Produce Safety Challenges

Since 2011, more than 20 foodborne illness outbreaks have occurred from North American produce. The foods involved were cantaloupe, romaine lettuce, cucumbers, frozen vegetables and others. In 2018 alone, romaine lettuce has been linked to two large recalls. This is costly not only in illnesses and unfortunate deaths, but complete disruption in the supply chain.

Produce safety is an ongoing challenge. Safe potable water is critical for growing produce, but also in harvest and processing. If water is high in mineral deposits, it can cause pathogen survival. Soil residue also impacts cleanliness and sanitation.

Water temperature will change the sanitizer stability and efficacy. If water is too cold, the sanitizer will not work properly. If water is too hot, sanitizers can vaporize and release toxic gases. Produce quality can also be affected which can reduce shelf life. The acidity or pH of water must also be monitored.

Contact time of sanitizers and disinfectants will dictate the effectiveness. If left on too long, off flavors will linger and can become a chemical hazard.

The produce surface texture can trap bacteria or make them difficult to remove soil and debris. Bruises and other damage also lead to ineffective cleaning.

Learn more at https://bit.ly/2rAy36g.

Kansas Corn Education

Kansas Corn is supporting education by providing FREE supplies and/or funding for classrooms or events. These materials are available to teachers and educational coordinators in Kansas.

These educational materials are designed to boost STEM education. They can provide education in K-12 schools, Ag Day events, fund guest speakers for your event, and offer lab supplies.

Learn more and request materials at https://kscorn.com/request-materials/.
Handling a Recalled Food

Food recalls happen almost daily and many do not get a lot of publicity. In a majority of recalls, it is the manufacturer that issues a voluntary recall.

Manufacturers will work with the FDA or USDA to help determine the reason for the recall and to fix the issue. If food-borne illnesses have occurred, the CDC and state health departments will also be involved.

As consumers, it is important to pay attention to recalls to eliminate the chance of getting sick. Recall announcements give specific information about the food recall including the type of food, brand, package size, date codes, manufacturer codes, shelf life dates, distribution locations, and other pertinent information.

If you have a recalled food, take it back to where it was purchased for a refund, or throw it away. Do not take the chance of eating it or feeding it to animals.

Learn more at www.foodsafety.gov/recalls/index.html.

Insight Summit Conference

Do you have a story to tell? Need help with social media and networking? The Center for Rural Enterprise Engagement is offering a two day conference to help you!

This conference will focus on a variety of communication platforms such as Facebook, E-newsletters, Instagram, creating visual content, and much more. Early bird registration is now open for $199! After January 1, 2019, the cost is $279.

The Summit is scheduled for February 12 & 13, 2019 at the KSU Alumni Center in Manhattan, KS.

What is Muscular Steatosis?

What looks like a highly marbled portion of meat, is actually a condition known as muscular steatosis. Other terms include “steatosis,” “callous,” “calloused lean,” “calloused ribeye,” “callus,” or “woody callused.” It occurs when muscle damage or nerve degeneration happens and fatty tissue permeates into the muscle tissue. In extreme cases, the fat can completely take over the muscle and become solid fat.

This condition most often occurs because the animal was injured at some point in its life. Other sources of this condition include vascular abnormalities, biopsy locations, or when animals rear up on their hind legs.

While it is still safe to eat, the quality will be very poor and tough.

Sources: Dr. Liz Boyle and Dr. Terry Houser, K-State Research and Extension Meat Specialists; https://meat.tamu.edu/2013/05/06/muscular-steatosis/
Using Yellow Split Peas

Yellow split peas are pulses which are the edible dried seed of legume crops. The word “pulse” comes from the Latin word “puls” which means thick soup or potage. Beside split peas, pulses also include dry beans, lentils, and chickpeas and have virtually no fat content. They are, however, high in fiber, protein and complex carbohydrates.

For those on gluten free diets, pulses are beneficial. Many products are now made with pulse foods such as yellow and green pea flour. For diabetics, pulses are beneficial for blood glucose management and have a lower glycemic index. For vegetarians, pulses have eight essential amino acids which offers beneficial protein quality.

Split peas are easy to prepare. No overnight soaking is needed. Heat two cups water for each cup of dry split peas. Simmer for 30 minutes to desired tenderness. Add them to chili, spaghetti sauce, soup, salsa, hummus or in many other dishes.

Sources:
https://bit.ly/2z6S2E1
https://northernpulse.com/recipes
http://foodhero.org/recipes/categories/141

Give Kohlrabi a Taste!

It looks like a turnip or even a mini-cabbage, but it’s not! It’s kohlrabi! The flavor is a mix of cucumber and mild broccoli. The texture is crunchy and juicy like an apple. This fat free, cholesterol free, low sodium, high fiber and high in vitamin C vegetable can be eaten raw or cooked.

Kohlrabi is German for “cabbage turnip”. It is a cousin to cole crops such as broccoli, cauliflower, kale and mustard. It contains glucosinolates, which may help fight cancer. A one cup serving contains 100 percent daily amount of vitamin C which helps the body easily absorb iron.

Source: https://bit.ly/2LdIfKM

Food Science in Action Competition

The Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) is sponsoring the fourth annual competition for students to show off their video skills and creativity in the STEM fields. The theme for the 2019 competition is “Teaching and Learning Science Through Food.”

This competition is open to anyone and does not require membership to IFT. Students create a 1– to 5-minute video to teach viewers about an aspect of food science. The video must be detailed and include a materials and equipment list so viewers can easily repeat the project at home or school. Scientific accuracy is important, so attention to detail is critical. This is very competitive and all submissions will receive constructive feedback. Video submissions are due April 8, 2019.

The star beverage for many holiday parties is egg nog. This is a drink that dates back to the 13th century and there are many variations.

To reduce the chance of giving the gift of food-borne illness, make a cooked egg base. This is done by mixing the eggs and half the milk and gently heat to an internal temperature of 160°F. The mixture should coat a metal spoon. Remove from heat and chill the base before adding other ingredients. Then, say cheers for a safe holiday treat!