



Food borne illness

You think it only affects other people and will never affect you or your loved ones, but you are wrong. According to the Center for Disease Control over 80% of Americans eat out at least once per week. They estimate up to 76 million cases of foodborne disease occur with as many as 5,000 deaths per year. A recent estimate for medical treatment, productivity loss, and premature deaths resulting from these illnesses are \$6.5 billion per year.¹

The roles of public health inspectors are rapidly expanding in response to an increase in reported foodborne related illnesses. In recent years, deadly new and emerging foodborne pathogens have evolved such as E. coli: H7, Norovirus, and Mad Cow disease just to name a few. Inspectors also look for symptoms of illnesses such as: Hepatitis A, Salmonella, Clostridium botulinum & perfringens, Shigella and typhoid fever (S. Typhi).² According to an analysis of food-poisoning outbreaks by the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), fresh produce is catching up with chicken as a major culprit of Salmonella infections. Produce-related outbreaks tend to be larger than poultry-related outbreaks, sicken more people, sometimes hundreds at a time. In CSPI's Outbreak Alert database, which contains information on nearly 4,500 outbreaks between 1990 and 2003, produce triggered 554 outbreaks, sickening 28,315 people. Of those 554 outbreaks, 111 were due to Salmonella.

¹“ Emerging Infectious Diseases volume 11, No 1, January 2005 “Capacity of State and territorial Health Agencies to Prevent Foodborne illness”. Available on www.cdc.gov/eid

² Food Safety Network November 22, 2005 “Salmonella outbreaks linked to produce on the rise”.

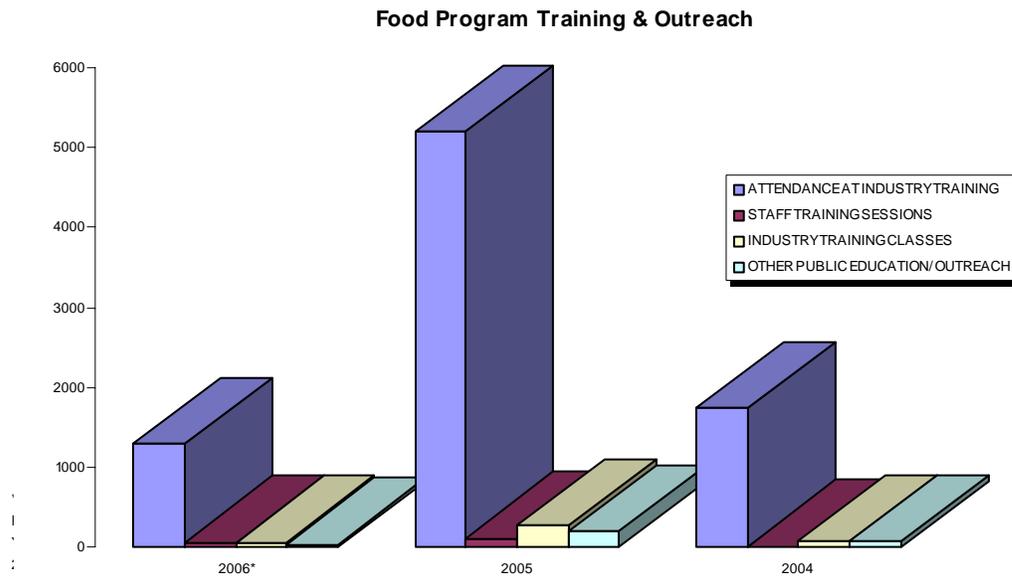
1966 – 2005 Food Borne illness cases reported to the New Mexico Environment Department

Year	City	Type of Facility	Organism	Reported cases Food borne Illness	Individuals who became ill	Individuals hospitalized	Deaths
1966	Hobbs	Restaurant	Salmonella Thompson	41	41	0	0
			Clostridium				
1978	Clovis	Restaurant	Botulinum	0	0	0	6
1982-1995	Hobbs	Restaurant	Beef Jerky	6	6	0	0
2005	Hobbs	Restaurant	Unknown	275	275	2	0
1999	TorC	Restaurant	Salmonella	36	36	0	0
2000	Las Cruces	Restaurant	Clostridium Perfringens	0	0	0	0
2002	Santa Fe	Rehearsal Dinner	Unknown	50	50	1	0
2000	Raton	Kitchen	Unknown	28	28	0	0
Unknown	Philmont	School	Noro Virus	200	200	0	0
Unknown	Clayton	Restaurant	Salmonella	53	53	20	0
Unknown	Springer	Correctional Facility	Clostridium Perfringens & Noro Virus	90	90	0	0
Unknown	Santa Fe/ Espanola	Market	Streptococcus	0	0	0	1
2005	Alamogordo	Restaurant	Noro virus	144	144	5	0

Source: NMDOH surveillance database

The goal of the New Mexico Food Program is to protect, promote and enhance public health as it relates to the safety of processing, preparation and the service of food and food products.

STAFF TRAINING AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH:



FISCAL YEAR	INDUSTRY TRAINING CLASSES	ATTENDANCE AT INDUSTRY TRAINING	STAFF TRAINING SESSIONS	OTHER PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH
2006*	74	1299	72	47
2005	286	5191	120	201
2004	84	1739	19	89
	*2006 1st Quarter only			

The Department also offers the following to assist the citizens with their food safety questions:

- FREE Food Safety Training Courses
- FREE Educational Materials targeted at reducing the risk factors associated with food borne illness.
- Food Webpage located at www.nmenv.state.nm.us This webpage is regularly updated, and full of useful information such as: Food Safety for Moms-to-be, Tips for preparing food safely in both Spanish and English, Food safety posters, Games for the kids on the Fight Bac Scrub Club link, NMED Regulations and Applications, etc.
- NMED inspectors have obtained some of the highest credentials available nationwide, and continue to improve their food safety knowledge by attending training workshops.

Future areas targeted for growth:

- The formation of Acute Disease Response Teams in collaboration with the Department of Health (DOH) and the State Laboratory Division (SLD).
- Perform risk-based inspections instead of the current inspection schedule of once per year.
- Training and outreach border issues: Unapproved food sources and food service equipment that does not meet New Mexico's standards.
- Hire a bilingual training officer to aid with community outreach and in-house training needs. Hire a Food Specialist for the Farmington/Grants/Gallup areas of the state.

The Food Program is a vital component necessary to maintain the health and safety of the citizens of New Mexico. Countless foodborne outbreaks and their related deaths have been reduced due to the professional talents of our field staff. The outreach and training that NMED personnel have provided to industry have assisted industry to provide quality meals in a safe environment. At a time when our country is concerned about terrorism, NMED must prepare to handle

emergencies that may pose a risk to the health and welfare of the citizens of New Mexico.