



# Family and Consumer Sciences Extension — *School Food Service Training 2004*

*Putting Knowledge to Work for Georgia Families*

The University of Georgia

Cooperative Extension Service

## ***The Problem***

- The School Nutrition Program in Georgia provides meals that meet the school-day nutritional needs and promotes the long-term health of children and youth. According to the Georgia Department of Education, it is the fifth largest program in the nation serving over 1.5 million meals daily to school children in Georgia in 2002. (1)
- 25% of Georgia's public school students eat breakfast at school; over 74% are served lunch (2).
- The State Department of Education requires every County School Nutrition Program Director to provide annual continuing education for foodservice workers.
- Young children are among those most at risk for foodborne illnesses from poor food handling practices.
- According to USDA Economic Research Service estimations, cost for a single case of salmonellosis is \$ 2,126, but this increases to \$13,117 for cases involving hospitalization. The economic burden of acute listeriosis in the U.S. is estimated at \$2.3 billion. ERS estimates that, each year in the U.S., foodborne *E. coli* O157:H7 disease costs \$659.1 million to society and foodborne *E. coli* non-O157 STEC disease costs \$329.7 million for a combined total of \$988.8 million (3).

## ***Research-based Solutions***

- The school nutrition program provides education and assistance for personnel so they can deliver quality meals that contribute to the health and nutritional well-being of Georgians and their performance at school.
- The application of the Dietary Guidelines, including food safety goals, in the school nutrition program affects nearly every aspect of on-site management and meal delivery.

## ***Extension's Role***

- Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agents are a primary resource for School Nutrition Education programs in various locations. In many counties, agents individually meet requests for research-based training.
- Through a partnership with school nutrition directors and area consultants, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agents have delivered six or more hours of training in a 25-county area of South Georgia yearly since 1991.

## ***Extension's Contribution to Solving the Problem***

- 26,940 contact hours of food handler training were provided to 922 school food service staff. Of them, 67 received the *ServSafe*® Manager Training and 837 received the *ServSafe*® Employee Training in 2004.
- More than 9,700 educational contact hours of food and nutrition education were provided to 2,462 school food service personnel.

## ***Impact on Georgians***

- The comparison of pre and post test score indicates that the school food service employees who completed the *ServSafe*® employee training significantly improved their food handling knowledge. Ninety-eight percent of the participants improved their food handling knowledge. Most of the participants expressed their preparedness to follow recommended food handling practices. For

example, all the participants indicated that they plan to wash, rinse, and sanitize their cutting boards, especially after cutting raw meat, poultry, or fish; 96% of the participants indicated that they plan to use a thermometer to decide if meat, poultry, egg dishes or fish are done before serving; and 97% the participants indicated that they plan to thaw foods in the refrigerator, in cold running water, or in the microwave right before cooking.

- Nearly 91% of the school food service personnel who participated in the school food service training program said it was helpful to improve their knowledge about meal planning and nutrition. At the end of the training most of the participants planned to implement healthy meal planning practices. For example, 94% planned to follow the Food Guide Pyramid serving recommendations; 91% planned to avoid serving unmeasured amounts of food; 86% planned to encourage students to make healthier food choices; and 89% planned to tell students and others about the health risk of “Fad Diets.”

## ***Sources***

1. Facts and Figures 2001-2002. School Nutrition Program, Georgia Department of Education. [http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/\\_documents/schools/nutrition/snfactssy02.pdf](http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/_documents/schools/nutrition/snfactssy02.pdf)  
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2. School Nutrition. School Nutrition Program, Georgia Department of Education. <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/schools/nutrition/nutrition.asp> Accessed 11/21/03.
3. Economic Research Service/U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. 2003. Economics of Foodborne Disease. <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodborneDisease/>

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