

Your consumer education connection

The Food Safety Educator

Volume 6, No. 1, 2001

■ BAC! to the Future

BAC! is making tracks! And they are all headed to the future: new partners, new focus, new technologies.

The Fight BAC!™ food safety education campaign sponsored by the Partnership for Food Safety Education has entered a new era. The Partnership has hired its first executive director, Melanie Miller, and is moving forward to expand its partner base among national organizations, enhance Web-based distribution of materials, and increase its focus on people with increased risk of foodborne illness.

“We’re reaching out to new national partners—and partners are seeking us out,” says Miller. New partners provide new avenues of distribution as well as new ideas and resources, Miller explains.

A new focus for the year ahead is reaching people who face special risks from foodborne illness: young children, people over 65, and people with weakened immune systems. “We have great materials for these groups and we’re making a special push to see that they get into people’s hands,” Miller says.

In one initiative for at-risk groups, the Partnership is teaming with another member, the Food and Drug Administration. The federal agency is distributing the Partnership’s food safety education package for young children to 90,000 school nurses and

daycare providers. A new activity sheet for kids and a parent handout will be available through the BAC! Web site this spring (<http://www.fightbac.org>).

And big things are happening at the BAC! Web site. It will be streamlined and easier to use, with information scrolling the site and highlighting BAC! fighter projects from around the country. (E-mail fightbaced@mindspring.com. Get your project featured!)

Miller comes to her new position with experience working for trade associations, industry, government agencies—and grassroots experience working with cooperative extension.

Miller was raised in a small town called Tie Siding, Wyoming, where her grandmother and grandfather ran the local post office/library/grocery store. The town was so small that when Miller left for college, the population dropped to two: her grandmother and grandfather.

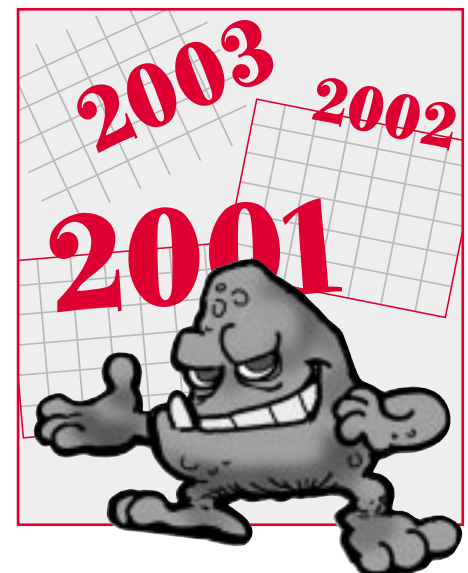
Miller’s grandmother, who turns 99 in May 2001, had a favorite saying: “Can’t never did anything.”

As you can imagine, “can’t” isn’t part of Miller’s vocabulary. Her goal for the Fight BAC!™ campaign and the Partnership is to make a difference in people’s lives.

“I grew up with extension programs and 4-H, working with programs that helped change people’s

lives,” Miller says. One of Miller’s first jobs was as an extension agent on the Ft. Hall, Idaho, reservation. Some kids there were headed for trouble. But “I made a difference with them,” Miller says with total certainty: three of those kids went on to college.

Look for BAC! to be making a difference. BAC! and the four key messages—clean, separate, cook, and chill—are becoming common currency. “People are aware of these ideas; educators are using these materials. It’s like a snowball—each project, each initiative is adding to the whole. And it’s making a difference in people’s lives—and even saving lives,” says Miller. •



■ In Canada—BAC! is Busy

BAC! fighters in Canada have been busy.

Canada's Fight BAC!™ campaign started in 1998 and is now in full swing. The Canadian Partnership for Consumer Food Safety Education includes 64 organizations representing industry, consumer, government, health, and environmental groups.

Over the past several years, BAC! and the four food safety messages have turned up all over Canada:

- Canada's brochure *Food Safety and You*, including Fight

BAC!™ messages, was distributed to every household in the nation.

- In April 2000, Canada launched a children's Learning Program based on the U.S. Partnerships K-3 "Presenters' Guide." The program includes games and songs and Canada added to their Web site their own interactive version of *The Family Vacation Game*. You can download the entire program.

- In May 2001, Canada is releasing a food safety curriculum package for grades 4-7. Based on the U.S. version called "BAC! Attack! How Our School Fought BAC!," the program has been adapted to suit the Canadian school curriculum.

The program includes a new 8-minute video and a teachers' guide. Look for it on the Web site later in the year or contact the Canadian Partnership at: fightbac@nin.ca

- The BAC! costumed messenger and Fight BAC!™ materials have crisscrossed Canada. One of the biggest events was annual Royal Winter Fair in Toronto, with 25,000 people stopping by the Fight BAC! booth.

- And BAC! has hit syndicated television across Ontario. BAC! has made some appearances on a popular cooking show for children called *Fun Food Frenzy*. The show features a little girl named Jessica who cooks

with her father, inventing recipes and doing science experiments.

- New tools: One is the newly redesigned refrigerator thermometer featuring the BAC! character. Bright yellow and backed with adhesive, the thermometer allows consumers to check on their fridge temperature. The thermometer has three zones: too cool, ideal, and too warm.

Another new tool—four new fact sheets from the Canadian Partnership gearing off the key food safety messages: clean, separate, cook, and chill. The two-sided sheets are colorful and fun, as well as easy to reproduce.

The Web site—<http://www.canfightbac.org>—features an easy-to-use home page with special sections including sites for:

- the media,
- consumers, and
- classroom educators.

The Media Centre includes background information on foodborne illness in Canada, a summary of common misperceptions about foodborne disease, sample radio public service announcements and more.

To stay in touch with Canada's BAC! fighters, view their quarterly newsletter through their Web site. Click on "About the Partnership" and then click on "Partnership News."

If you have questions, call the Canadian Partnership for Consumer Food Safety Education: 613/798-3042. •



**Check the Web site:
<http://www.canfightbac.org>**

■ Cooking for Groups—Now Available on the Net

Produced by the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service, *Cooking for Groups—A Volunteer's Guide to Food Safety*, is now available through the Web site: <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/cfg/cfg.htm>

Designed to provide safe food handling information for volunteer cooks, the publication is being distributed to nearly 50,000 organizations across the country including church groups, volunteer fire fighters, PTA's, soup kitchens, cooperative extension, and county public health offices.

Loaded with graphics, cooking temperature charts and food storage information, the 40-page publication targets information to cooking facilities that slip between the cracks because they frequently aren't

covered by the same food codes that apply to commercial food service, like restaurants.

Educators are encouraged to copy and use the information in their own food safety programs.

In addition to being available through the Web, copies of the publication can also be requested by e-mailing: fsis.outreach@usda.gov

Consumers can request individual copies of the publication by contacting the Federal Consumer Information Center, Item #604 H, Pueblo, CO 81009. The *Guide* can also be ordered on the FCIC Web site: <http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov>

A two-page fact sheet called *Seven Steps for Safer Community Meals* summarizes information from the publication. It's available as an insert in this newsletter. •



■ Egg Safety

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has produced a new—and very fun—publication designed to make egg safety easy.

Playing it Safe With Eggs—What Consumers Need To Know explains the new “Safe Handling Instructions” now found on egg cartons: “To prevent illness from bacteria: keep eggs refrigerated, cook eggs until yolks are firm, and cook foods containing eggs thoroughly.”

As the brochure notes, these instructions are particularly important to people who may be more vulnerable to foodborne bacteria including:

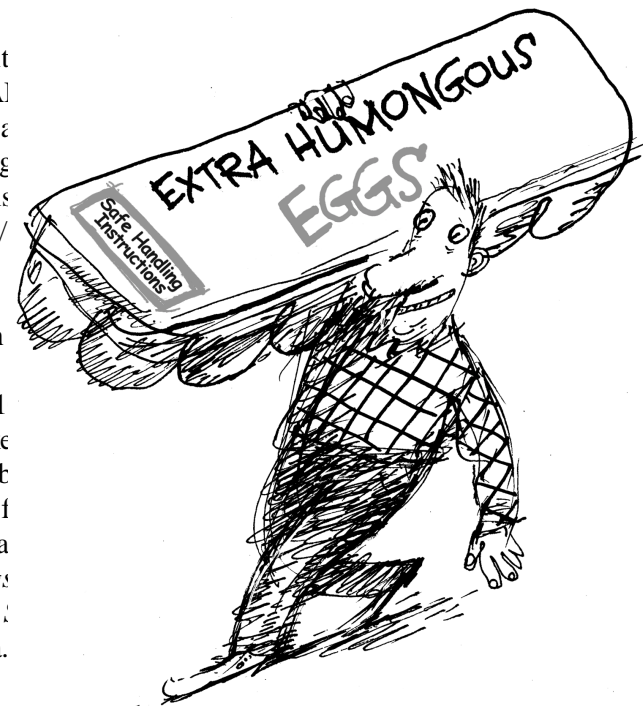
- children;
- people over 65;
- people with weakened immune

systems due to a variety of conditions including cancer, diabetes, and Al

The brochure provides food safety tips for buying, handling, serving and storing eggs. The brochure is available through the Web: <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/fs-eggs.html>

Educators and consumers can request the brochure (limit 100 copies) by calling 1-800-332-4013. A phone answering system will take your mailing address or fax number.

Also available from FDA for food service institutions, an updated fact sheet: *Assuring the Safety of Eggs and Egg Dishes Made from Raw Eggs*. Go to: <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/fs-eggs2.html> •



■ Selling Health...The Skill of Social Marketing

Connect the dots on these ideas:
selling cars...selling health.

As more and more public health educators recognize, providing facts and information, doesn't necessarily motivate people to change their behavior.

As Susan Conley, director of food safety education for the Food Safety and Inspection Service, explains, "that's where car sales come in. How can we apply the marketing principles that are so successful in selling things, like cars, to public health?"

Enter social marketing.

Social marketing is more than just working with focus groups. It's not quick, it's not cheap, and it's not easy. But it is a method for systematically approaching health communications in a new way.

One key to social marketing is understanding that one message doesn't work for everyone.

Some people buy cars because they are powerful, going from zero to 60 m.p.h. in race-track time and stopping on a dime.

But that's not important to everyone. Some of us care about the cup holders—are they finally big enough?

To be successful, marketers need to understand which segment of the population they're talking to—and what's important to them.

The same principles can apply to public health:

- know your audience,
- know what action you want them to take, and
- know what's important to them.

Another key to social marketing is understanding the "cost."

Consumers will change their behavior if the "cost" to them is worth it. Will the gain be worth the 'pain'?

If consumers aren't willing to do the most desired behavior—quit smoking for instance—they might be willing to do something else: smoke outside to protect others. As educators, Conley explains, we need to understand what the barriers are to changing behavior and help consumers negotiate their way to *some*

change, even if it's not total change.

Interested in learning more about social marketing?

Two major social marketing conferences are scheduled annually:

- "Innovations in Social Marketing," Washington, D.C. Web site: <http://www.social-marketing.org>
- "Social Marketing in Public Health," Clearwater, Florida. Web site: <http://www.publichealth.usf.edu/conted/socmarkconf01.html>

Also, stay tuned here: the Fall issue of *The Food Safety Educator* will highlight social marketing applications and public health issues.

Finally, anyone interested in social marketing can subscribe to the Social Marketing Listserv started by Georgetown professor, Dr. Alan Andreasen.

To subscribe, send an e-mail message to:

LISTPROC@LISTPROC.GEORGETOWN.EDU

In the body of the message write: subscribe SOC-MKTG (your name). •

■ Health Canada: A Resource for Social Marketing AND Partnerships

The government health department in Canada—Health Canada—includes a division devoted to both social marketing and partnerships.

Its Web site (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/socialmarketing/>) provides a world of useful information.

The site provides general information on social marketing and partnership development, a list of upcoming conferences and events, case studies, presentations, and links to related sites. You'll also find workshops and on-line tutorials that

treat both social marketing and partnerships.

In addition, a social marketing tutorial walks you through:

- defining the role of social marketing in your health promotion program,
- audience analysis,
- context for social marketing,
- defining measurable objectives,
- strategy and tactic,
- monitoring and evaluation, and
- operational details.

The partnership page notes that partnerships "offer many important benefits to the social organization, including improved delivery of their message, increased influence, and greater reach....There can be challenges to overcome in the formation of a successful partnership, but with the resources and the flexibility to manage such an agreement, these challenges are worth facing." •

Thermy™ Habla Español!

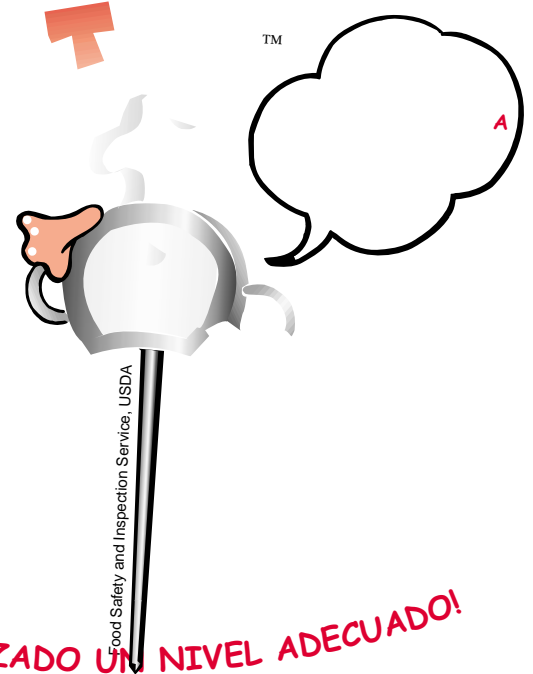
Thermy™ speaks Spanish. Thermy™ is the messenger of the educational campaign designed to promote thermometer use and encourage consumers to cook foods to safe internal temperatures. The campaign was developed by the Food Safety and Inspection Service.

A variety of Thermy™ educational tools have been translated into Spanish and are available for educators to use and copy. These materials include a:

- brochure,
- poster,
- magnet, and
- post card.

The materials can be accessed on the Web. Go to: <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/thermy/art5.htm>

Limited quantities are available. E-mail your request to: fsis.outreach@usda.gov •



¡MUERDA SIN CUIDADO SI LA TEMPERATURA HA ALCANZADO UN NIVEL ADECUADO!

FoodNet Follow Up

FoodNet is an active foodborne illness surveillance system, a collaborative project between sentinel sites, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Food Safety and Inspection Service, and the Food and Drug Administration.

Results from a 3-year surveillance of Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS) conducted by FoodNet researchers highlight the need for additional screening techniques and the special risks young children face from this disease.

The results of the surveillance were presented before the 38th annual meeting of the Infectious Disease Society of America in September 2000.

HUS is a life-threatening illness characterized by kidney failure. Among children, HUS typically follows a diarrheal illness caused by *E. coli* O157:H7 or other Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli*.

During the 3-year period, 150 cases of HUS were identified at FoodNet sites. The median age of

The median age of patients was 4 years old.

patients was 4 years old. (Median meaning an equal number of patients below and above 4 years old.)

But what the surveillance also showed was that while 91 percent of the patients had stools cultured specifically for *E. coli* O157:H7, only 55 percent showed positive.

“The large proportion of cases with no identified etiology indicates a need for the use of other diagnostic techniques,” FoodNet authors indicated in their presentation. The researchers recommend that patients with diarrhea and HUS be routinely screened using either Enzyme Immunoassay or Polymerase Chain Reaction-based methods and that positives be cultured to identify the specific agent.

To access the presentation summary, go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/foodnet> click on “Presentations.”

(Figures quoted in this article are slightly updated from the Presentation.) •

What Do Doc's Think?

Can doctors also be food safety educators? (See “Handwashing: One Doc’s Campaign,” pg. 7.)

FoodNet is currently conducting a survey of physicians to better understand their role as food safety educators. The mail-in survey is being distributed to over 3,000 physicians in eight states. The survey includes questions on what food safety materials are distributed as well as possible barriers to providing information.

Results should be in during the summer of 2001. Stay tuned and we’ll report. •

Available in May!



Educators! Go to the Web. Starting in May, reproducible artwork for September's National Food Safety Education MonthSM will be available through: <http://www.foodsafety.gov/September>

You'll be able to download this cool "Chill" artwork, the last of the four key food safety messages from the Fight BAC!TM campaign (clean, separate, cook, and chill). Other reproducible materials, including songs and games, are coming later this summer. •

For Pregnant Women: A Word of Caution on Fish

Women who are pregnant need to limit the amount of fish they eat and not eat certain types of fish. That's because fish can contain methylmercury, a chemical which can harm an unborn child's developing nervous system.

According to a consumer advisory issued by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), seafood is an important part of a balanced diet for pregnant women. At the same time, some precautions are important.

Nearly all fish contain some methylmercury. But long-lived, larger fish accumulate the highest levels. As a result, FDA advises pregnant

BSE Web-based Info

Consumer educators interested in bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), also known as "mad cow disease," can find a wealth of information through the Internet.

Government agency Web pages for information on the disease:

- The Federal Food Safety Page—<http://www.foodsafety.gov/~fsg/bse.html>
- Food Safety and Inspection Service—<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/topics/bse.htm>
- Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service—<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/oa/bse>
- Foreign Agricultural Service—<http://www.fas.usda.gov/dlp/BSE/bse.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/cjd/cjd.htm>
- Food and Drug Administration—<http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/bse.html>

Also of interest, an important online research source: 17 volumes of results from the United Kingdom's Government Inquiry: <http://www.bseinquiry.gov.uk/> •

Safe Food for the Hungry

Do you run a food bank or soup kitchen? You might want to check out *Safe Food for the Hungry*, a newsletter and Web site for staff and volunteers of emergency feeding programs started by Purdue Extension.

Go to: <http://www.cfs.purdue.edu/safefood/sfhungry.html>

Food safety can be especially important for people using emergency food assistance—inadequate nutrition can contribute to a special susceptibility to foodborne illness.

The Web site and newsletter are produced by Dr. Carol Boushey and Barb Nolan.

The newsletter is distributed in printed copy to soup kitchens and others in Indiana, but emergency food providers nationwide can access the newsletter via the Web site.

Topics in a recent newsletter included:

- safe storage tips for donated fresh produce, and
- a look at the connection between malnutrition and obesity.

According to editor Barb Nolan, future issues will look at Indiana Food Code issues, "but we are working from the federal Food Code, so it should be of interest to people in other states as well."

Plus every issue has a "recipe" section that focuses on safe use of federally donated foods.



Handwashing: One Doc's Campaign

"There's no question about it. I'm a nut about handwashing," says Dr. Will Sawyer, a family practitioner from Cincinnati, Ohio.

"I've got kids of my own and I started with them, trying to teach them how important 'hand awareness' is. Washing your hands is part of it—but so is keeping your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth. The mucous membranes are the super-highway for bacteria," says Dr. Sawyer.

"Teaching patients is the most important part of my day," says Dr. Sawyer. To help teach kids, Dr. Sawyer invented a cartoon character he dubbed Henry the Hand. With Henry in tow, he has visited elementary schools throughout his region—and Henry even has a Web site: <http://www.henrythehand.com>.

The database at the USDA/FDA Foodborne Illness Education Information Center has over two dozen materials that touch on handwashing, according to information specialist

Cindy Roberts. (Go to: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/foodborne>)

Among Web sites on handwashing that Roberts recommends:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—CDC Handwashing Page (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehserv/EHSA/Food/FoodSafety.htm>) A great collection of handwashing materials, including materials for kids and day care providers.
- Super Scrub and Bubbles (<http://www.tpchd.org/fcs/SSB1.html>) Information, quizzes, and coloring pages about handwashing for kids.
- Clean Hands Campaign (<http://www.washup.org>) Brochure, poster, and slide show on handwashing.
- Glo Germ Web site (<http://www.glogerm.com>) K-6th grade worksheets, also available in French.
- Healthy Hands, Healthy Kids (<http://www.healthyhands.com/qualifier/qualifier.asp>) Information geared towards principals, teachers, or parents.

<http://www.foodallergy.org>

<http://www.fankids.org>

In addition, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) produced a fact sheet for food service with tips about foods that frequently cause allergies and how to reduce risks for consumers, "Food Allergen Monitoring," January 2001. Go to <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/alrgfact.htm>

You can also read about a unique FDA partnership with Wisconsin and Minnesota to examine ways to work with food service to reduce allergen problems. The fact sheet, "Food Allergen Partnership," is available at: <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/alrgpart.html> •

Food Allergies: Web-based Info

The largest study of fatalities due to food allergies shows that stricter labeling requirements for food products and better education may save lives.

The research, published in the January 2001 issue of *The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*, also showed that only 5 of the 32 fatalities investigated occurred in the home. In addition, only three of the individuals studied had epinephrine (the medication of choice for treating severe allergic reactions) at the time of their attack.

Educators and consumers looking for information about food and allergic reactions have a number of Web-based sites to turn to:

New Look for FSIS Food Safety Web Site

Finding consumer education information from the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Web page has *never* been easier.

The Web page now sports a two-column format with graphics and a new menu of information and links.

A column for consumers includes links to more than 80 consumer fact sheets and features as well as "Frequently Asked Questions" and toll-free information lines.

A column for educators provides links to materials developed annually for National Food Safety Education MonthSM, consumer research and focus group testing, and food safety images and graphics.

Go to: <http://www.usda.gov/OA/consedu.htm>

The Economics of Food Safety

Think about this: \$6.9 billion is the estimated cost of human illness as a result of five foodborne pathogens.

If you want to check the latest economic research concerning food safety, you can do it now by going to the new Web site sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Emphases/SafeFood/>

The site provides access to research, publications, data. Topics include the economics of foodborne disease and government food safety policies.

You can even subscribe to e-mail updates.

Translation services are offered for all the information. With the click of a button, the ERS information will be translated into French, German, Italian, and Portuguese.

How To Keep in Touch With Food Safety Education Information

The Food Safety Educator

This free quarterly newsletter reports on new food safety educational programs and materials as well as emerging science concerning food safety risks. It is distributed to nearly 10,000 educators throughout the country including public health offices, extension educators, industry, and consumer groups.

To subscribe: provide your full name, organization name, & mailing address.

- Write to: USDA/FSIS/Food Safety Education, Room 2944-South Building, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-3700
- Or fax your request to: (202) 720-9063
- Or e-mail your request to: fsis.outreach@usda.gov
- The newsletter is also available on the FSIS Web site: www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/educator/educator.htm



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Please feel free to email comments or suggestions—fsis.outreach@usda.gov

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On the Web

- USDA/Food Safety and Inspection Service
www.fsis.usda.gov
- Thermy™ Web page
www.fsis.usda.gov/thermy
- FightBAC!™
www.fightbac.org
- Gateway to Government Food Safety Information
www.foodsafety.gov
- FDA/Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
www.cfsan.fda.gov
- USDA/FDA Foodborne Illness Education Information Center
www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodborne
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/foodsafety

Other Resources

EdNet—a monthly electronic newsletter for food safety educators. To subscribe, send an e-mail message to:

Listserv@foodsafety.gov Send the message: Subscribe EDNET-L
firstname lastname

foodsafesafe—an online electronic discussion group. To join, go to:
www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodborne

Toll-free—USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline 1-800-535-4555, for the hearing-impaired (TTY) 1-800-256-7072

Food and Drug Administration's Outreach and Information Center
1-888-SAFEFOOD