The New Agricultural and Extension Education: A Focus on Science of Food Safety

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Abstract
The number of food borne illnesses has been increasing by the day all over the world and
the United States is no exception. In this context, education on food safety assumes utmost
importance. Educators are positioned uniquely to teach about food safety to their clients.
Teachers of Agriculture in the formal settings and Extension Educators in the non-formal
settings can serve this purpose.

The purpose of this poster is to share the experiences from a summer workshop on food
safety that was conducted by the Departments of Agricultural Education and Studies and Animal
Science of a land-grant university in the United States that utilized collaborative learning
methods in educating the participants on teaching food safety.

The ‘Irradiation & Food Safety Education Manual’ was developed by the Departments of
Animal Science and Agricultural Education and Studies at a land-grant university in the United
States. This manual was developed as a part of a USDA project on irradiation technologies in
animal science. This manual provides ideas for teaching students and identifies a number of
websites that can be used to collect more information related to food safety issues. This manual
provides broad information related to food chain, bacteria, food irradiation, food preparation and
foodborne illnesses. This manual was developed into a CD also. A food safety workshop (2
credits) was organized by the Department of Agricultural Education and Studies in the summer
of 2007 in collaboration with the Department of Animal Science. The emphasis of this workshop
was the integration of food science, food safety, and food security into the agricultural education
curriculum. Nine agriculture teachers and one graduate student from the Department of
Agricultural Education attended the workshop.

The participants developed lesson plans related to food safety that could be used in
educating students. All the lesson plans were evaluated by the instructors and made into a
comprehensive packet that was sent to all the participants. All the participants opined that the
workshop was very educative. A follow-up survey to know the extent to which the participants
were using the educational manual and lesson plans they developed in the workshop in their
classes will be conducted in the summer of 2009.

This workshop has implications for non-formal educational settings, also. The authors
propose that the educational resources used in the workshop can be used by extension educators
in educating their clients on food safety issues. It is also proposed that the workshop can be used
as a model for conducting educational programs conducted by the state Cooperative Extension
System on food safety. The lesson plans have been developed in ways they can be used in any
country to educate people on food safety.

**Key Words:** Food safety, Summer workshop, Educational materials, Classroom teaching,
Extension Education