

Food Safety and Security

PROVINCIAL PROGRAMMING THEME FOR 2004

This is the third year of a similar programming theme as suggested by the provincial level of the organization. While the following suggestions may not be new ideas, your Branch may not have yet considered them for programming.

FOOD SAFETY

Handwashing

Once again food safety in the home, and indeed anywhere where food is handled, begins with good handwashing. Please make it a habit to not only thoroughly wash your hands after using the washroom, but after shopping, gardening, handling pets, etc., and always before handling food.

Unfortunately, running your hands under the water does not remove bacteria; it is necessary to use soap, liquid is more hygienic, and to rub your hands hard for twenty seconds in order to remove bacteria. Dry your hands thoroughly and then turn off the tap with the towel. Change your towels frequently. Did you know that only 80 per cent of people wash their hands after using the toilet?

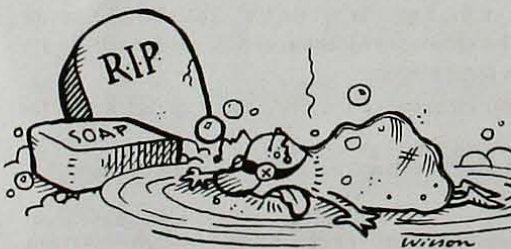
"Fight Bac"

There is an excellent program called "Fight Bac," available from the internet at <http://www.canfightbac.org> or by faxing 613-952-6400. The Canadian Partnership for Consumer Food Safety Education sponsors this program. The different sections of this program are available for different age groups, including the older adult, and they are free!

This program has four different approaches to Food Safety - clean, separate, cook and chill.

Clean

- Wash hands, utensils and surfaces with hot soapy water before, during and after preparing foods.
- Sanitize countertops, cutting boards and utensils with a mild bleach and water solution.



- Wash all produce thoroughly before cooking.

Separate

- Keep raw meats and poultry away from other foods during storage and preparation.
- Keep separate cutting boards for meats and vegetables.
- Always keep foods covered.

Cook

- Cook food thoroughly and remember cooking times and temperatures may vary for different meats and poultry.
- Prepare foods quickly and serve immediately so foods do not linger at room temperature.

Chill

- Refrigerate or freeze perishables and prepared foods within two hours.
- Set your fridge at 4 degrees Celsius and your freezer at - 18 degrees Celsius.

FOOD SECURITY

Food Security and Water

Food security must include our most precious resource - water. Here are some quick facts on water use:

- Toilet Flush - 15 to 20 Litres (L)
- Shower (10 minutes) - 100 L
- Bath - 60 L
- Dishwasher - 40 L
- Dishwashing by Hand - 35 L
- Handwashing (with tap running) - 8 L
- Brushing Teeth (with tap running) - 10 L
- Outdoor Watering (per minute) - 35 L
- Washing Machine - 225 L

Source: www.ec.gc.ca/water/e_main.html

There is sufficient information on this website to develop a program for your Branch.

Ground Water

Eight million Canadians depend on ground water use. To remain healthy, we need 2.4 litres of water a day. It is up to us to be knowledgeable about our water sources and its treatment. Does your county or region have a well capping program for wells no longer in use? Find out from your local Ministry of Agriculture and Food office. Ask an official from the local water and/or sewage treatment plant to speak at a Branch meeting. Why not make it a ROSE Session for the members in your community? You may be surprised at the interest your community will show.

Reliable Sources of Food

Food security means having a reliable source of food to feed our families. It begins with our farmers. Invite a local farmer to a meeting and listen to their concerns and opinions about farm prices or the safety of food from other countries. Become thoughtful, informed consumers. Do you shop at local farm markets or buy local produce whenever possible? Sometimes this is difficult because local supermarkets do not carry local produce.

Do you contribute to your local food bank? Call them and find out what items are most needed. Ask a food bank representative to speak at a meeting. Does your local school have a Breakfast Program? Could your Branch volunteer on a regular basis? Do you know about the Food Share Program, which works with communities to improve access to affordable, healthy food? Find out more about this program at <http://www.foodshare.net>

This information was compiled by the FWIO Education Committee under the direction of the ROSE Coordinator Gillian Catto. She can be reached at Box 16, Site 14, RR 1, Whitefish ON P0M 3E0, Email: gilcat@sympatico.ca

Food Safety Hotline

The University of Guelph has a Food Safety Hotline at 1-866-503-7638. This is a bilingual toll free line for Canadians to call for food safety information.