



OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT -
AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

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October 22, 2007

**REGIONAL DIRECTORS
COUNTY DIRECTORS
RESEARCH & EXTENSION CENTER DIRECTORS
ACTING 4-H PROGRAM DIRECTOR JUNGE**

RE: Food Safety Program

Dear Colleagues:

Service of safe food should be a priority for all University of California events.

Any activity where food is served (potlucks, luncheon meetings, etc.) has the risk for foodborne illness. Most cases of foodborne illness are avoidable if our staff and/or volunteers are educated in basic food handling procedures. In 2001, ANR funded an initiative to begin providing food safety information and training to at least one person in each county. Working with the Offices of Risk Management and Environmental Health & Safety, ANR professionals in the Nutrition, Family, and Consumer Sciences and 4-H Youth Development Program, constituted a Food Safety Workgroup to develop a comprehensive food safety initiative for UC Cooperative Extension.

Since it has been six years since the ANR Food Safety Program was first implemented, the Food Safety Workgroup has reviewed and updated the program. The overall goal of the program is to minimize the risk for foodborne illness associated with all ANR functions that serve or sell food. This goal is met by educating and informing employees and volunteers of the proper food handling and preparation guidelines. While the program was initiated for Cooperative Extension, the goals of the program apply to all ANR programs or locations. To ensure that this education and information is provided consistently throughout the state, each county or program location that prepares and serves food should designate at least one employee who will deliver annual food safety training and ensure that reference materials on food safety are available at their location.

Following are the specific goals of the Food Safety Program and actions to implement these goals:

Goal: Provide basic food safety information to as many Cooperative Extension and Research & Extension Center staff, volunteers and clients as possible.

- Action:** A food safety brochure has been developed and produced for statewide distribution. This highly collaborative effort produced a brochure that highlights the practical aspects of safe food handling. This brochure will ensure a greater awareness of food safety. Initially, has been distributed to each county office. The intention of the Food Safety Workgroup is that the brochure be further distributed to every 4-H family via a monthly newsletter and distributed to all UCCE staff and volunteer groups handling food (4-H, Master Gardeners, Master Food Preservers, etc.).
- Goal:** Assure that reference material on food safety is available in every region and, eventually, in every county or REC location.
- Action:** A food safety binder will be prepared for trained food safety staff and volunteers. In the future, the county "library" will be assessed and a list of recommended food safety books, handouts, videos and other educational and reference material will be developed. This will enable the county or REC to expand its collection as funds allow.
- Goal:** Assure that at least one staff member or volunteer in each UCCE location and at least one staff member at each Research & Extension Center is prepared to train others in safe food handling.
- Action:** The Food Safety Workgroup has organized three food safety training workshops in the Central Valley Region: November 1 in Oroville, November 28 in Stockton, and February 2008 in Tulare. Additional sessions will be planned for the Central Coast and Southern and North Coast and Mountain Regions. Those receiving the training will be prepared to present the food safety training at their location to disseminate the information to all employees, volunteers, and clients who handle food for *any* type of ANR program. Members of the Food Safety Workgroup are working with Regional Directors to organize these *Train the Trainer* Food Safety Education sessions. Announcements will be made through Regional Directors to the County Directors.

This letter serves to re-emphasize and continue the efforts of the Food Safety Workgroup and ensure that the ANR Food Safety Program is implemented in an on-going basis. In addition to support of the ANR Program Council, which approved the formation of the Food Safety Workgroup and provided programmatic funds to implement the Food Safety Program, this program is also endorsed by UC Office of the President Risk Services, which has provided funding from the Be Smart About Safety Program to print the food safety brochures and sponsor the training sessions.

I offer my thanks to all involved who have dedicated their time to establishing and maintaining this food safety program. All ANR programs will benefit from the work accomplished and initiatives planned.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Brian Oatman".

Brian Oatman
Environmental Health & Safety Manager

cc: Assistant Vice President Allen-Diaz
Acting Assistant Vice President Taber
Controller & Business Services Director McGuire
Food Safety Workgroup Members
Nutrition, Family and Consumer Sciences Advisors