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## POINTS OF INTEREST

- Are hand dryers in restrooms doing more harm than good?
- UConn researchers found elevated bacteria counts in restroom with hand dryers.
- Bacteria in the room air was being circulated, not coming from hands..
- Are single use towels better?

## “Egg”ceptions to the rules?

The Indiana State Egg Board oversees eggs of chickens, not other types of eggs. That was the first reminder that Mark Straw, Executive Director, said at a recent Food Protection Committee.

What the Board does is more extensive than most consumers realize and there are four field staff to perform inspections. Mark said there are 22 firms in Indiana that do “grading” or have “layers.” He said while the trend is toward “cage free” not many understand what that means. Birds can leave the cage and roam if they choose, then return. A cross contamination issue may oc-

cur if the roaming chicken happens to lay an egg on the ground. That egg should not go into distribution but often does, and there is no way to tell.

A surprising statistic he shared was that there are over 31 million layers in the state, but the count is low as some 50,000 birds in “smaller” farms might not be counted. Some 500 farms have fewer than 5,000 birds, and while FDA does regulate large operations, smaller flocks of less than 3,000 are exempt from FDA rules. This does not exempt them from food code requirements at retail, nor other State Egg Board rules.



Mark explained the two types of contamination that can occur with eggs. “Horizontal occurs when the egg is contaminated after being laid, but vertical contamination comes through the reproductive track,” he said. He added that federal rules are attempting to address vertical contamination.

He told the group that

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## What you should know about . . .

### HAND DRYERS

We know about drying hands after proper washing. We know the acceptable methods in the food code, from disposable towels to hot air devices. But could one of the choices actually make

things worse? Researchers at the University of Connecticut think they know the answer.

Based upon a recent study, a hand dryer in a rest room might be doing more harm than good. These devices need re-

placement air, and suck in bacteria from the restroom to replenish the air blown from the nozzles.

Researchers at UConn placed Petri dishes in 36 restrooms around cam-

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## Foodborne illness outbreak has Indiana link

Because of the complexity of the food supply, when a disease outbreak occurs, it has wide reaching consequences. A more recent case involving pre-cut melon or fruit salads has been connected to Caito Foods LLC in Indiana.

CDC has said that 70 victims in seven states including Indiana, have fallen ill after ingesting Salmonella Adelaide from the suspect processed fruit. Caito Foods distributed the product in clear, plastic clam shell containers to 22 states and has initiated a voluntary recall of all suspected products.

The seven states where illnesses have been reported include Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, Missouri, Kentucky, and Tennessee. CDC says the recalled product was distributed to a number of stores under several different brands or labels including Costco, Jay C, Kroger, Payless, Owen's, Sprouts, Trader Joe's, Walgreens, Walmart, and Whole Foods/Amazon.

FDA inspectors have spent a number of hours inside the Cai-



to Food facility taking environmental samples, and continues to work with the CDC and ISDH, to try to determine the source of the contamination. The first illnesses

were reported at the beginning of June although illnesses had occurred as early as April. Thus far, no deaths have been reported.

## What you should know about . . . (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

pus to see if and when bacteria landed on each dish. With no hand dryers on, they detected perhaps one bacterium on a dish. But with the dryers activated, the number jumped by as much as 60 times in two minutes, with an individual dryer on for about 30 seconds. In one case, bacteria counts over 250 were detected with an exposure of under a minute. Open the restroom door while a dryer was on, and bacteria could circulate throughout the facility.

In the study, researchers found that when the hand dryers were switched off for 18 hours, up to 6 bacterial colonies per exposed agar plate were detected. But when the dryers were activated

and the agar plates exposed for up to 30 seconds, the bacterial counts increased to as many as an average of 60 colonies per plate.

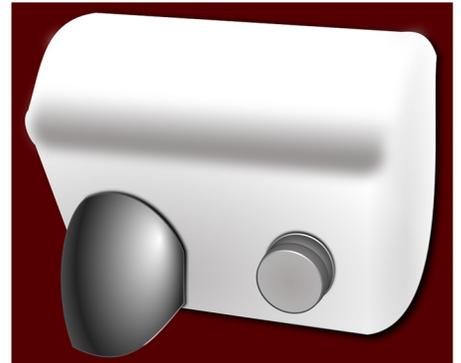
**"They found that one model of hand dryer can emit air at up to 273 feet per second!"**

Researchers didn't believe that the bacteria was harboring in the hand dryers but rather coming from the air drawn in to the

devices. They noted that one model of hand dryer can emit air at a velocity of 273 feet per second from the nozzle!

What about HEPA filters on each dryer? That was tried and was found to reduce bacterial counts about four times, but not eliminate them completely.

The study shows that potentially, pathogenic bacteria including bacterial spores, can be spread long distances by hand drying



devices. This study shows that bacteria spread through the air can rival contaminated food handler hands in the spread of pathogens. The study did not include the newer "blade" type hand dryers, so the relative effectiveness is not known.

The UConn restrooms where the study was conducted replaced the hand dryers with paper towel dispensers.

The UConn study was published recently in *Applied and Environmental Microbiology*.

## Did you know? FDA does regulate pet foods

Feeding your cat or dog its meal out of a bag or can? The U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulates that product. FDA also cares about the pet treats meeting certain standards for safety. The Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act requires that all animal foods, as with human food, be safe to eat, produced under sanitary conditions, contain no harmful substances, and be truthfully labeled, says FDA. Also, canned pet foods have to be processed in conformance with the low acid canned food regulations to assure there are no viable microorganisms. This comes under 21 CFR 113.

Pet food labeling is regulated on two levels. Current FDA requirements are that the label identify the product, state the net quantity, include the name and place of business of the manufacturer or distributor, and a listing of ingredients by weight from most to least. The Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) provided the model for many of the FDA regulations.

FDA also looks at health claims



made by the manufacturer under guidelines provided under the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM), but FDA does not recommend one brand or

type of pet food over another. Note that pet food products made in Indiana come under the Office of Indiana State Chemist. See the Spring 2018 FPC Newsletter for details.

## “Egg”ceptions (continued)

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big processors might be a bit safer as there are more safeguards in place, while small producers may not have the safety knowledge needed to prevent the disease spread. He said the growing number of

“backyard” flocks are the source of many Salmonella outbreaks and often are unregulated.

Mark said that eggs have to be “clean” but not necessarily “washed.” He added that a sanitizing step is even better. He said the Egg Board will look at labels and

expects to see the farm ID, safe handling instructions, package date, expiration date, the grade, and the size on each label.

He said egg storage temperatures are measured as ambient air, not internal temperature of the egg. And, he concluded, once diagnosed, that a sick chicken’s eggs cannot go into the food chain.

“Each Hoosier on average consumes 281 eggs per year.”

## Causes of romaine lettuce outbreak narrowing

The investigation of E. coli O157:H7 illnesses linked to romaine lettuce continues but the risk of illness has passed since any product is past its shelf life. CDC has reported that 210 people in 36 states became ill from lettuce grown in the Yuma, Arizona area. FDA says traceback investigations show

that illnesses cannot be associated to one grower, harvester, processor, or distributor. One question is what contributed to contamination across multiple supply chains.

The latest is that health officials are sampling water, soil, and cow manure to find a connection. Lab results from samples

taken from canal water in the area have identified the same generic fingerprint as the outbreak strain. Analysis is ongoing, but so far, the canal water is the only proven link. How this water reached the lettuce is being investigated.



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## FOOD PROTECTION COMMITTEE

[www.iehaind.org](http://www.iehaind.org)

### IEHA MISSION:

*To promote, preserve and protect environmental public health in the State of Indiana, and to encourage a spirit of cooperation among all environmental health stakeholders while serving its members in the regulatory, industry and academic communities.*

The **Food Protection Committee (FPC)** is one of four standing subcommittees of the **Indiana Environmental Health Association**. The committee meets approximately four times per year with dates and locations chosen by the members. Its focus is to discuss food safety related issues of interest to its members. While all IEHA members and guests may attend meetings, only voting members, as specified in the IEHA Constitution and Bylaws, may vote. Meeting information is disseminated by email. To be added to the email list, contact one of the co-chairs, or your IEHA chapter representative.

**FPC Co-chairs:** Jennifer Asbury, Lisa Chandler

**FPC Newsletter Editor:** Ed Norris



## Tidbits and morsels

**F**oodborne illnesses keep being reported. Pre-cut melon and fruit trays from Caito Foods appears to be the cause of a Salmonella outbreak across 7 states (see page 2). Now the CDC has confirmed at least 212 cases of parasite poisoning attributed to trays of pre-cut vegetables from Del Monte Fresh Produce. The company recalled the product in June.



Seven people have been hospitalized so far from what lab tests reveal as Cyclospora, which can take up to 14 days for victims to show symptoms. Then it takes a period of time after a person becomes ill before the illness is reported, so CDC expects more cases.

### CONFERENCE SPEAKERS SET

The food protection committee has set the speakers for the afternoon breakout sessions during the IEHA Annual Fall Educational Conference. Speakers will include Dr. Bruce Applegate, Dr. Amanda Deering, and Dr. Ron Turco from Purdue discussing various topics. Krista Click, Director of the Food Protection Program at ISDH will be discussing new and ongoing food safety issues. And Ron Geiger from the Indiana State Chemist Office will talk about pet food in Indiana. Also Patrick Quaid will share the topic, "I was poisoned." Check the IEHA website for details.

### OLD LAW, NEW ISSUES?

There is a law on the books in Indiana that is now coming to light that can affect health departments. The

law, IC 25-25-2, dates to the late 19th century and meant to help war vets get a start in business, provides that honorably discharged military veterans are exempt from "fees" related to permits or other requirements if he or she wants to "vend, hawk, or peddle goods, wares, fruits, or merchandise" in the state, and "the auditor" shall issue a "license."

Recent interpretations of this law say that at most, only the fee is waived. But concerns were raised at a recent FPC meeting when a potential vendor wanted to be exempt from other requirements. It was generally agreed that any health department requirements as to food safety and inspections be followed, and at most, the permit fee may be waived. More information will be coming on this.