Email: champton@uidaho.edu