



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
LANSING

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DATE: October 16, 2006

TO: All Local Health Departments (LHD's)
Attn: Medical Director / Health Officer / Director of Environmental Health
/ Sanitarians
Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA)
Attn: Food and Dairy Division Managers, Food Inspectors

FROM: Kevin Besey, Manager
Food Service Sanitation Section
Food and Dairy Division

SUBJECT: Enrollment Opportunity- FDA Voluntary Retail Food Program Standards

On September 8, 2006, John Powell, FDA Central Region Food Specialist and I made a presentation at the Environmental Health Director's Annual Conference describing an opportunity for Michigan's local health departments (LHDs) to enroll in the FDA National Voluntary Retail Standards. I wanted to follow up that presentation with this memo to make sure the information regarding this opportunity reached all Environmental Health Director's and Health Officer's.

What are the Voluntary Retail Food Program Standards?

There are eight program standards, which cover various aspects of regulatory food safety programs. They are often referred to as the "gold" standard to which food safety programs should attempt to achieve. A ninth standard describes program self-assessment.

The standards are voluntary. Your agency chooses which standards to work on and when, based on your local priorities and resources. There is no failure- only progress and quality improvement.

The overall process and suggested time frames are:

- Enrollment
- Self-assessment- +1 year
- Develop improvement plans- established by agency
- Implement desired corrections- established by agency
- Audit completed standards- when self-assessment shows standard met

Why should my agency enroll?

- You get credit for work already done. Michigan's food minimum program requirements are patterned closely after the FDA standards. Being accredited means you already meet some standards and are close to meeting others, based on a self-assessment conducted by MDA in 2005. MDA's assessment shows that all LHD's meet standards 1 and 6, and many meet standard 7. See the attached self-assessment summary.
- Meeting accreditation standards and the voluntary standards are very complimentary processes. Enrollment does not create conflicts with the work already being done in your food program.
- Striving to meet the voluntary standards creates a framework for future quality improvement efforts in your food safety program.

- Project a positive image for your program's food safety efforts. Enrollment and quality improvement is a positive step towards demonstrating to policy makers and the community the high level of food safety protection provided by your program. State and local combined efforts can be marketed jointly for greater impact. A press release from Florida regarding their efforts can be viewed at: <http://tampabay.bizjournals.com/tampabay/stories/2006/05/15/daily44.html>
- MDA is currently enrolled in the standards and has a governor's cabinet level initiative to meet them by 2011. Enrollment by LHDs provides an increased opportunity to partner and develop a seamless food safety system throughout the state and demonstrate national leadership.
- MDA will assist with self-assessment and auditing, during normal accreditation reviews, keeping your agencies self-assessment work to a minimum. For example, standard 1- Regulatory Foundation, is already met statewide by the food service program, based on MDA's self-assessment. MDA will seek FDA's approval to have the self-assessment documents audited by another state on your behalf. This would only leave your agency to submit a simple form to get credit for meeting the standard and get national recognition on FDA's website.
- Enrollment is a way for Michigan to measure its progress against other programs around the country.
- Conducting baseline and followup surveys to determine the effect on foodborne illness risk factors is already part of MDA's statewide initiative. A baseline survey was conducted in 2005 and the next survey is scheduled for 2008.
- Enrollment by a minimum of 27 Michigan LHDs, would give Michigan 28 total enrollments and position Michigan as the national leader in total enrollments of jurisdictions at the county level and higher. A list of agencies currently enrolled in the standards and their current progress can be viewed at: <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/ret-jur.html>.
- FDA is committed to providing training and assistance resources to enrolled jurisdictions. A strong enrollment means Michigan becomes a priority for FDA staff.
- A brochure which describes a number of additional reasons for enrolling is available at: http://www.foodprotect.org/FDA_Program_2005/m1s3.pdf.

What support is provided?

FDA and MDA are committed to assisting enrolled agencies. MDA will work to provide:

- self-assessment documentation for those items already verified as being completed through accreditation reviews as feasible and appropriate,
- consultation,
- auditing during normal accreditation reviews and
- overall state-wide management of the process.

Determining what portions of the normal FDA standards self-assessment/auditing process can be replaced with accreditation reviews already being completed, is ongoing.

Should you have questions, please call me. Should your agency decide to enroll, please send us a copy of the enrollment form.

To review the standards directly and obtain an enrollment form go to:

http://www.foodprotect.org/FDA_Program_2005/m1s1.pdf. The standards are on pages 1-1 through 9-2 and the enrollment form is on pages i1-2.

C: Katherine Fedder, MDA
John Powell, FDA