



Introduction

The safety of foods is important to everyone and consumers in the United States have one of the safest food supplies in the world. Each sector of the food industry works diligently to insure the safety of foods they grow, process, prepare, and merchandise by developing and implementing food safety assurance plans that result in a wide variety of food products that successfully feed over 300 million Americans daily. While foodborne illness outbreaks sometimes occur, these illnesses usually result from lack of attention to details, an error, or other problem in the food protection system. The food industry and regulatory agencies constantly work to prevent outbreaks and provide all people with a safe food supply. Consumers also have a responsibility and should understand the basic concepts of safe food preparation and how to implement practices to assure the safety of the foods they handle, store, prepare, and eat.

The Food Safety Investigation (FSI) Curriculum has been developed for students in high school agriculture, biology, health, and food science classes. It is a supplemental curriculum designed to teach students safe food handling and preparation practices as well as increase their understanding of food production from farm to table. Created collaboratively with educators, it is presented in an easy to use format with activities that were tested in the classroom. While this curriculum presents cases that include food contamination events and foodborne illnesses, the lessons and activities are designed to be educational and not to raise concerns about specific food products.

The collaborating educators, who helped develop the curriculum and pilot taught it in their classrooms, requested the final curriculum be flexible in the design and presentation. To meet this need and take into account differences in teaching styles, classroom time periods, and variations between schools in different states, the FSI Curriculum is presented in multiple formats with the ability to modify flow and order. The printed portion of this FSI Curriculum is an abridged version of the full curriculum provided so that the Unit Overview, Student Handouts, and Appendices are immediately available to reference and for copying. For the full curriculum, please see the CD in the inside cover of this booklet. The authors take full responsibility for the original materials, but are not responsible for any content modification by users.

Funding for the development of the Food Safety Investigation Curriculum was made possible through a grant (Project # 2004-51110-02164) from the United States Department of Agriculture, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, National Integrated Food Safety Initiative. The authors gratefully acknowledge their support of this important project. It is our sincerest hope that everyone who utilizes this curriculum finds it engaging and educationally valuable. Improving the food safety awareness and practices of consumers as well as future growers, agricultural workers, and food industry personnel is an important step in keeping all food safe as well as insuring the health and safety of all consumers.