



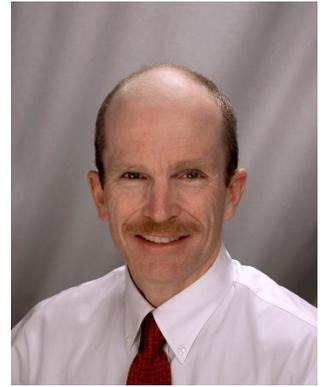
Industry and Government Food Safety Partners Work to Make Every Day World Food Safety Day

Commentary from Dr. Steve Ingham, Administrator, Division of Food and Recreational Safety

Release Date: June 5, 2019

Contact: Leeann Duwe, Public Information Officer
(608) 224-5005, leeannm.duwe@wi.gov

MADISON – We often hear about food deserts, food insecurity problems, and even excess food consumption in the U.S. and other countries. With the designation of June 7 as World Food Safety Day, I'm thankful for industry and government partners who work around the clock to ensure we don't hear more often about foodborne illness. While improvements in technology to detect, track, and trace potential outbreaks may make it seem like we are hearing more about foodborne illness, the actual prevalence of illnesses based on population size is low.



*Dr. Steve Ingham, Administrator
Division of Food and
Recreational Safety*

In 2018, the Centers for Disease Control's Foodborne Disease Active Surveillance Network (FoodNet) identified 25,606 foodborne infection cases at 10 representative sites covering 15% of the U.S. population. This means at least 99.95% of people in the FoodNet areas did **not** suffer a reported foodborne infection last year. Obviously, we would all like this percentage to be 100, but it takes a lot of hard work to ensure that it's as high as it is.

On a daily basis, food industry stakeholders and government food safety professionals face the reality that there are many factors working against a 100% safe food supply. Our world's population is increasingly urban and becoming more and more removed from the production of their food. While we enjoy the bounty and variety that world trade provides, longer and more complicated transportation chains require increased vigilance and preventive measures; otherwise a food safety hazard can quickly become international in scope. Additionally, the U.S. labor market is highly dynamic, presenting a unique challenge to maintaining consistent control over food safety hazards across thousands of distinct food businesses. Along with an aging population that is more susceptible to foodborne illness, these factors mean it is critical for industry and government to work together in keeping our food supply safe.

Fortunately, great progress has been made. In the U.S. and many other countries, government food safety regulations have moved from the "command and control" prescriptions of the past to requirements for proactive food safety systems that are now used by food manufacturers and verified by regulators. Extra scrutiny is applied to key processing steps such as pasteurization and other heat treatments that dramatically reduce the likelihood of foodborne illness. When a microbial foodborne illness outbreak does occur, scientific techniques for identifying the genetic fingerprint of the microbe now allow regulators to recognize – and stop – illness outbreaks far more quickly than in the past. Similarly, communication between federal, state, and local food safety regulators has dramatically improved over the years, meaning that corrective and preventive actions can be taken more quickly. Finally, food industry leaders have worked to reduce the great costs that foodborne illness inflicts on society - and their businesses. These leaders have worked tirelessly to create a food safety culture in their companies.

It's rare that a food safety headline is good news, but thanks to many hardworking people, foodborne illness outbreaks are relatively rare in our state. On World Food Safety Day, let's honor and thank the many professionals in the food industry and government who partner together each day to keep our food supply safe to eat.

###

Find more DATCP news in our [newsroom](#), and on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).