



March 2009

Dear 4-H Families:

It is important, as we head into the busy summer season, that we all understand the food safety codes and guidelines especially when preparing food for the public. .

When serving food for the public, it is imperative that you contact Corrine Rose, County Sanitarian, to obtain a food permit. Her number is 466-2150 ext. 223. You may dial the extension as soon as the automated system responds.

Any club in charge of concessions for fair or any meal during the fair must contact the sanitarian independently. Once you obtain the food permit, **follow the guidelines outlined by state and federal laws. For instance, when serving food to the public any potentially hazardous food must be prepared on-site in a licensed or licensable kitchen.** Many churches in the county have licensable kitchens and the kitchen at the Choteau Pavilion qualifies as well. To give a specific example, all meat being prepared for the public during the fair must be prepared in the kitchen at the Pavilion or in another similar kitchen. Also, any meat used to be served to the public has to be from a USDA inspected facility.

Additionally, many common salads are viewed as potentially hazardous and therefore, extra care and caution needs to be taken when preparing a salad for serving food to the public. We have attached a list of potentially hazardous foods as well as the current law regarding serving food to the public.

Poor personal hygiene is the number one cause of food borne illnesses. Cooking, cooling and reheating of foods can also create many safety concerns. **For this reason, we are asking families bringing items containing potentially hazardous foods to the Chuckwagon Dinner to prepare them according to guidelines on site.** There is a large capacity refrigerator at the Pavilion and a small chest freezer, so there should be plenty of room to store items.

Please read through the enclosed information and be certain to **contact the county sanitarian when you are preparing food for public consumption.** It is best to be educated before the event and prepare food properly. Please call the office if you have further questions regarding the requirements for food safety, particularly for the fair.

4-H families attending the Chuckwagon Dinner are assigned an item to bring by last name. If your last name starts M-Z you are asked to bring a dessert in a pan that is at least 9x13 or prepare it on-site if it is a potentially hazardous food item, and last names A-L are to bring at least one gallon of salad/side dish or prepare one on-site if it is potentially hazardous. **New this year, each member with livestock to sell is asked to bring one dish per animal. For instance, if you have three children in your family, all selling three animals, you are asked to bring three sizable items to the Chuckwagon Dinner.** The reason is that we have been running out of food for our guests. It is important for us to be able to feed even the last person who has waited in line. Thank you for your cooperation.

We have a "Food Safety for Fundraisers" video and instructional booklet available for check out by individuals or clubs. Some fairs have mandatory food safety training for all volunteers/members handling food at any time during the fair. We hope this letter and the educational material will suffice this year to provide you the information that you need.

Sincerely,

Jane Wolery
MSU Teton County Extension Educator

*Montana State University,
U.S. Department of
Agriculture and Montana
Counties Cooperating.
MSU Extension is an
equal opportunity/
affirmative action provider
of educational outreach.*

P.O. Box 130
#1 Main Ave. South
Choteau, MT 59422-0130
www.msueextension.org

Tel (406) 466-2491,2492
Fax (406) 466-2138
Email teton@montana.edu

Mountains & Minds