



FOOD SAFETY

FMI and the supermarket industry are working to enhance food safety through comprehensive programs to:

- Educate consumers.
- Ensure food is safe from the source.
- Institute rigorous food safety practices in the store.
- Train and educate food retail associates.

The overriding goals are to protect the health and well-being of the consumer and make food safety management as effective and efficient as possible.

Educate Consumers

FMI provides numerous public food safety education resources. Some of the most effective programs were developed by a public-private coalition among industry, government and consumer groups known as the Partnership for Food Safety Education. FMI spearheaded the founding of the partnership. Partnership programs are the centerpiece of Food and Drug Administration and U.S. Department of Agriculture consumer education efforts.

The Partnership's award-winning **FightBAC**[®] campaign (www.fightbac.org) teaches the public how to reduce food-borne illnesses emphasizing four basic measures:

- **Clean** — Wash hands and surfaces often.
- **Separate** — Don't cross-contaminate.
- **Cook** — Heat to proper temperatures.
- **Chill** — Refrigerate promptly.

In 2007, the Partnership launched the **Be Food Safe** program, aimed at the caregivers of people most vulnerable to food-borne illnesses, including children, seniors and people with compromised immune systems (<http://www.befoodsafe.org/>).

The Partnership's **Project Chill** initiative urges consumers to place thermometers in their refrigerators to ensure that the temperature does not exceed 40°F, the level necessary to prevent the growth of harmful bacteria. FMI members are promoting the program and selling certified thermometers in their delis and other ready-to-eat food departments.

The Partnership hosts an interactive Web site (www.scrubclub.org) to teach children proper hand-washing methods. This **Scrub Club** program is conducted in cooperation with NSF International, a public health organization.

FMI provides consumers with information on safe handling and storage of food in the home through the **The Food Keeper** brochure, complete with storage dates, information on nutrition, and healthy shopping.

FMI consumer brochures educate consumers about avian and human influenza (**Bird Flu**, **Seasonal Flu**, **Pandemic Flu**) and how to minimize the risks posed by mercury in fish (**Mercury and Fish: Advice for Women Who Might Become Pregnant, Women Who Are Pregnant, Nursing Mothers and Young Children**).

Ensure Food Is Safe From the Source

The FMI SQF Institute administers the **Safe Quality Food (SQF)** initiative — an independent food safety and quality certification program for suppliers. It is based on the internationally recognized Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system. This science-based program anticipates how and where biological, chemical or physical hazards are most likely to occur and takes measures to control them.

The program features standards covering all foods, third-party auditing and training. It ensures that suppliers are using science-based management systems, and that the audits, based on the most rigorous international standards, are reliable and consistent.

The SQF Institute has issued 10,000 certificates to producers, manufacturers and processors in 20 countries.

Progress on the Food Safety Front

Each year, 76 million people contract foodborne illnesses, 325,000 are hospitalized and 5,000 die, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The industry, government and scientific community have responded by mounting campaigns to address the full range of food safety issues. These efforts are paying off according to the most current CDC data.* From 1996-2007, foodborne illnesses caused by:

- **Yersinia declined 49 percent** (this pathogen is most commonly found in undercooked pork).
- **Listeria declined 42 percent** (soft cheeses, deli meat, poultry, hot dogs).
- **Shigella declined 36 percent** (vegetables, dairy products, poultry).
- **Campylobacter declined 31 percent** (raw poultry).

* Preliminary FoodNet Data on the Incidence of Foodborne Illnesses — Selected Sites, United States, 2007. The FoodNet initiative covers more than 45.5 million people in 10 states.

Through its office in Mexico, some of the world's largest produce growers are implementing SQF systems.

Institute Rigorous Food Safety Practices in the Store

FMI offers numerous programs to help retailers implement best practices in the store, based on HACCP principles and the most current FDA *Food Code*.

FMI provides videos, handbooks and other materials on general food safety practices, such as *Quick Tips for Food Handlers*.

The Invisible Challenge video training program examines food safety issues in the supermarket workplace. The program is designed to facilitate teaching food retail associates the best methods to control the spread of bacteria and viruses that cause foodborne illness. With detailed demonstrations, the 30-minute video covers:

- Food-handling and prevention of cross contamination.
- Personal health and hygiene.
- Proper temperature and time controls.
- Comprehensive cleaning and sanitation procedures.
- Food allergen awareness and controls.

An international edition of this video is based on globally recognized food safety standards.

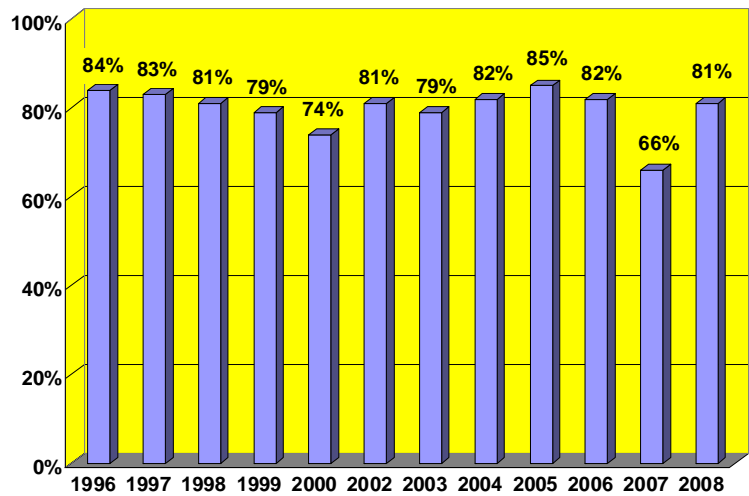
FMI resources targeting specific concerns include *Molluscan Shellfish Handling*, *Safe Preparation of Sushi* and an information package on *Hepatitis A*. The *Food Safety Center* provides background on topics such as methylmercury, acrylamide and *Listeria* (www.fmi.org/foodsafety).

FMI offers best practice models in its *Total Food Safety Management* series, including *Guidance for the Control of Listeria Monocytogenes* and *Raw, Ready-to-Eat Fresh-Cut Produce*. These comprehensive models can be adapted to the wide range of retail operations and address the challenges of that environment. They are scientific, practical and flexible so that retailers can tailor them to individual store requirements.

Train and Educate Food Retail Associates

FMI offers the award-winning *SuperSafeMark*® program (www.supersafemark.com), the most comprehensive retail-specific food safety training and certification program available. It provides food safety and sanitation instruction-

Consumer Confidence in Supermarket Food



Notes: Percentages include consumers who are "completely" or "mostly confident." Data for 2001 are omitted due to an inexplicably high result.

Source: FMI, *U.S. Grocery Shopper Trends*, 1996-2008.

designed by retailers and scientists for supermarket operations. The program was developed with Pearson Education/Prentice Hall. *SuperSafeMark*® trains and certifies more than 15,000 supermarket managers a year.

Designed for all levels of employees, from management to anyone who handles food, the program features:

- Seminars and certification for food managers using an exam accredited by the National Registry of Food Safety Professionals.
- Teaching resources for food safety trainers.
- Educational materials on food safety and sanitation for all food-handlers.
- Online instruction.

FMI offers guidance to help retailers with food recalls. The FMI handbook *Product Recalls, Situation Management* shows retailers how to prepare for and implement recalls. This guide describes the roles played by the retailer, supplier and regulator during a recall, and emphasizes the importance of communication during a crisis.

For more information, visit FMI's Food Safety Center (www.fmi.org/foodsafety/FSCenter/) and see the FMI Food Safety and Foodborne Illnesses Backgrounder (www.fmi.org/media/bg/foodborne_illness.pdf).



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