

# The Communicator

www.agls.uidaho.edu/fcs

July 2004

## Director

September FCS Inservice	1
MRDS Series	1
IAFCS Membership Meeting	1
Signature Programs	2
Bischoff Team Garners Federal Funding	2

## Food Safety

<i>Idaho Food Code</i> Hearings this Summer	3
Hand Washing Study in Pakistan Decreases Illness by 50%	5
Salmonella Outbreak Investigation—Raw Almonds	6

## Family Development

Empty Caps and Gowns	7
MMR Vaccine and Thimerosal-Containing Vaccines Are Not Associated With Autism, IOM Reports	10

## Nutrition Education

U.S. Dietary Guidelines Update	11
Junk Food = 1/3 of U.S. Diet	11
Exercise Update: Adolescents and Seniors	12
Where You Live Can Affect Your Waistline	12

## Family Economics

Money Cents for Teachers and Youth Leaders Workshop, August 4	13
Back-to-School Savings	13
Cut the Line on Phishing Scams	15
Financial Education Resources	16
Family Economics Calendar	16

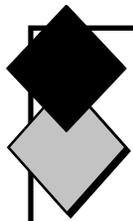
School of Family & Consumer Sciences



University of Idaho  
Extension

## September FCS Inservice

FCS Educators will receive a copy of the fall FCS Inservice program in the mail soon. I hope that you will review it carefully and make a decision to join us on campus September 22-24. In addition to the discipline updates by specialists and educators, the program addresses many important issues identified by your inservice program committee. For example, we will have presentations on survey research and get some feedback on FCS issues identified in the recent statewide survey. Marketing and delivery to today's audiences is another topic identified by the committee. I'm impressed with the content of the inservice and I think you will be, too. Make your reservations early!



***Director***  
*July 2004*



Nancy Wanamaker  
Director  
Family and Consumer Sciences  
University of Idaho  
Moscow, ID 83843-3188  
nancyw@uidaho.edu

## MRDS Series



The decision was made to have the FCS Inservice in Moscow this year in order to take advantage of the Margaret Ritchie Distinguished Speaker Series, September 23-24. Our speaker is Joanne Ikeda, an Extension Nutrition Specialist, co-director of the Center for Weight and

Health, and lecturer in the Department of Nutritional Sciences at the University of California, Berkley. She is a nationally recognized expert on pediatric obesity and the dietary practices of ethnic and immigrant populations. Joanne is a pioneer in conducting community collaborative research on the food habits and dietary quality of California's low-income, immigrant, and ethnic populations. She has developed culturally sensitive and relevant educational programs for these groups. More recently, she has promoted the adoption of "size acceptance," an approach to the treatment of obesity that emphasizes health promotion rather than weight loss. She has authored or co-authored several books and training manuals designed to help health care professionals, paraprofessionals, and parents instill healthy eating habits and encourage physical activity in children and adolescents. Joanne is Chair of the Weight Realities Division of the Society for Nutrition Education, a past-president

of the 7,000 member California Dietetic Association, and was formerly California delegate to the American Dietetic Association. She earned a BS degree from Cornell University and an MA from San Francisco State University.

The MRDS series is entitled, "Obesity: Problems, Issues, and Change." Joanne Ikeda will present an address to the Moscow community on Thursday evening at 7:30. She will speak to the complexity of the problem and focus on "Why Abandon Dieting for Health at Every Size." On Friday she will present to the University community in the SUB Borah Theatre. The title of her presentation will be, "Establishing Eating and Activity Habits in Children that will Prevent Overweight: What Can We Learn from Research." After lunch a panel of experts from the health care and education professions will present their perspectives on the issues and solutions. We are very fortunate to be able to welcome a scholar to our campus who has the experience and expertise to address the important issues related to obesity. FCS educators have a special opportunity to hear and engage Joanne during her visit.

## IAFCS Membership Meeting



In addition to the Margaret Ritchie Distinguished Speaker, we have also invited AAFCS Past President Virginia Vincente to be with us. Dr. Vincente will address the FCS Educators at a breakfast meeting on Friday morning. The title of her presentation is "Strengthening Collaboration in a Culture of Competition." Dr. Vincente will join the IAFCS membership later in the day for a business meeting. She will be the speaker for the annual Alumni Brunch on Saturday. Her topic is entitled, "Creating a Viable Future."

Dr. Vincente is currently Professor of Family and Consumer Sciences at the University of Wyoming, Laramie. She received her BS in Home Economics with secondary teacher certification and a minor in chemistry from Mansfield University of Pennsylvania, MS and PhD in Home Economics Education with a minor in Individual and Family Studies from the Pennsylvania State University. Virginia has taught at the secondary level and was a county Extension educator in Pennsylvania. Before moving to Wyoming she was on the faculty in the Department of Consumer Studies at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and has served as Dept. Head and Associate to the Dean for Special Projects in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences at the University of Wyoming. Her scholarship has focused on the history and philosophy of home economics/family and consumer sciences. We are especially pleased to have Dr. Vincente join us for our FCS Inservice, to attend a membership meeting as we rebuild our professional organization in the state, and to be our Brunch speaker. We anticipate a busy week from Wednesday to Saturday. We look forward to seeing you for some or all of these events.

## Signature Programs

As you know, all units in the College have been discussing the criteria for signature areas and signature programs. All of you have been a part of the discussion in your districts. One of the opportunities

that we will have at the Inservice is to discuss these areas and programs by discipline, rather than geographical area. I look forward to your input as we discuss signature or priority programs, those that CALS should emphasize during the next 5 to 8 years. As I write, the nine identified signature areas are as follows:

- Agricultural and Food Based Process and Product Innovation
- Community Development
- Disease Prevention
- Environmentally and Economically Sustainable Crop and Livestock Integrated Systems
- Human Health, Nutrition, and Food Safety
- Individual and Family Well-being
- Managing Soil, Air, Water and Biological Resources
- Urban Environment and Small Acreage Agriculture
- Youth Education and Development

Our task before September 15 will be to specify which programs under these umbrella areas are signature programs. Many of you will serve on the integrated teams comprised of faculty and staff from different disciplines; they will further refine the signature programs and resource needs. Although we will all have discussed these areas and programs before the Inservice, I look forward to the opportunity to discuss signature programs by discipline as well.

## Bischoff Team Garners Federal Funding

A seven member team of Family Economics specialists (Idaho-Bev Healy and Marilyn Bischoff, Colorado, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Kentucky) who are developing the CSREES "Legally Secure Your Financial Future: Communicate, Organize, Prepare" education program have been awarded \$5,000 in funding from USDA to partially support their program development. Marilyn Bischoff chairs the team. Congratulations to all of you.



Existing Unioode

Proposed Idaho Food Code

## Idaho Food Code Hearings this Summer

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Food Protection Branch is in the process of updating the UNICODE (*Rules Governing Food Safety and Sanitation Standards for Food Establishments*). Revision work has been going on since October 2002 (see “Idaho Food Regulations Being Revised,” *The Communicator*, October 2003, page 3), but ran into a stumbling block in the legislative procedure this spring. Now a second round of public hearings concerning the newly proposed *Idaho Food Code* will be held this summer. (I represented academic institutions on the Idaho Food Safety Advisory Group, referred to in Frequently Asked Question #2 below.)

The following Frequently Asked Questions were prepared by Food Protection Branch Manager Patrick Guzzle to provide more information about the process.

### Why should we update the food rules in Idaho?

The Idaho “Rules Governing Food Safety and Sanitation Standards for Food Establishments” (UNICODE) was adopted in the early 1990’s. Prior to this set of food rules, there were two different sets of rules: one for restaurants and another for grocery stores and retail food markets. The term UNICODE was used to indicate that the two separate sets of food rules had been joined into one set of rules. These rules were based on scientific information related to food safety that was valid at the time. Since that time, more information is available to us and we recognize that the UNICODE is out of date. In addition, over the years, several interpretations have been made that are not consistent around the state. This has resulted in confusion about the UNICODE.



## *Food Safety*

*July 2004*



Sandra M. McCurdy  
 Extension Food Safety Specialist  
 Family and Consumer Sciences  
 University of Idaho  
 Moscow, ID 83843-3188  
[smccurdy@uidaho.edu](mailto:smccurdy@uidaho.edu)

### What is the Idaho Food Safety Advisory Group?

The Idaho Food Safety Advisory Group (IFSAG) was established in 2002 and consists of independent restaurant owners, private consultants, Health District staff, Department of Health and Welfare staff, The Idaho Restaurant and Lodging Association, and several other key individuals. The Group was charged with finding ways to update the UNICODE. The unanimous recommendation of the group was to adopt the 2001 version of the *FDA Model Food Code*.

### What is the *FDA Model Food Code*?

The *FDA Model Food Code* is a guidance document that each state can use to form a base for its own food rules. Some states that have adopted the Model Code have adopted it in its entirety while others have used specific sections. The Model Code is sometimes called the “Federal Food Code,” though this is not accurate as there is no “Federal” code for retail food safety. The Model Food Code is updated every four years using recommendations from the “Conference for Food Protection” This Conference meets every other year and consists of

several representatives from the food industry, independent restaurant owners, FDA staff, USDA staff, CDC staff, and personnel from local and state health departments.

**What is the *Idaho Food Code*?**

The *Idaho Food Code* is a compilation of the *FDA Model Food Code*, with specific revisions designed to meet the needs of Idaho Food Establishment Owners and Operators and protect the public health by establishing clear and consistent rules for food safety. It will be presented to the Legislature in 2005. If passed, the *Idaho Food Code* will replace the existing UNICODE.

**When will the *Idaho Food Code* become effective?**

If passed in 2005, the *Idaho Food Code* will become effective at the conclusion of the 2005 Legislative Session.

**What training will the “Health Inspectors” receive about the new *Idaho Food Code*?**

During June 2004, FDA representatives were in Boise to conduct a three-day training session for the “Health Inspectors” about the rules in the Model Food Code. In addition, the Idaho Food Protection Program is charged with the responsibility of providing training for all new inspectors. The Idaho Food Protection Program conducts regular evaluations of the Food Programs of each of Idaho’s seven (7) Health Districts during which, further training is provided.

**What will the new *Idaho Food Code* mean for my “food permit”?**

Nothing changes with the way that food permits are issued in Idaho. If your food establishment has been required to have a food permit in the past, this will continue. On the other hand, if your establishment has not needed a food permit, this will also continue. You should check with the local District Health Department to determine if a food permit is necessary.

**I have heard that the *Idaho Food Code* requires all employees in my establishment to be trained in food safety and sanitation. Is this true?**

No. The *Idaho Food Code* requires a “Person in Charge” to be present during hours of food service and preparation. A “Person in Charge” must be

able to demonstrate knowledge of food safety and sanitation. This can be accomplished in one of the following ways: 1) having zero critical violations at the time of inspection, 2) having completed a nationally accredited food safety course (there are currently three such courses, 3) completing an updated version of the “Idaho Food Safety and Sanitation Manual” or other approved course, or 4) correctly answering a series of questions found in the *Idaho Food Code*. Only one of the 4 options needs to be met in order to qualify as a “Person in Charge.”

**Can I see a copy of the *Idaho Food Code* now?**

Yes. Go to the following internet address: <http://www2.state.id.us/dhw>. On the left hand side of the page, in the margin, you will find a link that says “Health Information.” Click on that link and scroll down until you see a link for the “Idaho Food Safety and Sanitation Manual.” That will open a page labeled “Idaho Food Protection Program.” There are links on this page for the current food rules (UNICODE), the proposed new rules (*Idaho Food Code*), and a lot of other good information about food safety. If the document does not open, or if you experience any technical problems, please contact Patrick Guzzle, Food Protection Program Manager at 208-334-5936. This document is currently the draft set of rules. If the rules are approved in the 2005 Legislative Session, each food establishment in the state will receive a final copy of the rules, free of charge.

**How can I comment about these rules?**

There will be a series of public hearings. The purpose of the hearings is to collect statements about the proposed rules. These hearings are not to debate or discuss specific points of the rules, but your comments will be recorded and are certainly appreciated. Dates and times are listed below. Please note that all times are local.

<b>August 17, 2004</b>	<b>August 18</b>	<b>August 24</b>
7 - 9:00pm	7 - 9:00 pm	7 - 9:00 pm
Silverhorn Room	Coeur D’Alene Rm	Madeira Room
Holiday Inn	Shilo Inn	Holiday Inn
3300 S. Vista	702 W. Appleway	1399 Bench
Boise, ID	Coeur D’Alene, ID	Pocatello, ID

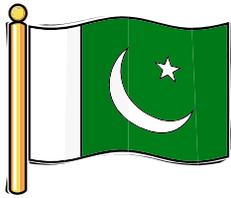
## **I have other questions, where can I find answers?**

For any other information about the proposed *Idaho Food Code* or the existing UNICODE, please feel free to contact:

Patrick Guzzle  
Food Protection Program Manager  
PO Box 83720  
Boise, ID 83720-0036  
208-334-5936  
Fax: 208-332-7307  
email: [guzzlep@idhw.state.id.us](mailto:guzzlep@idhw.state.id.us)

Source: Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, Department of Health and Welfare, Food Safety and Sanitation Standards for Food Establishments.

Key words: food safety, food service, resources.



## **Hand Washing Study in Pakistan Notes Hand Washing Program Decreases**

A study recently published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported that an intensive hand washing education and promotion program in Pakistan decreased diarrhea by more than 50 percent among children. Nearly 2 million children worldwide die every year from diarrheal disease. Washing hands with soap helps to prevent diarrhea, but children younger than 1 year, the group most vulnerable to diarrheal-related deaths, are too young to wash their own hands.

The researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducted a program of hand washing education and evaluated whether promotion of hand washing with soap among adults and children in a household decreased diarrhea among young children. The study was conducted in 36 low-income neighborhoods in urban squatter settlements in Karachi, Pakistan. Households participating in the study had at least two children

younger than 15 years and at least one younger than 5 years. As part of the intervention, field workers visited the participating households (in 25 neighborhoods) weekly for one year. The households were provided with education about proper hand washing with soap after defecation and before preparing food, eating and feeding a child. The educators used slide shows, videotapes and pamphlets to convey the health problems associated with contaminated hands. The households also received a regular supply of soap (either antibacterial or plain). Eleven of the 36 neighborhoods were randomized to the control group and did not receive education or soap.

In the households which received the educational program and plain soap (300 households, 1640 children), children younger than 15 years had a 53 percent lower incidence of diarrhea compared with children living in household that did not receive education or soap. Infants in the education/soap households had 39 percent fewer days with diarrhea. There were no significant differences in diarrheal disease among persons living in households that received antibacterial soap as compared to plain soap. The authors point out that this "is not surprising because triclocarban [the active agent in the antibacterial soap] is a bacteriostatic agent that inhibits the growth of some gram-positive bacteria, but is not effective against gram-negative bacteria, viruses or parasites that cause infectious diarrhea."

The study suggests that household hand washing in this population interrupts transmission of diarrheal pathogens sufficiently to markedly reduce diarrhea among infants. The educational program worked to improve hand hygiene, but less expensive interventions are needed that can reach millions of at-risk household worldwide.

Source: Luby, S.P., Agboatwalla, M., Painter, J., Altaf, A., Billhimer, W.L., & Hoekstra, R.M. 2004. Effect of intensive hand washing promotion on childhood diarrhea in high-risk communities in Pakistan: A randomized controlled trial. *J. Amer. Med. Asso.* 291(21):2547.

Key words: handwashing, health, poverty.



## Salmonella Outbreak Investigation— Raw Almonds

Raw almonds are the source of a *Salmonella enterica* serotype Enteritidis (SE) outbreak being investigated by state health departments, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and others. A total of 29 infected patients in 12 states and Canada have been identified so far since September 2003; 7 patients were hospitalized; no one has died. Patients ranged in age from 11 months to 91 years. (The infant patient was presumed infected by a caregiver.) Specific laboratory tests (two-enzyme pulsed-field gel electrophoresis) indicated the same strain of SE caused the illnesses.

Outbreak interviewing techniques that asked the infected patients about consumption of approximately 400 specific food items and their shopping and eating venues during the 5 days before illness onset led to the identification of almonds as the food associated with the SE illness.

Researchers tested for *Salmonella* in raw almonds from an opened package recovered from one patient's household, in unopened packages of nuts from the supplier's warehouse, and in environmental samples collected at the almond processor and at huller-shellers supplying the processor. The packaged samples were negative for *Salmonella*; however, *Salmonella* was isolated from one environmental sample collected from the processor and from three samples from two huller-shellers (the specific strain has not yet been identified).

California and federal regulatory agencies are trying to determine how the almonds become contaminated with *Salmonella*; the mechanisms are poorly understood. Typical harvesting, drying, and hulling-shelling practices readily enable cross-contamination. Raw nuts can be treated with dry heat, steam, propylene oxide, or other methods to reduce the risk for bacterial contamination; at least one almond processor does treat all raw almonds.

Roasted, blanched, or otherwise heat-processed nuts do not pose a risk for *Salmonella* contamination. Approximately 1 billion pounds of California almonds were produced in 2003, of which 5 percent were sold for raw consumption.

On May 18, 2004, the producer, Paramount Farms, announced a nationwide recall of all raw almonds sold under the Kirkland Signature, Trader Joe's, and Sunkist labels. Costco mailed 1,107,552 letters\* to members known to have purchased the recalled product in the United States (Costco has one of the best product recall notification systems in the U.S.). The recall was expanded subsequently to include nuts sold in bulk to approximately 50 other commercial customers, some of whom repackaged almonds for sale under other brand names. As of May 21, 2004, approximately 13 million pounds of raw almonds had been recalled. The majority of the recalled almonds likely were consumed months ago; however, raw almonds have a shelf life of more than 1 year, and consumers might still have the implicated products.

Brands and dates of recalled almonds can be found at FDA's recall website:

<http://www.fda.gov/oc/po/firmrecalls/almonds.html>.

The current outbreak continued for months, and possibly for more than 1 year, without being detected. Fewer than 5 percent of *Salmonella* infections are ever reported in the United States. More cases in the current outbreak are being identified as more patient samples are screened. Shell eggs and poultry are the most common vehicles for both outbreaks and sporadic infections attributed to SE, but multiple other sources also have been identified, including raw milk, meat, and sprouts.

---

\*Our family received three of these recall letters from Costco. Some of you know that almonds are my "must have" travel snack; I'm glad that I almost always toast them.

Source: Outbreak of *Salmonella* Serotype Enteritidis Infections Associated with Raw Almonds—United States and Canada, 2003—2004, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report Dispatch*, 53:1-3, June 4, 2004.

Key words: food safety, bacteria, nuts, recall.

## Empty Caps and Gowns

New analysis reveals deep problems in the graduation rates at four-year colleges and universities, but finds that some institutions do a much better job graduating their students than others.

As families and friends gather at colleges across the country to celebrate graduation, a new report released today by the Education Trust documents the fact that nationally, these same colleges will have failed to graduate nearly half of their degree-seeking first-time full-time freshmen within six years, and the picture is even worse for low-income and minority students. These young people leave our higher education system burdened with large student loans that must be repaid, but without the benefit of the wages that a college degree provides. The report includes a brand new analysis of institutional-level graduation rates that reveals widely different rates among similar institutions serving similar students and argues that when it comes to student success, what colleges and universities do matters greatly. The report, *A Matter of Degrees: Improving Graduation Rates in Four-Year Colleges and Universities*, includes a new analysis of a comprehensive federal database of six-year graduation rates from every degree-granting higher education institution in the United States.

“Our higher education system is a world class system and is a great asset to the general welfare and quality of our society,” said Kevin Carey, Senior Policy Analyst and author of the report. “But, it is failing to graduate the numbers of students needed if we are to continue to compete in a global economy. And a disproportionate amount of these students are low-income and minority students. For both moral and economic reasons, we must change the way we do business in higher education in this country.”

### Good News...Bad News

The good news is that more students in the United States are entering two- and four-year institutions than ever before; enrollment has increased from less than half in 1975 to almost two thirds in 2001. The biggest gains among entering freshmen are coming from groups that have been traditionally left behind, female and low-income students. When we extend the time frame to look at college enrollment

## *Family Development*

July 2004

Harriet Shaklee  
Extension Family Development  
Specialist  
University of Idaho Boise Center  
800 Park Blvd, Suite 200  
Boise, ID 83712  
hshaklee@uidaho.edu



to the first eight years out of high school, we find that by the 1990s, four out of five on-time high school graduates had enrolled in some form of higher education.

Unfortunately, while enrollment has increased, graduation rates have not increased at the same rate. In fact, many institutions lose one out of every four students they enroll in the freshman year alone. When looking at six-year graduation rates for four-year colleges and universities, the data shows that barely six out of ten (63 percent) first-time full-time degree-seeking college freshmen graduate within six years. While the overall graduation rates are low for all students, they are particularly low for minority and low-income students: only 46 percent of African American, 47 percent of Latino, and 54 percent of low-income first-time full-time freshmen are graduating within six years.

The report contends that if the United States is going to hold its historical position in having the best educated workforce in the world, higher education must do more. The world is changing rapidly and many jobs now require the skills and knowledge that can only be filled with workers with post-secondary education. Lower-skill manufacturing jobs that once allowed people to enter the middle class without a post-secondary education are rapidly disappearing with no end in sight. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that in the coming decade, there will be more and more jobs requiring post-secondary education.

Carey noted that, “Recent international studies show that over the last ten years, the U.S. has lost its first-place position in the developed world in terms of college-going rates. Similarly, we’ve slipped from first in college attainment as measured by the percentage of 25- to 34-year olds with a four-year degree.” He further warned that, “Even more significantly, every country surveyed but the U.S. made great strides in increasing college attainment rates for the current generation compared to the last.”

### Analyzing Institutional-Level Data

The report includes a new analysis of a comprehensive federal database—the Graduation Rate Survey (GRS)—of all four-year degree-granting higher education institutions in the United States. The analysis factors out specialty institutions, for-profit schools, distance learning outlets and others, leaving about 1,400 colleges and universities that meet the general definition of a “regular” four-year college or university, and have graduation rate data. These institutions educate approximately 90 percent of all undergraduate students. The GRS is limited to only those students who enroll as first-time, full-time freshmen with the goal of getting a bachelor’s degree—about 83 percent of all freshmen. It also makes adjustments for students who leave college early to join the Armed Services, foreign aid services, or serve on official church missions.

“We know from prior research that over 80 percent of all students who begin higher education at a four-year institution and ultimately graduate, get that degree from the same institution where they started,” noted Carey. “Which is one of the reasons we find this data to be so compelling.”

Some key findings of this analysis include:

Overall graduation rates vary widely and are too low:

- Overall six-year graduation rates range from less than 10 percent to almost 100 percent from institution to institution.
- Nearly one out of five four-year institutions in America graduate less than one-third of their first-time, full-time, degree-seeking freshmen within six years.

And the picture is even worse for minority students:

Of 772 colleges and universities in the United States where at least 5 percent of the full-time undergraduates are African American:

- 299 have a graduation rate for African American students **under 30 percent**.
- 164 have a graduation rate for African American students **under 20 percent**.
- And 68 have a graduation rate for African American students **under 10 percent**.
- Similarly, 25 percent of all institutions with at least 5 percent Latino students have a Latino graduation rate of **less than 30 percent**.

“These devastating facts make clear the need for a renewed and comprehensive focus on higher education outcomes,” said Kati Haycock, Director of the Education Trust. “Colleges and universities must take more seriously their obligation to these students and change their practices to improve success for all students. Where do we start? To begin, we can learn more about what high-performing institutions are doing to be so successful year after year.”

### High-performing Institutions

Analysis finds that even with very similar students, some colleges and universities are far more successful than others.

The analysis also finds that, *even when compared to institutions with very similar students*, graduation rates vary tremendously from institution to institution. In fact, even after controlling for a host of possible factors that might influence graduation rates—including students’ SAT and ACT scores, institutional mission, financial resources, degree programs, size, location, and others—some colleges and universities far outperform their peers.

“The analysis revealed differences in success rates at similar—or peer—institutions that were in some cases quite honestly staggering,” noted Haycock.

The report highlights a few high-performing institutions including:

*University of California*—Riverside, CA has a very racially diverse student body of over 13,000 stu-

dents (23 percent white, 22 percent Latino, and 41 percent Asian). It has an overall graduation rate of 66 percent, 15 percentage points better than the 51 percent median rate of its 33 peer institutions. The median graduation rate for Latino students at the peer schools is less than 39 percent, a gap of 12 percentage points. By contrast, success at UC-Riverside is equally distributed across groups. The graduation rate is 65 percent for white students, 67 percent for Asian students, and 68 percent for Latino students.

*East Carolina University*, NC is a “competitive” doctoral-degree granting institution whose 15,000 students are 16 percent minority. Among East Carolina University’s peers, the median overall grad rate is 41 percent and the median rate for African American students is 32 percent, a gap of 9 percentage points. At East Carolina, the graduation rate for all students is 54 percent, a rate that has increased every year since 1997. The rate for African American students is six percentage points higher: at 60 percent almost double the rate of other, similar universities.

*Binghamton University*, NY is one of the university centers in the State University of New York (SUNY) system. A “highly competitive” doctoral and research institution, Binghamton has an undergraduate population of 10,000, of whom about 12 percent are members of underrepresented minority groups. Its six-year graduation rate is 79 percent, which is a full 9 percentage points above the median rate of 70 percent among its closest peers. Moreover, Binghamton does well by graduating all groups of students. For example, the median African American graduation rate at Binghamton’s peer institutions is 59 percent, 11 percentage points lower than the rate for all students in those schools and 13 points below the rate for white students. Binghamton, on the other hand, has an African American graduation rate of 77 percent, a full 18 percentage points higher than the average for its peer group, and virtually the same as its overall rate and rate for white students.

According to Carey. “These colleges and universities offer powerful evidence that our higher education system has the capacity for great improvement when it comes to maximizing the education and success of *all* students.”

### **Moving to Action: Six Recommendations for Improvement**

- ***Real Accountability in Higher Education***—State policymakers and higher education leaders must collectively commit to making comprehensive and significant improvements in higher education graduation rates, including a particular focus on closing gaps for low-income and minority students.
- ***Improve Alignment Between K-12 and Higher Education***—Far too many students enter college lacking the necessary academic preparation. States and districts must work to increase rigorous academic course taking in high school, while colleges and universities must provide more information to K-12 schools and improve transparency in the process of placing students into remedial courses.
- ***Continuing to Improve Access and Affordability***—While access to higher education has increased, major affordability problems remain, exacerbated by rising state tuition and stagnant federal aid programs, both of which hinder the ability of lower-income students to complete college successfully.
- ***Continue to Increase the Quality of Learning***—Students need to complete college, but they also need to learn while they’re there. In the end, there can be no trade-off between improving completion and improving learning—in fact, at the most successful institutions, the two go hand in hand.
- ***Changing the Way Public Institutions Are Funded***—Rather than simply funding public universities based on the overall number of students enrolled, states should provide institutions with resources based on student progression through school, and ultimately graduation.
- ***Invest in More and Better Information***—Advances in information technology have now put states in the position of, for the first time, being able to integrate their K-12, higher education, and workforce databases in a way that will allow much richer analysis of student progression and success, both within the education system and after graduation.

As Carey concludes, “We have a huge task in front of us. But it is not an insurmountable one. If we in this country are serious about our economy and our education system, we must work to ensure that we

are graduating and educating far more students than we have in the past. Our future depends on it.”

Source: The Education Trust, <http://www.edtrust.org>.

Key words: higher education, income.

## **MMR Vaccine and Thimerosal-Containing Vaccines Are Not Associated With Autism, IOM Reports**

Based on a thorough review of clinical and epidemiological studies, neither the mercury-based vaccine preservative thimerosal nor the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine are associated with autism, says a new report from the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. Furthermore, the hypotheses regarding how the MMR vaccine and thimerosal could trigger autism lack supporting evidence and are theoretical only. Further research to find the cause of autism should be directed toward other lines of inquiry that are supported by current knowledge and evidence and offer more promise for providing an answer, said the committee that wrote the report.

"The overwhelming evidence from several well-designed studies indicates that childhood vaccines are not associated with autism," said committee chair Marie McCormick, Sumner and Esther Feldberg Professor of Maternal and Child Health, Harvard School of Public Health, Boston. "We strongly support ongoing research to discover the cause or causes of this devastating disorder. Resources would be used most effectively if they were directed toward those avenues of inquiry that offer the greatest promise for answers. Without supporting evidence, the vaccine hypothesis does not hold such promise."

The report updates two earlier IOM reports, published in 2001, on possible links between autism and the MMR vaccine and thimerosal. At that time, the committee determined that the evidence did not show an association between the MMR vaccine and autism, but there was not enough evidence to determine whether thimerosal was associated with neurodevelopmental disorders such as autism. Given that mercury is known to have a toxic effect

on the nervous system and that prenatal exposures to another form of mercury have been shown to adversely affect early childhood development, the committee concluded in 2001 that it was possible to hypothesize that thimerosal might trigger neurodevelopmental problems. The committee revisited these issues because several studies exploring the epidemiology and biological mechanisms of possible links between vaccines and autism have been undertaken during the past three years.

The committee based its latest conclusions and recommendations on a careful review of the literature it had assessed to develop its previous reports; subsequent studies; and other information provided by researchers, parents, and others. Epidemiological studies that looked at autism rates and exposures to vaccines carried the most weight in the committee's assessment of causality, but it considered other kinds of studies as well.

Five large epidemiological studies conducted in the United States, the United Kingdom, Denmark, and Sweden since 2001 consistently provided evidence that there is no association between thimerosal-containing vaccines and autism. Similarly, 14 large epidemiological studies consistently showed no association between the MMR vaccine and autism. The committee also reviewed five studies that reported links between thimerosal and autism and two that indicated a connection between the MMR vaccine and the disorder. However, limitations in how these studies were conducted and how the data were analyzed led the committee to conclude that they did not provide evidence supporting an association between vaccines and autism.

Thimerosal is an organic mercury compound that is still used as a preservative in some adult vaccines. It began to be removed from vaccines for children in 1999, and as of mid-2000, vaccines that are recommended for universal use in infants and young children are available in forms that have no or only trace amounts of thimerosal.

Source: The National Academies, <http://national-academies.org>.

Key words: infants, health.

## U.S. Dietary Guidelines Update

At the end of May 2004, the U.S. Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee met and voted on more than two-dozen scientific conclusions that will become the basis for the next U.S. Dietary Guidelines set for release in January 2005. Here are examples of what the committee agreed upon:

- **Monitor your weight.** This will help you know if you're reaching or maintaining a healthy weight and to gauge how many calories you need daily and to calculate a new category of "discretionary" calories for occasional splurges.
- **Choose a variety of foods.** The committee found that this was the best way a person could obtain the vitamins, minerals, fiber, and phytonutrients that most Americans don't consume. The average American should be consuming more fruits and vegetables, more low-fat and nonfat milk and milk products (about three cups per day), about three servings per day of whole grains and a lot less high-calorie, high-fat foods.
- **Go beyond potatoes.** Yes, I know this is Idaho, but most Americans need to consume more dark-green vegetables (e.g. spinach) and orange-colored produce (e.g. sweet potatoes, cantaloupe).
- **Move more throughout the day.** Be physically active—take the stairs, rake your yard—helps counteract the negative effects of the sedentary lives most Americans lead. Regular exercise can help people achieve a healthy weight and reduce the risk of chronic disease.
- **Pump iron.** Weight training increases strength, endurance and maintains or increases muscle mass. Health benefits occur of strength training is done two or more days per week.
- **Go easy on sweetened food and beverages.** Added sugar in the diet was the most controversial issue the committee discussed. The committee couldn't decide if food and drink with added sugar played a major role in the obesity/overweight epidemic.

## *Nutrition Education*

July 2004

Martha Raidl  
Extension Nutrition Education  
Specialist  
University of Idaho Boise Center  
800 Park Blvd, Suite 200  
Boise, ID 83712  
mraidl@uidaho.edu



Another meeting of this committee is scheduled in August 2004.

Source: <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/AgendaPublicMay2004Mtg.htm>.

Key word: dietary guidelines.

## Junk Food = 1/3 of U.S. Diet

You've just read what the U.S. Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee recommends, but the truth is that junk foods such as sugary sodas and chips comprise approximately one-third of calories in the U.S. diet. Gladys Block, a professor of epidemiology at the University of California, analyzed 24 hour recalls from 4,760 adults who took part from 1999 to 2000 in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). She categorized items into 23 food groups.

Her results showed that three food groups—sweets and desserts, soft drinks and alcoholic beverages—comprise almost 25 percent of all calories consumed by Americans. Salty snacks and fruit-flavored drinks make up another five percent, bringing the total energy contributed by these nutrient-poor foods to almost one-third of the total calorie intake.

Where did fruits and vegetables fall? Unfortunately, fruits and vegetables contributed only 10 percent of the calorie intake in the U.S. diet. The entire research article was published in the June 2004 issue of the *Journal of Food Composition and Analysis*.

Source: <http://www.sciencedirect.com>.

Key words: diet, foods.

## Exercise Update: Adolescents and Seniors

**Question #1: Which is more important in building strong bones in adolescent women, calcium or physical activity?** If you answered calcium, you are wrong, according to a 10-year study conducted by professor Tom Lloyd from Penn State College of Medicine on adolescent girls found that exercise was responsible for between 16 and 22 percent of the variation in hip bone mineral density and bending strength. In addition, consuming more than 500 mg/day of calcium during adolescence did not increase body bone accrual or increased adult bone mass. The entire study was reported June 2004 issue of the *Journal of Pediatrics*.

**Question #2: What is more popular at senior centers—bingo or exercise programs?** Information collected by the National Council on Aging and International Council on Active Aging indicates that some seniors would rather bench press than play bingo. One of the reasons fitness and health clubs today don't attract senior citizens is that the programs and services are geared toward the younger adult rather than the older adult. Some senior centers are obtaining treadmills, stationary bikes, resistance machines and free weights and offering aerobic workouts.

Plus research indicates that it is never too late to start an exercise program. A 1994 study by Tufts University showed that even at age 98, intense training can significantly reverse a loss of strength. Other benefits of regular exercise include decreasing blood pressure, increasing strength and stamina, enhanced flexibility, and improved balance and coordination.

Source: [http://www2.us.elsevierhealth.com/scripts/om.dll/serve?action=searchDB&search](http://www2.us.elsevierhealth.com/scripts/om.dll/serve?action=searchDB&searchDBfor=art&artType=abs&id=as0022347604002161&nav=abs)

<http://www.ncoa.org>;  
<http://www.icaa.cc>.

Key word: exercise.

## Where You Live Can Affect Your Waistline

Ahh—the suburbs, a quiet place to live, far away from the noise and pollution of the big city. Unfortunately, living in the suburbs may increase your likelihood of being either overweight or obese. A study was undertaken by Lawrence Frank, a public health researcher that measured the traveling habits of more than 10,000 people in the Atlanta area. Participants were asked to carry a global positioning device that monitored their every movement. One of the participants, Marni Copeland, was surprised to find that she was in her car five to six hours a day, doing errands and driving the kids around.

The results of this study showed that people who lived in neighborhoods with a mix of shops and businesses within easy walking distance were 7 percent less likely to be obese, thereby lowering their relative risk of obesity by 35 percent. On the other hand, living in a suburb with no sidewalks and far away from shops forced individuals to drive everywhere. Each hour spent behind the wheel or in the passenger seat on a daily basis resulted in a 6 percent greater chance of being obese. About 91 percent of the people surveyed said they didn't walk to destinations. Many spent an hour each day in their cars.

Even though the article focused on Atlanta, Frank said the city is not alone. "Most regions look very similar to Atlanta—anything that's built after World War II is pretty much auto-oriented. We need to start to look at the way we're designing our communities...the collective impact of having to drive everywhere is becoming really large." The entire article is titled "Driving, Walking and Where You Live" and is published in the June 2004 issue of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*.

Source: <http://www.sciencedirect.com>.

Key word: exercise.



## Money Cents for Teachers and Youth Leaders Workshop, August 4

Teens spent \$175 billion in 2003 according to a recent study by Teenage Research Unlimited (TRU). Teens aged 12 to 19 spent an average of \$103 per week last year. This amount takes into account both teens' own money and the cash they receive from sources including gifts, odd jobs, and parents. To help teens learn how to manage their income and gain valuable life skills, the University of Idaho Extension teams with the National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) and credit unions to provide free teaching resources to high school teachers, the *High School Financial Planning Program (HSFPP)*.

This summer University of Idaho Extension Family Economics is offering a four-hour workshop, *Money Cents for Teachers and Youth Leaders*, on August 4, 2004 in Meridian, ID. Meridian's Capitol Educator's Credit Union and the Idaho Credit Union League are co-sponsoring the workshop that teaches adults how to use the free *HSFPP* curriculum. Teachers, home-schoolers, and youth leaders will gain materials to teach budgeting, career selection, savings and investing, using credit wisely, and insurance basics. The materials are research-based and include no promotional gimmicks or sales.

If adults register by July 15, the workshop is free. Afterwards, the cost is \$15. Participants will receive copies of the *HSFPP* Student Guide and Instructor's Manual, refreshments, and door prizes. They'll also share instructional ideas with others. Teachers may receive in-service credit for a fee. For more information, contact Marilyn or the UIBC secretary, Lyn, [crabtree@uidaho.edu](mailto:crabtree@uidaho.edu).

Key words: teens, teachers, financial literacy.



## *Family Economics*

*July 2004*

Marilyn Bischoff  
Extension Family Economics  
Specialist  
University of Idaho Boise Center  
800 Park Blvd, Suite 200  
Boise, ID 83712  
[mbischof@uidaho.edu](mailto:mbischof@uidaho.edu)





## Back-to-School Savings

School bells are ringing, and for most families, that means "time for teachers, time for books..." as another academic year begins. You may be thinking: this is July and I'm not ready to think about back-to-school savings. By doing a little planning now, you'll be ready to save next month.

### Supplies and Books

August and September are usually the best months of the year to buy notebook paper, pens, tape, and other school supplies. Stock up on extras for use throughout the year, and for a home office, too. For example, notebook paper, thanks to price wars, is usually down to 29 cents for a large package by September 1st. That sure beats the usual \$1.79.



If your student needs to buy textbooks, try shopping online. [Half.com](http://Half.com) (owned by eBay) is a great site, and <http://BestBookBuys.com> is also worth checking out.

### Kids' Clothing

As weather turns colder, late September is a good time to swap children's winter coats, boots, parkas, and raincoats with



friends or relatives. At this time of year many parents go through closets and realize that half of the family's outer gear no longer fits. It's trading season! Call your neighbor and casually mention, "I have a coat I think Tim could wear. Would you like it? And by the way, I was wondering if I could buy a pair of Susan's last-year snow boots for my youngest daughter...." Or, to your sister, "When Emily outgrows her Girl Scout uniform, please keep me in mind."

At a SW Idaho home-school co-op, members have a swap and shop table where parents bring excess clothing and other goods to share with others at no cost. Last year, one family was able to get several clothing items through this table, including an expensive suit that fit their 6'5" son perfectly. Perhaps you could set up such a table at your church. And don't forget to take advantage of the abundant garage and rummage sales in the fall; volunteers at rummage sales are often granted free shopping privileges.



### Special Equipment

Do your children need musical instruments, ballet shoes, roller skates, sports equipment, or other expensive items? Before you purchase new, check out thrift stores. One mother reports having good luck at Goodwill, where she recently bought a used music stand in perfect condition for \$3.00.

Also consider putting an ad in the school PTA flyer, in a low-cost community paper, or on a church bulletin board. Or simply pass the word around to former members of the band, hockey team, or cheerleaders' squad regarding what you'd like to buy. You might be able to buy second-hand and save a substantial amount of money.

### After School Lessons

If your family lacks cash to pay for children's lessons, you may have something just as valuable: a skill, or a time commitment. Maybe you can barter.

Several years ago, one mother taught piano lessons in a rather high-class, high-cost music school. Mid-semester, one of her adult students confessed that, though she wanted to continue, she simply couldn't afford it.



She proposed a deal: 16 hours of lessons in exchange for 16 hours of her work as a professional upholsterer. The mother took the piano student up on the offer, and had her poor beat-up old car's front seat refurbished. The next semester, the piano student bartered for prime cheese from her father's Wisconsin factory. Both benefited. The student learned to play decent piano, and the piano teacher had a new front seat in our car plus several pounds of the best cheese she ever tasted. So, ask. (Be aware that the IRS has certain guidelines regarding bartering. Consult your accountant.)

It's only July, I know. If you start soon to think about back-to-school savings, you'll come up with many additional ideas.

Source: Barfield, R. (September, 2003). Sound Mind Investing. <http://www.soundmindinvesting.com/visitor/2003/sept/level1.htm>.

Key word: saving.

## Cut the Line on Phishing Scams



### What is a “Phishing” Scam?

“Phishing” is an email scam that attempts to trick consumers into revealing personal information—such as their credit or debit account numbers, checking account information, Social Security numbers, or banking account passwords—through fake websites or in a reply email. Typically the emails and websites use familiar logos and slick graphics to deceive consumers into thinking the sender or website owner is a government agency or a company they know. Sometimes the phisher urges intended victims to “confirm” account information that has been “stolen” or “lost.” Other times the phisher entices victims to reveal personal information by telling them they have won a special prize or earned an exciting reward.

Phishing scams are among the fastest growing forms of fraud on the internet. According to the Anti-Phishing Working Group, phishing scams grew 52 percent from December of 2003 to January of 2004.

### How to Recognize Potential Phishing Scams

While phishing scams can be quite sophisticated in appearance, the following features are often indicators that an email could be a scam:

- Asks you to provide personal information such as your bank account number, an account password, credit card number, PIN number, mother’s maiden name, or Social Security number.
- Fails to address you by your name.
- Fails to reference your personal information such as your partial account number.
- Warns that your account will be shut down unless you reconfirm your financial information.
- Warns that you have been the victim of fraud.
- Has spelling or grammatical errors.

### Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

While phishing scams can be quite sophisticated in appearance, the following features are often indicators that an email could be a scam:

- View any email request for financial information or other personal data with suspicion. Do not reply to the email and do not respond by clicking on a link within the email message.
- Contact the actual business that supposedly sent the email to verify if it is genuine. Call a phone number or visit a website that you know to be legitimate, such as those provided on your monthly statements.
- Do NOT send personal information (credit or debit card number, Social Security number, or PIN) in response to an email request from anyone or any entity. Government agencies will never initiate a request for such information via email, nor will legitimate businesses.
- Be cautious. Check your monthly statements to verify all transactions. Notify your bank or credit card issuer immediately if you identify any erroneous or suspicious transactions on your statement.
- Forward any emails claiming to be from Visa or your Visa card issuer asking you to provide your personal account information to [phishing@visa.com](mailto:phishing@visa.com).

You can also forward any suspicious phishing email to the BBB at [nophishing@cbbb.bbb.org](mailto:nophishing@cbbb.bbb.org), and immediately call your issuing financial institution. Notify other companies that are being victimized immediately.

Source: Practical Money Skills for Consumers, April 2004 electronic newsletter  
<http://www.practicalmoneyskills.com/english/consumers/identity/phishing/>.

Key words: fraud, identity theft.

## Financial Education Resources

### New CSREES Website

On April 15, 2004 the new Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), USDA website was launched. The new URL for CSREES is [www.csrees.usda.gov](http://www.csrees.usda.gov). Financial Security is one of the programs listed under Economics and Commerce on the homepage of the agency's new website. To access an overview of the Financial Security program area, which also includes family economic research, higher education, and youth financial education programming, go to [www.csrees.usda.gov/financialsecurity](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/financialsecurity).

The *Financial Security in Later Life* (FSLL) website has a new look and feel with all of the same information and content. To access the new FSLL homepage and all program information for educators and consumers, go to [www.csrees.usda.gov/fsll](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fsll). Make sure to bookmark the new URL for future reference. During a transition time of 6 months, the old URL ([www.reeusda.gov/financialsecurity](http://www.reeusda.gov/financialsecurity)) will forward you directly to the new FSLL homepage. Please direct comments and questions to Kelli Jo Anthon [kanthon@csrees.usda.gov](mailto:kanthon@csrees.usda.gov).

### Office of Financial Education

The Office of Financial Education (OFE) provides the Department of Treasury with expertise on issues involved in financial literacy education. The mission of the OFE is to ensure that Americans have access to financial education programs that help them obtain practical knowledge and skills to make informed financial choices throughout their lives. OFE concentrates its efforts on four key areas: basic savings, credit management, homeownership, and retirement planning. In addition, the OFE is responsible for Treasury's financial education policymaking and for coordinating financial education initiatives within the Department and its bureaus. Sign up to receive OFE's Financial Education newsletter via the OFE website <http://www.treasury.gov/offices/domestic-finance/financial-institution/fin-education/>.



## Family Economics Calendar

**Money Cents for Teachers and Students** workshop. August 4, Meridian. Teachers and adult volunteers will learn how to teach the *High School Financial Planning Program*. Cosponsored by the National Endowment for Financial Education, Capitol Educators Credit Union, Idaho Credit Union League, and University of Idaho Extension. Beverly Healy, Marsha Hawkins, and Marilyn will team-teach with a credit union representative.

**Idaho Governor's Conference on Aging.** September 14-16, Doubletree Riverside Hotel, Boise. Seven Extension FCS faculty: Carol Hampton, Marsha Hawkins, Beverly Healy, Barbara Petty, Kathee Tiff, Julia Welch, and Marilyn will present concurrent sessions and staff a UI Extension exhibit.

**Extension FCS In-Service.** September 22-24, University of Idaho, Moscow. Marsha Hawkins, Barbara Petty, and Marilyn will introduce *Credit Cents*, new publications and PowerPoint slides to teach how to reduce debt and become credit savvy.

**National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences** annual meeting. October 3-6, Nashville, TN. Attend a *Financial Security in Later Life* panel session on innovative programs and a *Dollar Decision\$* session taught by Marsha Hawkins and Marilyn.

**Association of Financial Counseling and Planning Educators** annual meeting. November 17-20. Denver, CO. Join the Idaho Extension team at THE BEST personal finance in-service available. Contact Marilyn for information.