



Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

— School Foodservice Training 2005

Learning for Life

The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension

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. (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, the cost for a single case of salmonellosis is \$ 2,126, but this increases to \$13,117 for cases involving hospitalization. The economic burden to the U.S. for all foodborne salmonellosis is \$2.9 billion annually. 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

- More than 8,300 contact hours of food handler training were provided to 1,331 school foodservice staff. Of them, 224 received the *ServSafe*[®] Manager Training and 730 received the *ServSafe*[®] Employee Training in 2005.
- More than 8,800 contact hours of food and nutrition education were provided to 3,061 school foodservice personnel.

Impact on Georgians

- Of the school foodservice employees who completed the *ServSafe*[®] employee training, 96% improved their food handling knowledge. The comparison of pre and post test score indicates that the school foodservice employees who completed the *ServSafe*[®] employee training significantly improved their

food handling knowledge in all major areas of food safety namely recognizing hazardous situations, receiving and storing foods, preparing and serving food safely, preventing contamination, personal hygiene, cleaning and sanitation. After training, more than 90% of the participants expressed their preparedness to follow recommended food handling practices. For example, 99% of the participants indicated that they plan to wash, rinse, and sanitize their cutting boards, especially after cutting raw meat, poultry, or fish; 95% 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 98% the participants indicated that they plan to cool large quantities of food like soups, stews or roasts quickly, by dividing into smaller amounts or shallow containers.

- Of the school foodservice staff who received *ServSafe*[®] Manager Training, more than 95% said that they plan to follow recommended food handling practices. For example, 100% of the participants planned to monitor that their employees check and record food temperatures regularly in cold and hot holding; 97% planned to have written standards for personal hygiene and 99% planned to train and monitor employees on proper hand washing procedures.
- Of the school foodservice personnel who participated in foodservice training programs, 91% indicated that it was helpful to improve their knowledge about meal planning, food safety and customer service. At the end of the training most of the participants planned to provide better customer service to school children and staff. For example, 94% planned to create a healthy and customer-friendly school nutrition environment and provide better customer service; 98% planned to use separate cutting boards for meats and produce.

Sources

1. School Nutrition. School Nutrition Program, Georgia Department of Education. <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/schools/nutrition/nutrition.asp> Accessed 11/18/05.
2. Facts and Figures 2001-2002. School Nutrition Program, Georgia Department of Education. http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/_documents/schools/nutrition/snpfactssy02.pdf Accessed 11/18/05.
3. Economic Research Service/U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. 2003. Economics of Foodborne Disease. <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodborneDisease/> Accessed 11/18/05.

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02/16/06