

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT**

Nomination for the

**2006 CCDEH
Excellence in Environmental Health Award**

**FOOD SAFETY FACT SHEETS (FSFS)
Public Food Safety Information
For Sacramento County**

Overview

The Sacramento County Environmental Management Department (EMD) and the University Sacramento County Cooperative Extension (CE) established an ongoing partnership in 2004 to reduce foodborne illnesses within Sacramento County and provide residents with food safety information that can be used in the home environment.

Challenge

Cooperative Extension is the county-based educational and research branch of the University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

EMD is a comprehensive Environmental Health Department that implements a wide range of regulatory programs. The Food Protection Program maintains high public and media visibility due to the public concern regarding food safety.

EMD receives suspected foodborne illness complaints from residents that frequent restaurants and other retail food facilities. Many are unaware that food handling practices at home may be the culprit and this lack of understanding may cause people to needlessly become ill or die.

Although EMD staff investigates all consumer complaints regarding suspected foodborne illness for restaurants and other retail food facilities, restaurant staff frequently request food safety educational information for customers on home food preparation, storage and handling.

Solution

In 2006 EMD and CE created targeted food safety fact sheets to provide information to help residents prepare, store and handle food in a safe manner. The fact sheets are written in simple non-technical language and graphics are used to illustrate and highlight important information. Since 2004 the partnership has produced a total of 29 FSFS (three are in Spanish). FSFS feature a colorful masthead taken from the County website to establish recognition with the County “brand” and also includes masthead from CE signifying the partnership. Each FSFS contains contact information for additional assistance.

Cost Savings

FSFS are economical to produce and distribute to the public. The information provided is easily maintained as minimal updates are required. EMD staff is able to provide improved customer service to the public at a low cost. The staff can easily explain how to download the FSFS from the EMD website or mail a copy if requested to do so.

Results

EMD staff distribute FSFS annually at public outreach events, including: Food Safety Education Month festivities in partnership with the California Restaurant Association; Carmichael Founder’s Day Celebration with County Board Supervisor Peters; Earth Day Celebration at California State University, Sacramento, to name a few.

EMD staff also use the fact sheets to provide the media with information on holiday food safety during Thanksgiving, Easter and Christmas. FSFS are highlighted on the EMD website during the season of high demand for particular information. During the holiday season, Univision, Sacramento County's local Spanish television station provides a link to holiday food safety fact sheets to disseminate information to their customers. Representatives from Univision were so enthused about the FSFS; they assisted with the creation of the Spanish versions of the Holiday Food Safety fact sheets.

In addition, the County Board of Supervisors' Chiefs of Staff frequently seek consumer health and safety information to include in newsletters for their constituents and the FSFS are an easy way to forward useful information. FSFS provide needed food safety information to the public and are tools to help prevent foodborne illness.

Attachments (7 Food Safety Fact Sheets-FSFS)