

The Food Safety Educator

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■ The Power of Partnering!

The “power of partnering” was in the spotlight during a Food Safety Education Satellite Video Conference on September 26, 2000, linking food safety educators in more than 100 sites throughout the country.

The teleconference focused on the new publication “Using Partnerships to Fight BAC!™—A Workbook for Food Safety Educators” and showcased examples from around the country of food safety educators teaming up with others to Fight BAC!™

The workbook was produced by the national food safety partnership, the Partnership for Food Safety Education, a coalition of industry and consumer groups as well as liaisons from federal agencies.

The goal of the workbook, which is available for free, is to help local food safety educators create partnerships that mirror the Partnership for Food Safety Education. (See ordering information on page 5.)

Ann Sydnor, of the Food Marketing Institute, was involved in the Partnership for Food Safety Education from its beginning in 1997. “We realized that individually our organizations were doing a good job with food safety education—but we were missing a nationally united campaign,” Sydnor said.

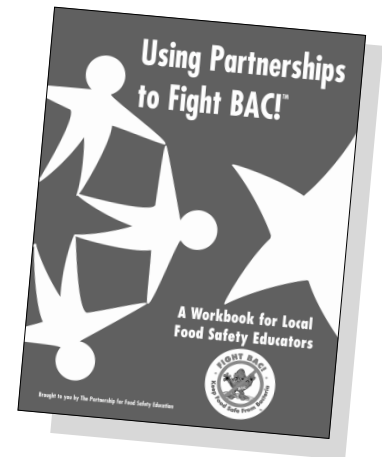
By working together, Sydnor said, the Partnership was able to “develop a unique, one-of-a-kind food safety education program” that centered around four consistent key messages: clean, separate, cook and chill.

Since 1997, those four key messages have become the cornerstone of food safety education programs in this country as well as internationally. These consistent and clear messages allow multiple partners to speak with one voice, but to present the information in thousands of different ways, to hundreds of thousands of people.

Using the four Fight BAC!™ messages, the workbook for food safety educators provides reproducible educational materials along with the “best-in-the-industry” advice about how to create partnerships at the local level.

One of the creators of the workbook, Kelly Woods from JMH Communications, points out that the “workbook is flexible. Regardless of your expertise in building partnerships, there’s something for you.”

The 50-page workbook is set up in a ring binder and works like a “road map,” says Woods. It walks educators through all the steps—brainstorming potential partners, contacting people, meeting strategies and event planning.



As evidenced in the video teleconference, local food safety educators have a wealth of ideas and creativity. The workbook gives them a step up by providing the building blocks with which to start.

This issue of *The Food Safety Educator* takes a look at some of the people who shared their food safety education experiences through the video teleconference—their stories, their insights, their views on partnering.

Susan Conley, director of food safety education for the Food Safety and Inspection Service, was involved in the creation of the Partnership for Food Safety Education as well as the workbook for local educators. “I’ve always believed in the power of partnerships and my experiences have convinced me it is the only way to go. The combination of ideas and views provides a richer, fuller product that has the potential to reach a much wider audience,” she said. •

■ Stories From the Frontlines

Testifying to the power of partnerships, the teleconference featured a panel of educators drawn from across the country, representing a wide variety of professions:

- Vickie Church, San Diego Dept. of Environmental Health, CA;
- Beth Shephard, Brevard County, FL Cooperative Extension;
- Angie Fraser, Cooperative Extension, NCSU;
- Bill Brooks, SC Department of Agriculture;
- Ann Marie Bosshamer, Nebraska Beef Council; and
- Jeannie Ertter-Prego, FDA.

Whether you're an extension agent, public health worker, nutritionist, or industry educator, partnerships can make your job easier. Take a look at a few of these stories drawn from the teleconference and the workbook "Using Partnerships to Fight BAC!™—A Workbook for Local Food Safety Educators."

"Words of Wisdom"

"Our 'saturation' campaign was made even richer by getting the kids in the community excited. Not only did they learn about the key messages and the roles they can play in keeping their own food safe...but they also reinforced the messages at home with their families. They're top on our list of energetic BAC! fighters!"

Vickie Church, Environmental Health, San Diego, CA

From: "Using Partnerships to Fight BAC!™—A Workbook for Local Food Safety Educators"

San Diego Department of Environmental Health, CA

The San Diego partnership started in 1999 and teamed people from cooperative extension, environmental health and health and human services.

According to Vickie Church, from Environmental Health in San Diego, the team decided to use materials from the Fight BAC!™ food safety education campaign to target a specific audience: kids.

They set up kid-friendly displays in local supermarkets loaded with food safety information including a Fight BAC!™ Bean Bag Toss game—a game invented by a staffer. (Instructions for the game are available online at www.fightbac.org/tools/fun_stuff/beanbag.htm)

fun_stuff/beanbag.htm)

According to Church, "the game was terrific. It engaged the kids—and the parents. Sometimes the kids would come and play, then go through the store and come back and play again!"

One grocery store even donated chocolate cookies to give to "contestants" as a prize!

But the San Diego partnership didn't stop with the grocery stores. They took Fight BAC!™ messages to fairs, festivals, a summer air show, and to schools. They used two Fight BAC!™ kits in the schools, one for Grades K-3 and the other for Grades 4-6. •

Maryland Cooperative Extension

The Anne Arundel County partnership included people from federal, state and county agencies, educators, industry and consumer groups.

They worked together in the summer of 1999 to create a Fight BAC!™ food safety education campaign that would serve as a pilot project for continuing efforts.

The partnership decided to target the Annapolis, MD community during summer's high season: boating, picnicking, barbecuing.

They kicked the campaign off with a press event—a barbecue featuring celebrities including local chefs and politicians to maximize their "people appeal" and media interest.

"One of the things we proved," said Jeannie Ertter-Prego, from the Food and Drug Administration, "was that you can successfully have a barbecue in pouring rain!"

Rain and all, the press event was a big hit. Fight BAC!™ news appeared in the local "life-styles" column and on TV.

But the press event was only part of the campaign. Using Fight BAC!™ educational materials, as well as the full-sized BAC! character and BAC! puppets, the food safety partnership hit the community running.

They "cross-pollinated" by running concurrent education efforts throughout the city, including county buildings, local supermarkets, church groups and community associations, and more.

As Constance Pergerson with the University of Maryland's Cooperative Extension noted in the workbook, "Multiple exposures go a long way in getting consumers to pay attention—and that's where partner participation really matters in helping sustain the messages and the outreach efforts." •

South Carolina Department of Agriculture

Bill Brooks is assistant commissioner of agriculture in South Carolina. Speaking at the video teleconference, Brooks stressed that it's just not that hard to get a partnership going.

South Carolina began a food safety advisory council several years ago, in part as a response to a foodborne illness outbreak.

"A number of us have responsibility for food safety....We decided that we needed a group that would be a

resource to the media, the governor's office and others when food safety problems arise," Brooks explained.

"Coming together on a regular basis has been helpful in providing people from different arenas with coordinated information on what others are doing," he said.

In addition, the council holds quarterly meetings, has begun a newsletter and is publishing informational inserts in local newspapers. •

Nebraska Farm to Table Food Safety Task Force

Like some other state partnerships, the Farm to Table Food Safety Task Force in Nebraska started after a foodborne illness outbreak.

The University of Nebraska was instrumental in creating the task force to help interested parties work together promoting food safety.

One of the key players in the Nebraska task force was an industry group: The Nebraska Beef Council.

According to Ann Marie Bosshamer of the Council, the task

force was instrumental in helping share knowledge about what was going on in the state and allowing the different partners to learn how they could work together.

A key educational campaign supported by the Nebraska Beef Council focused on safe cooking and promoted the use of food thermometers. As a result of their campaign, more than 85,000 thermometers were distributed nationwide. •

Florida Cooperative Extension

This partnership started with a phone call. A local public affairs specialist with the Food and Drug Administration called a natural partner—cooperative extension.

According to Beth Shepherd of Brevard County Cooperative Extension, the Central Florida Partnership grows daily. "We have different levels of partnerships," she explained. "Some donate money, some teach—

some just provide an audience!"

One product of the Florida partnership was the Elder Learning Program. Seniors who were savvy about food safety went out into the community—including to senior centers and kids' camps—to teach others using the four Fight BAC!™ messages as their basic teaching tool. •

North Carolina Cooperative Extension

The North Carolina Food Safety Coalition started in 1997, according to one of the founders, Angie Fraser with Cooperative Extension at North Carolina State University.

"We realized a lot of people were interested in food safety education and we brought them together to maximize our efforts," Fraser said during the video teleconference.

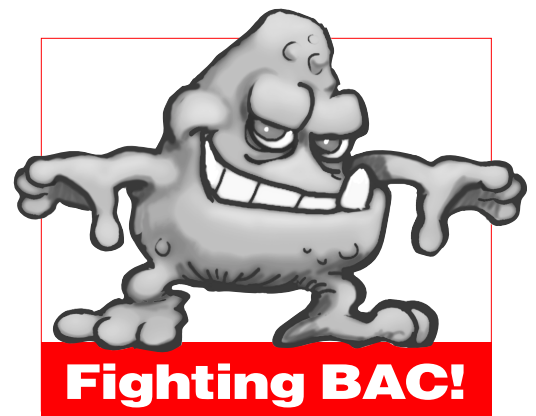
Fraser's experiences taught her a number of things about making partnerships work.

One thing: "You need a mission. Ours was to share resources and promote consistent messages," Fraser said, noting that the Fight BAC!™ campaign provides that consistency.

Also important, Fraser said, is having a structure in place. She felt it was important to have someone serve as a "chair" over the long term to provide direction.

She also recommended establishing subcommittees. North Carolina is forming three: retail food issues, consumer issues, and operations.

Finally, Fraser added, "You need to be inclusive. I can't emphasize how great it is to have industry partners. Often coalitions fail to include industry and other commodity partners." •



■ Teleconference Tidbits

The teleconference panelists had lots of good advice for other would-be partners.

Here's a sample:

One panelist said she began to understand the power of partnerships when she approached a school as a potential partner.

"You realize what a large network of people you need to deal with. The cafeteria is one layer of people, teachers are another.... To put things on the walls, you need to work with another group.

"Think of it like concentric circles and you keep building outward. The next thing you know, you have a cluster of grapes—and it's something of value."

—Vickie Church

"If all of your food safety activities are driven by crisis, you're not doing a very good job...."

—Bill Brooks

Tell us Your Story...

"I am eager to hear your stories" says Fight BAC!™

Executive Director
Melanie Miller.

Send in YOUR
partnership stories. Go to:

<http://www.fightbac.org>

or email:

fightbaced@mindspring.com



"We didn't know what each other was doing. After we formed the group, we looked at each other and said, 'why didn't we do this a long time ago?'"

—Ann Marie Bosshamer

"If I had had this workbook, I'd have had a resource for how to find the local groups, how to contact the restaurant association, people in the states. It would have given me a lot more confidence."

—Jeannie Ertter-Prego

"We floundered the first year trying to figure out how to get a partnership formed. Go through the workbook, it has fantastic ideas about how to form your structure."

—Angie Fraser

"Have fun with it, enjoy. You need ambition and enthusiasm. What you put into it is what you're going to get out of it. It shouldn't be an obligatory exercise for anyone. It's doing the right thing...."

—Vickie Church

"Nobody owns food safety. The more people you get involved...you can get your message out through each of them."

—Angie Fraser

"Make sure that you are very cognizant of all the partners that you've brought together and their time constraints."

—Ann Marie Bosshamer

"It doesn't take a lot of money to have a partnership. Just a commitment."

—Bill Brooks

Top Ten Reasons to Partner!

10. You really can't do it alone.
9. There is strength—and safety—in numbers.
8. Combined consensus = Clout!
7. Partnering creates a richer product.
6. Your message reaches a wider audience.
5. Combined people-power = Synergy.
4. Provides more value to the dollar.
3. It promotes a uniform message to the public.
2. It's effective—partnering works!
1. It's FUN!

It all adds up to Partnership Power!!

"Be open. Don't be in it for yourself or who you represent. Be open to other people's ideas. They probably want to take it on a different avenue, but that's okay, as long as they are hitting somebody."

—Beth Shephard

"Don't get discouraged easily. You can come up against some obstacles and all obstacles can be overcome....The only time you fail is when you quit trying"

—Jeannie Ertter-Prego

"Set a date for the first meeting, contact people and get going!"

—Bill Brooks •

News Flash!

It's not too late...

You can receive a free video of the teleconference as well as a free copy of "Using Partnerships to Fight BAC!TM —A Workbook for Local Food Safety Educators."

To receive either the video or the publication, email your request—with your name and mailing address—to: fsis.outreach@usda.gov

Or, fax your request to: 202/720-9062.

For people who aren't in the mood to wait, download the pdf file of the workbook from <http://www.fightbac.org>

Print it out and you'll be ready to go.

Partnering: It's All About Synergy

(page 5, "Using Partnerships to Fight BAC!TM —A Workbook for Local Food Safety Educators")

Together, we will:

- Promote a uniform message to our community
- Get more value for our dollar
- Combine our people-power
- Reach a wider audience
- Create a richer product to achieve synergy

Guidelines for Successful Partnering

(page 13, "Using Partnerships to Fight BAC!TM —A Workbook for Local Food Safety Educators")

- **Set goals for the partnership**—Identify 3 to 5 goals that can be achieved within a specific timeframe (6 months to 1 year)
The goals should be achievable and measurable and have people who are *committed* to achieving them.
- **Spread projects around**—Every partner should have a task. The more people are involved, the more committed they become.
- **Get firm commitments**—Each participant should commit to his/her responsibility, no matter how big or how small.
- **Don't overcommit**—Completing projects will bring success. Not delivering leads to discouragement.
- **Elect a Leader and Chairpersons for each project**—Solicit volunteers. You need to assign responsibility to ensure that things get done!
- **Keep everyone informed**—Provide periodic updates via fax, email, phone.
- **Set convenient meeting dates/times.**
- **Be very frugal with people's time**—Set specific agenda. Start and end on time. If you say this will be a 1-hour meeting, make sure that it is!
- **Set SMART Objectives!**
 - S:** specific
 - M:** measurable
 - A:** achievable
 - R:** realistic
 - T:** timely



Our Sum is Greater Than Our Parts!

FoodNet Follow-Up

According to FoodNet Coordinator Malinda Kennedy, some of the latest in FoodNet findings were presented as abstracts at the Emerging Infectious Diseases Conference in July 2000. (web access: <http://www.cdc.gov/foodnet/> click on “Publications and Presentations.”)

The 22 abstracts presented represent FoodNet findings based on their active surveillance as well as surveys of the general population and case control studies.

Among the findings presented:

- **Although half of the people surveyed (10,000) indicated they would be willing to buy irradiated meat or poultry, only 23 percent would be willing to pay more for irradiated ground beef and only 25 percent would pay more for irradiated chicken.**

At the same time, CDC estimates that treating meat and poultry with gamma rays or nonradioactive electron beams offers the potential to prevent nearly a million cases of foodborne infections, thousands of hospitalizations, and hundreds of deaths each year.

- **Some people who face greater risk of foodborne illness are more likely to eat risky foods, especially runny eggs.**

Young people (ages 18-44) with immunocompromising conditions, such as HIV infection, were more likely to eat risky foods than other people.

The other surprising risk takers—people over 65 taking immunosuppressive drugs such as prednisone. They eat more risky foods than their respective healthy counterparts.



- **FoodNet found room for substantial improvement in people’s knowledge and use of antibiotics.** Over half of respondents reported beliefs that “may put them at unnecessary risk for infection with resistant bacterial pathogens....”

- **The FoodNet *Campylobacter* case control study suggests that foreign travel is an important risk factor for infection—and for infection with antibiotic-resistant *Campylobacter*.**

Another important risk factor for antibiotic-resistant *Campylobacter*: eating chicken or turkey cooked at a commercial establishment.

- **And this piece of good news—although *Salmonella enteritidis* remains “an important public health concern, there has been a remarkable decrease, 42% between 1996 and 1998, in the incidence of human illness.”** •

A Top Topic for FoodNet This Year—Foodborne Illness: Cause Unknown

Another abstract presented at the conference touched on one of FoodNet’s special areas of interest this year—understanding outbreaks of unknown cause.

According to the Foodborne Disease Surveillance Report 1993-1997, 68 percent of outbreaks are attributed to unknown causes, or etiology.

“We are very interested in finding out why so many are unknown,” says Kennedy. “What in the system might be breaking down? Stool cultures aren’t taken? Labs don’t do the correct cultures? Lab techniques for identifying viruses might not be adequate. We’re going to be trying to identify all the possible gaps.”

A crucial tool in this search: a FoodNet survey of physicians and their diagnostic practices as well as a new survey of clinical laboratories. •

Don’t forget to check: <http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety>

Fun Web Sites for Kids

It was never more true. Learning can be fun. And the web proves it.

Cindy Roberts, information specialist with the USDA/FDA Foodborne Illness Education Information Center, has picked out some great sites for kids:

Outbreak!

<http://www.nbif.org/outbreak>

Sponsor: National Biotechnology Information Facility, New Mexico State University. Outbreak! is an on-line interactive teaching tool for use by students and science educators. Players must use microbial identification techniques to identify the causative agent of an illness outbreak.

Bugs in the News

<http://falcon.cc.ukans.edu/~jbrown/bugs.html>

Sponsor: Jack Brown, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS. This site aims to provide information on microorganisms to the general public in a reader-friendly format. The “What the Heck is” section includes *E. coli*, food allergies, “mad cow” disease, genetic engineering and viruses.

Top Food Safety Mistakes for Food Service

A survey by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released in September 2000 points to three food safety mistakes likely to occur in food service:

- improper holding times/temperatures,
- contaminated equipment/cross-contamination, and
- poor personal hygiene.

The data in the survey was collected from nearly 900 institutional food service establishments, including restaurants and retail food stores.

Infection Detection Protection

<http://www.amnh.org/explore/infection>

Sponsor: American Museum of Natural History. Site includes general information on microbes and a “Bacteria in the Cafeteria” section. Specifically geared to children.

Microbe World

<http://www.microbeworld.org>

Sponsor: American Society for Microbiology. This site is divided into two areas: “Stalking the Mysterious Microbe” for elementary students and the “Microbial Literacy Collaborative” for older students and science teachers. Although not geared just to foodborne microbes, they are included in some areas.

The above web sites and more can be found at the Center’s food safety index:

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodborne/fbindex/index.htm>

And don’t forget to visit the Food and Drug Administration’s new “How to Lose a Million” game. Go to: <http://www.foodsafety.gov/~fsg/virgkids.html> •

Bugs for Days

If you’ve ever been hunting for some good graphics of those bad bacteria that can make you sick, here’s the site to check: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsafety/Lesson/L1/L1p8.html>

They’ve got all the usual culprits—in graphics that *move*. They catch your attention, no question. They include:

- *Clostridium botulinum*
- *Clostridium perfringens*
- *Cambylobacter jejuni*
- *Cryptosporidium parvum*
- *Escherichia coli* O157:H7
- *Listeria monocytogenes*
- Norwalk virus
- *Salmonella*
- *Staphylococcus*
- *Toxoplasma gondii*
- *Yersinia*

When you click on the web page, you get a graphic of each foodborne pathogen along with a short chart noting such things as incubation period, symptoms, and prevention steps.

It’s all part of Food Safety Lessons, a web-based training program developed by Iowa State Extension. •

USDA’s Meat and Poultry Hotline

Check out chicken: a new publication called “Focus On: Chicken,” written by the specialists on the Meat and Poultry Hotline, provides all the basics of safe food handling and chicken. Go to: <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/chicken.htm> •

To access the survey go to: <http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/retrsk.html>

According to FDA, the survey will serve as a baseline to measure how effective future industry and regulatory efforts are in changing behaviors and practices that might lead to foodborne illness.

According to the survey, two risk factors were considered NOT to be a problem for food service:

- obtaining foods from unsafe sources, and
- inadequate cooking.

Future studies of food service will be conducted in 2003 and 2008. •

New Food Safety Program for Seniors

“To Your Health! Food Safety for Seniors” is a new food safety education program designed especially for seniors.

Produced by the Food Safety and Inspection Service and the Food and Drug Administration, the package includes a 14-minute video and a 17-page four-color publication printed in 14-point type.

The publication and the video explain why seniors may be more susceptible to foodborne illness and how to prevent illness.

Both the publication and the video cover safe food handling at home and when eating out. The four Fight BAC!™ messages are included in the program.

The publication includes a home food storage guide and cooking temperature chart.

In the “eating out” section of the video and the publication, seniors are

reminded about safe handling of leftovers and some of the problems that can occur when taking food home from senior centers or restaurants.

The video and copies of the publication are being direct-mailed to 10,000 senior centers throughout the country as well as to area offices on aging and county extension offices. The video, and a sample copy of the publication, are also being mailed to county health offices.

Single copies of the publication are available from the Federal Consumer Information Center. Write: Federal Consumer Information Center Item #596H Pueblo, CO 81009

You can also access the publication on the web. Go to: <http://www.foodsafety.gov>, select “consumer advice” and then select “seniors.” •

Don't Forget EdNet

EdNet—the monthly electronic newsletter for educators from federal food safety agencies. To subscribe: send an email message to: Listserv@foodsafety.gov. Send the message: `Subscribe EDNET-L-firstname lastname`



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USDA/FSIS

Food Safety Education Staff

Room 2944 South Bldg.

14th and Independence Ave., SW

Washington, DC 20250-3700

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

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