

ABSTRACT

In order to meet the challenges of today food industry many countries have developed comprehensive food safety program utilizing the concept of "Farm to table". This involves utilizing appropriate measures at each stage along the food chain to minimize risk associated with food spoilage and contamination.

Primarily responsibility for food safety lies with these who produce process and trade in food. These include farmers, food processors, caterers and vendors. Despite new technologies and standards, thousands of Food Bourne Illness occur annually. These are mainly due time-temperature control, cross contamination and personal hygiene.

To accomplish this research, a total of 220 questionnaires were administered with an effective response rate of 79.0%. Data generated via questionnaires was complimented with qualitative information obtained through inspection of restaurants where respondents work.

The study revealed the majority of food establishments (75%) did not pass the criteria for certification and registration. While only one fifth had functional Hazard Analysis Critical Control program (HACCP) with one third of respondents trained in HACCP principles.

Women made up three quarters of the population of food handlers most of whom had a secondary level of education. The analysis indicated most food handlers had valid food handler's permit and had on the job training in food safety. Not with standing the above, one quarter of food handlers were unable to correctly identify a high risk food or knew how to thaw foods properly. While 57.4% and 43% use thermometer to monitor food during preparation and serving respectively only 47% correctly identified the temperature danger zone, that is the range where most microorganism survive over half of the food handlers were not knowledgeable of time temperature standards for holding . The majority did not know the correct temperature to store dry foods. Most respondents exhibited a positive attitude towards food safety issues.

Relationships that were statistically significant were:

1. Highest education attainment by gender $P = .003$
2. Knowledge of HACCP by occupation $P = .034$
3. Educational levels and utensil storage practices $P = .012$