

Program Report Card: Food Safety Program--Department of Consumer Protection

Quality of Life Result:

The goal is to establish a risk based food safety program by employing a uniform basis for measuring and improving the performance of packaged food from production to retail sale. The adoption and implementation of the FDA Program Standards will help direct regulatory activities at reducing the risk factors contributing to food borne illness. As a result the safety and security of *the Connecticut food supply will improve.*

Contribution to Result:

- Target and reduce the CDC identified risk factors that have an impact on food borne disease
- Promote the adoption of good practices by both DCP and the industry by working towards a less adversarial process through uniformity, outreach and training
- Reduce subjectivity in inspection through training and uniform practices

Partners: USDA, FDA, CT DPH, CT Agriculture & Industry

Performance Measure 1:

Using CDC identified risk factor guidelines, establish a baseline of the number of violations & re-inspections found through inspections of operations in Connecticut facilities. The top 5 identified risk factors are:

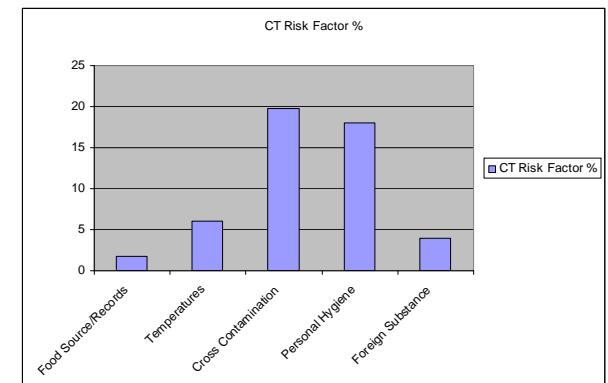
- **Approved Food Source and/or Record Keeping**
- **Poor Personnel Hygiene** (Personal Cleanliness, Keeping sick people away from food)
- **Contaminated Equipment/Preventing Contamination** (Minimize cross contamination, e.g., raw from cooked)

- **Inadequate Cooking and proper time and temperature for food holding** (Promoting adequate cook and holding times particularly for critical foods such as ground beef - E. coli and eggs – Salmonella)
- **Foreign Substances**

Story behind the baseline:

According to the CDC an estimated 76 million illnesses, 325,000 hospitalizations, and 5,000 deaths each year may be associated with microorganisms in food. Hospitalizations due to foodborne illnesses are estimated to cost over \$3 billion each year. The FDA estimates the cost of lost productivity is estimated at between \$20 billion and \$40 billion each year. In

addition to acute illness, some microorganisms can cause delayed or chronic illness. Food borne chemical contaminants may cause chronic rather than acute problems, and specific estimates of their impact on health and the economy are not available.



Proposed actions to turn the curve:

Develop a comprehensive baseline of data to assist in identifying and monitoring risk factors noted in Connecticut inspections. Learn from that data to focus attention on areas of greatest concern. Use data to educate industry, retailers and other partners. Add new data as inspections continue to monitor changes and identify improvements or areas needing attention.

Performance Measure 2:

Workshops on relevant food safety topics are an integral part of achieving our Quality of Life goal. Conducting meaningful workshops and increasing the number of participants from our partners in government and industry is a key performance measure.

Story behind the baseline:

The adversarial element of an inspection program can be counter productive to initiating and promoting good practices within the regulated industry. Inspections are a “Snap Shot” of the establishment the timing of which does not always coincide with critical procedures that should be observed

Inspections are finite. The length of time devoted to an inspection is not sufficient to fully observe and document a practice. Therefore internalized practices are desirable a sort of self promotion within the industry of acceptable practices.

This is counteracted by having the program interact with consumers and industry by supporting or actively participating in meetings such as task force, workshops or advisory committees. Topics at such outreach efforts may include food defense, investigation strategies and regulatory requirements. Representative from industry, consumers, academia as well as our State and local partners are to be invited.

Proposed actions to turn the curve:

Increase the number of workshops and educational sessions offered (from 1 in 2009 to 2 or more in 2010) to reach out to industry and consumers. Documentation of those meetings and course evaluations will be collected and analyzed to work towards future workshop improvements.

Performance Measure 3:

Design and develop a standardized Report Card for each DCP Food Safety

Inspector as a tool in tracking their training and professional growth and expertise. Areas of expertise include:

- Prevailing statutes, regulations,
- Public Health Principles
- Food Defense Awareness
- Communication Skills
- Microbiology
- Epidemiology
- Basics of HACCP
- Basic Labeling
- Control of Allergens
- Sampling Techniques and prep

Story behind the baseline:

A key limitation in any inspection program is subjectivity, both on the part of the inspector and on the operator of the establishment e.g., the act of the inspection itself changes normal operational procedures. Uniform and consistent training of the inspector will seek to mitigate subjectivity. The operator will thus be encouraged to prep for the inspection rather than the inspector.

Proposed actions to turn the curve:

We will work to develop and utilize a new Standardized Food Inspector Report Card as a tool to improve knowledge and uniformity. Priority training areas and recognition of Mastery will also be noted.

