

The Communicator

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Director

- 1 Featherstone & Haberly Award Applications
- 2 To Attend, or Not to Attend
- 2 Extension Faculty Publish Article

Food Safety

- 3 New Proposed Food Safety Rules Published

Family Development

- 5 Family Poverty and Federal Safety Net Programs
- 5 Divorce and Health Insurance for Women
- 6 Microlife: A Metric to Understand Health Risk

Nutrition Education

- 7 Update on Eating Habits and Snacking
- 8 Cancer Deaths: Good News and Bad News
- 8 Are Fast Foods Linked to Asthma, Allergies, and Eczema?

It feels like UI's spring semester started just a couple of weeks ago. But, my calendar is telling me it is already February. February has always been one of my favorite months. I am not really sure why unless it was the fun activities we did in elementary school or it might be that there is a hint of spring just around the corner. Spring semester also provides us the opportunity to recognize faculty and students for their outstanding work. Part of that recognition also includes the opportunity to provide funding opportunities for professional development activities.

In the past we have been able to award professional development awards to our Extension faculty from three different accounts, Haberly, Hepworth, and Featherstone. Due to low funds in the Hepworth account, we will not be accepting applications for that account until such time that the account funds show a significant increase. We will be accepting applications for funding from the other two accounts. The Haberly's current balance stands at \$5,614; the Featherstone balance stands at \$455.35.

Featherstone & Haberly Award Applications

The School of Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Faculty/Professional Development Committee would like to remind Family and Consumer Science faculty and extension educators that we will be reviewing applications for Marion Featherstone and Mildred Haberly awards in March 2013. Here is a brief synopsis of the two awards and the type of submissions that are allowed:

(1) The **Marion Featherstone Scholar Award** is for **faculty** in the Margaret Ritchie School of FCS to participate in scholarly projects, a professional activity, or to recognize their outstanding accomplishments. The award may be used to cover a wide variety of professional experiences that include: attending a conference or seminar, participating in an international experience, developing or participating in a technology related project, outreach to the state, outreach to public schools, welfare reform, and program delivery, course development.



Director

Sonya Meyer
Family and Consumer Sciences
University of Idaho
875 Perimeter Dr MS 3183
Moscow, ID 83844-3183
sonyam@uidaho.edu



(2) The **Mildred Haberly Home Economics Extension Endowment** is to fund extension faculty development and program opportunities for Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Specialists and Educators. It may be used to cover expenses incurred to take or attend a seminar, conference, workshop, short course, or to purchase educational, illustrative or audio-visual materials.

Applications are limited to two pages and will undergo a competitive review by the Faculty/Professional Development Committee. They should be submitted electronically to the School of Family and Consumer Sciences (kariz@uidaho.edu) **by March 1**. The applications for these awards are located at the School of FCS website, <http://www.uidaho.edu/cals/fcs/resources>.

Recipient(s) will be announced on or about April 1. They will be recognized at the Alumni brunch, in *The Communicator*, and at the CALS banquet. Funds need to be spent by April 30 of the following year, unless an extension is requested and approved. The recipient(s) will be required to write a report to be published in *The Communicator*.

Since we are on the topic of professional development, I thought it would be good to share how one of our undergraduate students utilized her professional development award this past fall. Miranda Strey is a senior in Child Development and Family Relations. She was awarded funds to attend the

National Conference on Family Relations held in Phoenix, AZ this past November.

To Attend, or Not to Attend

I recently had the opportunity to attend my first professional conference as an undergraduate student. The National Conference on Family Relations was held in Phoenix, AZ in November. NCFR organization is a professional association established to assist educators in understanding the vast complexities of families.

As a first time participant to the conference and stepping foot in the largest city I have ever been in, I gained a deeper understanding of what is necessary in furthering the advancement of understanding families. Here are my top 3 “ah ha!” moments:

1. Research is absolutely necessary to gather data in furthering the advancement of families. In order for educators to have current and accurate information research is necessary because it exposes how, what, and why families cope and progress through changes. Also, research allows educators and family advocates to present families with resources and assistance in subject areas that pertain to their needs.
2. NCFR conference provides networking experiences for education and career advancement. While attending the conference, I was intimidated knowing that I was one of only a few undergraduate students. Although I was clearly outnumbered I made some great connections with prospecting grad schools, networked with other professionals who share the same interests, and had personal contact with the graduate school recruiters from the programs and schools that I am most interested in. By doing this, I have been able to establish a professional relationship with these recruiters and it will assist me when I launch into grad school.
3. Attending the conference further developed my knowledge base about what I currently knew and am learning in classes about families. By attending seminars, plenary sessions, and workshops I was exposed to an array of different subjects that are currently being studied to

assist families as well as furthering the advancement in what is already being done. Not only did I learn about families but other workshops were available to assist undergrads who wish to further their education into graduate school and other professional programs. These workshops offered tips and tricks as to what graduate school programs are looking for within the application packet as well as defining terms and expectations that are often used during the process. With all of this new information I am now waiting in anticipation to apply it to real life applications when the opportunities arise.



By attending the conference I have gained the reinforcement that was necessary in making decisions regarding my future aspirations. I am looking forward to attending the conference in 2013 in San Antonio, Texas and I will be applying to grad school next year.

Written by Miranda Strey, senior, Child Development/Family Relations.

Extension Faculty Publish Article

Congratulations to **Marnie Spencer, Laura Sant, Carol Hampton, Rhea Lanting, Audrey Liddil, Marsha Lockard, Joey Peutz, Grace Wittman, Sharlene Woffinden, and Martha Raidl** for publishing their article, “Effectiveness of the six-week Strong Women Stay Young program,” published in the *Forum for Family and Consumer Issues*. It can be found at <http://ncsu.edu/ffci/publications>.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Food and Drug Administration

21 CFR Parts 16 and 112

[Docket No. FDA-2011-N-0921]

RIN 0910-AG35

Standards for the Growing, Harvesting, Packing, and Holding of Produce for Human Consumption

AGENCY: Food and Drug Administration, HHS.

ACTION: Proposed rule.



Food Safety

Sandra M. McCurdy
Food Safety Specialist
Family and Consumer Sciences
University of Idaho
875 Perimeter Dr MS 3183
Moscow, ID 83844-3183
smccurdy@uidaho.edu



New Proposed Food Safety Rules Published

In January, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) proposed two much anticipated sets of rules that are designed to improve the safety of foods FDA regulates, including fresh produce which will see more controls over how it is grown, harvested and handled post-harvest. Food industry publications and blogs have devoted a lot of space to discussion of these proposed rules during the past month.

Background. Two years ago, on January 4, 2011, Congress passed, with broad bipartisan support, and President Obama signed the long awaited Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) (see “At Long Last, New Food Safety Bill Now Law” in the January 2011 issue of *The Communicator*). The law was enacted to shift the food safety system from primarily reacting to foodborne illness outbreaks to focusing on preventing contaminated products from entering the market place. The bill is described as the first major change to U.S. food safety laws since 1938 and a landmark modernization of the U.S. food safety system.

However, passage of the FSMA was just the first step. The bill directed FDA to create new food safety regulations in several areas. Thus, on January 16, 2013, FDA published (in the *Federal Register*) two sweeping new food safety rules, of the

expected five to come. The public will have 120 days to comment and then the rules will go through the normal rulemaking process, which could take several months.

Proposed rules delayed. Several sources have commented on the year long delay in publishing the rules, since Congress had directed FDA to accomplish the work in one year. The delay in large part was because the new regulations were under review at the White House Office of Management and Budget’s Office of International and Regulatory Affairs for more than a year, a delay many stakeholders blamed on election politics.

Two rules. The more sweeping of the proposed rules, referred to as “preventative controls” for short, would require makers of food to be sold in the United States, whether produced at a foreign- or domestic-based facility, to develop a formal plan for preventing their food products from causing foodborne illness. The rule would also require them to have plans for correcting any problems that arise. Large food manufacturers would need to be in compliance with the new preventive controls rules one year after the final rules are published but small and very small businesses would be given additional time.

Although specific industries, notably seafood and fruit and vegetable juice processors, have been required to have written preventative controls, this is the first time FDA has proposed to apply preventive controls across all types of food operations.

The other rule, “produce safety,” proposes enforceable safety standards for the production and harvesting of produce on farms. This rule proposes science- and risk-based standards for the safe production and harvesting of fruits and vegetables. The proposed rule covers all fruits and vegetables except those rarely consumed raw, produced for personal consumption or destined for a commercial process that will reduce pathogens. It focuses on areas of risk such as agricultural water, biological soil amendments (such as manure), worker health and hygiene, domesticated and wild animals, and equipment, tools, and buildings.

Large farms would need to be in compliance with most of the produce safety requirements 26 months after the final rule is published. Small and very small farms would have additional time to comply, and all farms would have additional time to comply with certain requirements related to water quality.

This is the first time that FDA will have enforceable standards on the farm. Produce production standards at this time are in the form of guidelines.

Cost-benefit analysis. The Office of Management and Budget found that the economic benefits from the two new rules are much greater than the expected costs to the food industry. For example, the proposed produce safety rule is estimated to cost the domestic and foreign produce industry about \$630 million per year. (The average recurring costs to the produce industry are estimated to be \$10,507 for small farms and \$24,401 for large, with first year start-up costs somewhat higher.) Implementation of the rule is estimated to reduce the human health burden associated with produce by nearly 65 percent, which would save \$1.04 billion, resulting in an expected net benefit of about \$410 million annually. In addition, preventing outbreaks and the health care costs associated with them is only one part of the expected economic benefit. Additional benefits include reducing the disruption to the markets, the loss of sales, and the loss of consumer confidence

each time a major foodborne illness outbreak associated with produce occurs.

Reactions. The early reactions of stakeholders to the proposed rules has been generally positive. Consumer groups hailed the rules as a significant step forward in reducing preventable foodborne illnesses and restoring consumer confidence in the food supply. Industry groups have welcomed the publication of the rules so they can evaluate and comment on them and begin to plan for implementation.

A concern expressed by several sources is whether the additional resources needed by FDA to fully implement the proposed rules, \$1.5 billion in additional funds over five years, will be provided by Congress. Additional inspectors will be required to insure compliance with the new rules.

Three additional rules. There are three other key draft rules that remain under review at OMB; these rules target foreign supplier verification, preventive controls for the feed industry, and third party audit certification.

Obviously there are a lot of details in 1,227 pages of rules (in the early release PDF version), much of which could change as stakeholders—consumers, industry, producers, and food safety experts in state governments and academia—review the proposed rules and offer comments. However, the end result should be improved safety of the U.S. food supply.

Source: Bottemiller, H. “FDA Releases Two Long-Awaited Food Safety Rules,” Food Safety News, January 4, 2013: <http://www.foodsafetynews.com/2013/01/fda-announces-two-long-awaited-food-safety-rules/#.UOr0seQ0V8E>; FDA News Release, “FDA proposes new food safety standards for foodborne illness prevention and produce safety,” January 4, 2013, <http://www.fda.gov/newsevents/newsroom/pressannouncements/ucm334156.htm>.

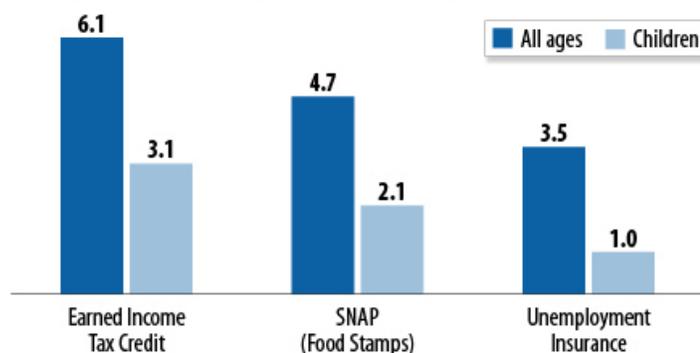
Keywords: food safety, government, food industry.

Family Poverty and Federal Safety Net Programs

Data released by the U.S. Census Bureau demonstrates the importance of federal safety net programs in keeping families and children out of poverty in 2011. The analyses rely on the Supplemental Poverty Measure, an alternative poverty calculation which has been introduced to integrate non-cash government assistance and regional variations in cost of living into the poverty calculation. The figure below shows the roles of the Earned Income Tax Credit, the SNAP nutrition program, and unemployment insurance in protecting families from poverty.

Safety Net Programs Kept Millions out of Poverty in 2011

Millions of people kept above Supplemental Poverty Measure poverty line in 2011



Note: The EITC and SNAP are not included in the official poverty measure.

Source: CBPP analysis of Census Bureau data.

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities | cbpp.org

Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Off the Charts, www.cbpp.org.

Keywords: children at risk, income, poverty.

Divorce and Health Insurance for Women

About 115,000 women lose their private health insurance every year in the wake of divorce, according to a [University of Michigan study](#). And this loss is not temporary: women's overall rates of health insurance coverage remain depressed for more than two years after divorce.



Family Development

Harriet Shaklee
Family Development Specialist
University of Idaho, Boise
322 E Front St., Suite 180
Boise, ID 83702-7364
hshaklee@uidaho.edu



“Given that approximately one million divorces occur each year in the U.S., and that many women get health coverage through their husbands, the impact is quite substantial,” says Bridget Lavelle, a U-M Ph.D. candidate in public policy and sociology, and lead author of the study.

Among the other key findings of the study:

- Each year, roughly 65,000 divorced women lose all health insurance coverage in the months following divorce. Many women have trouble maintaining private insurance coverage because they no longer qualify as dependents under husbands' policies or have difficulty paying premiums for private insurance.
- Women insured as dependents on their husband's employer-based insurance policy are particularly vulnerable to loss of coverage after divorce. Nearly one-quarter of them are uninsured six months after divorce.
- Women who have their own employer-based coverage are less likely than other women to lose coverage (11% vs. 17%) but they are not completely immune from loss of coverage because financial losses related to the divorce may reduce their ability to pay their share of employee-sponsored health insurance.

“Women in moderate-income families face the greatest loss of insurance coverage,” says Lavelle. “They are more likely than higher-income women to lose private coverage and they have less access than lower-income women to public insurance.”

Lavelle and Smock also found that full-time work and education are important buffers protecting women from losing health insurance after divorce. But since many women work part-time or in jobs that don’t provide health insurance coverage, the protective effects of employment are not universal.

“The current health care and insurance system in the U.S. is inadequate for a population in which multiple marital and job changes over the life course are not uncommon,” Lavelle and Smock conclude. “It remains to be seen how effective the Affordable Care Act will be in remedying the problem of insurance loss after divorce, but the law has provisions that may help substantially.”

Source: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, www.sampler.isr.umich.edu.

Keywords: divorce, health insurance.

Microlife: A Metric to Understand Health Risk

We may like to eat, drink and be merry, but each day of over-indulging can shorten life by several hours. Activities like smoking, having a couple of drinks, eating red meat and watching television can each knock at least 30 minutes off your life expectancy for every day you indulge. In contrast, each day of sticking to just one alcoholic drink, eating plenty of fruit and vegetables, and exercising can be expected to add up to two hours to your life.

Professor David Spiegelhalter, a statistician at the University of Cambridge, wanted to find a simple way of communicating the impact of our behaviors on expected length of life. He suggests using the concept of ageing faster or slower, by expressing the daily effect of lifestyle habits as “microlives” (half hours of life expectancy). A half hour of adult life expectancy can be termed a microlife as it is loosely equivalent to one millionth of life after age 35, he explains.

Using data from population studies he calculates that, averaged over a lifetime habit, a microlife can be “lost” from smoking two cigarettes, being 5 kg overweight, having a second or third alcoholic drink of the day, watching two hours of television, or eating a burger.

On the other hand, microlives can be “gained” by sticking to just one alcoholic drink a day, eating fresh fruit and vegetables, exercising, and taking statins.

Demographic factors can also be expressed in microlives. For example, being female rather than male (a gain of 4 microlives a day), being Swedish rather than Russian (a gain of 21 a day for men), and living in 2010 rather than 1910 (a gain of 15 a day).

This form of communication allows a general, non-academic audience to make rough, but fair comparisons between the sizes of chronic risks, and is based on a metaphor of “speed of ageing,” which has been effective in encouraging cessation of smoking, says Professor Spiegelhalter. “So each day of smoking 20 cigarettes (10 microlives) is as if you are rushing towards your death at 29 hours rather than 24.”

He points to several limitations and stresses that these assessments are very approximate and based on numerous assumptions. However, he says they “bring long term effects into the present and help counter temporal discounting, in which future events are considered of diminishing importance.” In spite of the limitations, he concludes that “a reasonable idea of the comparative absolute risks associated with chronic exposures can be vividly communicated in terms of the speed at which one is living one’s life.”

He adds: “Of course, evaluation studies would be needed to quantify any effect on behavior, but one does not need a study to conclude that people do not generally like the idea of getting older faster.”

Source: *British Medical Journal*, December 17, 2012, www.bmj.com.

Keyword: health.



Update on Eating Habits and Snacking

The NPD market research group collected data from March 2010 to March 2012 on American's eating and snacking habits. They found that Americans are less likely to skip breakfast, lunch, or dinner meals, than they were five years ago, but the number of items consumed at these meals has decreased and the amount of snacking has increased.

For example, Americans have decreased the number of food and beverage items they eat and drink at dinner time, from 5.3 items in 1985 to 4.1 items today. As a result of these smaller or "mini" meals, over half (53%) of Americans are snacking 2-3 times a day. Food and beverage analyst Darren Seifer stated, "Our frequent snacking is a result of our hectic lifestyles, need for convenience, increasing desire to eat healthier foods, and simply to enjoy what we eat."

The NPD found the three most popular snacks were fresh fruit, chocolate, and potato chips. Americans snacked on fresh fruit an average of 10 times more than they snacked on chocolate and 25 times more than they snacked on potato chips. Several reasons why fresh fruit was such a popular snack include:

1. It's eaten by all age groups, from children to seniors. Teenagers had the lowest consumption of fresh fruit and the older people became, the more fruit they ate.
2. It is convenient—fruit can be eaten at all times of the day—morning, afternoon, and evening.
3. Americans are becoming more health conscious, which makes fresh fruit more appealing.



Nutrition Education

Martha Raidl
Nutrition Education Specialist
University of Idaho, Boise
322 E Front St., Suite 180
Boise, ID 83702-7364
mraidl@uidaho.edu



Researchers at Cornell University are suggesting that promoting healthy snacks be used as a way to target childhood obesity. Snacking in children has increased over the past 30 years, from once a day to three times a day.

In NPD study, 201 kids in grades three through six watched a 45 minute cartoon. Half of them were given a snack of vegetables and cheese and the other half were given a snack of potato chips. The results showed that children who ate the vegetable and cheese snack consumed an average of 170 calories. Those who received the potato chip snack consumed significantly more ($p < 0.001$) calories, an average of 620 calories.

Parents should consider replacing snacks high in fat, salt, sugar, and calories with fruits and vegetables as a way to decrease calories and increase the nutrient content of their diet.

Source: *Pediatrics*, January 2013;
https://www.npd.com/lps/pdf/The_NPD_Groups_Snacking_in_America-Report_Excerpts.pdf; <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/131/1/22.full?sid=4cba8b23-df87-430c-9f4d-1b1dd4bbd7ba>.

Keywords: fruit, vegetables, snacks, youth.

Cancer Deaths: Good News and Bad News

The American Cancer Society (ACS) annually compiles and analyzes the most recent data on cancer incidence, mortality and survival. The good news is that ACS found that the death rate from cancer in the U.S. dropped over the last twenty years. Cancer death rates peaked in 1991 at 215.1 deaths per 100,000 people. The most recent data, from 2009, shows the death rate declined by 20 percent to 173.1 per 100,000 people. ACS estimates that this 20 percent decline is equivalent to preventing 1.18 million cancer deaths.

Lung, colorectal, breast, and prostate cancer comprise half of all cancers diagnosed in the U.S. The decrease in cancer deaths is due to a decrease in smoking rates (the number one cause of cancer), early detection and improved cancer treatments.

The bad news is that the high incidence of obesity is negatively affecting cancer rates. Obesity is the second leading cause of cancer. Breast, prostate, pancreatic, and colon cancer have been linked to excessive calorie intake and lack of physical activity. Therefore, while overall cancer mortality is decreasing, the obesity epidemic is keeping the incidence at a high level.

In 1970, approximately 15 percent of adults were obese and in 2010, it was 35 percent. It is unknown what affect the increase in childhood obesity, from 4 percent in 1970 to 20 percent in 2010 will have on future cancer incidence and mortality.

To further decrease the number of Americans being diagnosed with cancer, early screening and treatment needs to be available to more individuals, and lifestyle changes need to be implemented.

Source: *CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians*
January/February 2013,
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.3322/caa.c.21166/full>.

Keywords: cancer, obesity.



Are Fast Foods Linked to Asthma, Allergies, and Eczema?

Researchers in New Zealand and Great Britain monitored food intake of children in 31 countries. All participants were involved in the International Study of Asthma and Allergies in Childhood, a collaborative project led by the University of Auckland.

In this study, data was collected on approximately 500,000 children who fell into two age categories, 6-7 year-olds (181,000) and 13-14 year-olds (319,000). The teenagers and the children's parents were asked about their weekly diet and how often they developed symptoms of asthma (wheezing), and rhinoconjunctivitis (a runny or blocked nose accompanied by itchy and watery eyes) and eczema (scaly and itchy rashes).

In their diet history, the teens and the children's parents reported how many times a week (0 times, 1-2 times, 3 or more times) they ate: meat, fish, fruits, vegetables, pulses, cereals, bread, pasta, rice, butter, margarine, nuts, potatoes, milk, eggs, and fast food/burgers. They found that children and teens consuming three or more weekly servings of fast food had a 27-39 percent increase likelihood of developing severe asthma, rhinitis, and eczema. Eating three or more servings of fruit weekly was protective and decreased the severity of their symptoms by 11-14 percent, possibly due to its high antioxidant content.

The authors speculated that fast foods are high in saturated fat and omega-6 fats which affect immunity and increase likelihood of allergies. Also, fast foods are higher in trans-fat and lower in vitamins A and C, and antioxidants which are linked to development of asthma and skin allergies (eczema). Researchers warned that these results do not prove cause and effect, but warrant further investigation.

Source: *Thorax*, January 2013.

Keywords: fast food, youth, teenagers.