

**COUNTY OF SONOMA
AGENDA ITEM
SUMMARY REPORT**

Clerk of the Board Use Only

Meeting Date Held Until
 ___/___/___ ___/___/___
 Agenda Item No: Agenda Item No:

Department: Health Services

() 4/5 Vote Required

Contact:
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Board Date:
4/14/09

Deadline for Board Action:
4/14/09

AGENDA SHORT TITLE: Excellence in Food Safety Program

REQUESTED BOARD ACTION:

Resolution acknowledging the accomplishments of the Excellence in Food Safety Program and operators representing 1,366 retail food facilities that achieved the 2009 Recognition of Excellence in Food Safety.

CURRENT FISCAL YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT

EXPENDITURES

ADD'L FUNDS REQUIRING BOARD APPROVAL

Estimated Cost

\$ 0

Contingencies
(Fund Name:)

Amount Budgeted

Unanticipated Revenue
(Source:)

Other Avail Approp
(Explain below)

Other Transfer(s)
(Source:)

Additional Requested:

\$ 0

Add'l Funds Requested:

\$ 0

Explanation (if required):

Prior Board Action(s): 9/9/08 – Gold Resolution acknowledging food facility operators that achieved the 2008 Recognition of Excellence in Food Safety.

Alternatives – Results of Non-Approval: Lost opportunity to recognize retail food facilities for their commitment to food safety and the public's health.

BACKGROUND:

The Department of Health Services Environmental Health Division (EHD) inspects approximately 3,000 retail food facilities to educate operators about safe food handling practices, and to assure compliance with food safety and sanitation laws. Last year the EHD conducted 6,811 inspections, including investigation of 459 citizen tips and 126 reports of suspected foodborne illness.

As with all environmental health programs, the food program does not stand alone. For maximum efficiency it is integrated with other activities to ensure a healthy environment. For example, while environmental health inspectors are at food facilities on routine visits, they also conduct storm water inspection and education as part of the county’s National Pollution Discharge Elimination System to ensure that waste water is not drained to creeks or streams. Further efficiencies occur when staff make softserve ice cream inspections for State Department of Food and Agricultural licensing.

To assure that the most current science-based practices are incorporated into its regulatory activities and decisions, the EHD participates in the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards. EHD is currently taking action to complete Program Standard No. 5, “Foodborne Illness and Food Defense Preparedness and Response”. (A complete list of the nine standards can be found at <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/ret4toc.html>.) Other innovative activities in the food program include promotion of composting, zero waste at farmers’ markets, and recycling at food facilities.

The Recognition of Excellence in Food Safety is a highlight of the public awareness component of a comprehensive approach to food safety. The EHD began the Recognition of Excellence in Food Safety Program in 2004 in response to public interest in having a visual indicator of food facilities that consistently practice the highest level of safe food handling. Staff collaborated with the Food Industry Advisory Forum, a cooperative association of food service industry representatives, to create a program that would complement the ongoing regulatory and educational efforts to promote safe food handling.

For 2009, the Department awarded the Recognition of Excellence in Food Safety to operators representing 1,366 retail food facilities in Sonoma County. This represents approximately 53% of all facilities eligible to receive this recognition. They earned this recognition by meeting strict food safety criteria throughout 2008. Last year 1,419 retail food facilities, representing approximately 56% of all eligible facilities, received recognition.

Attachments: Resolution acknowledging the accomplishments of the Excellence in Food Safety Program and operators representing 1,366 retail food facilities that achieved the 2009 Recognition of Excellence in Food Safety.

On File With Clerk: None.

Board Action (If other than "Requested")

Vote:

BACKGROUND: (continued)

Elements of the Recognition of Excellence in Food Safety Program

- 1) The following types of facilities are eligible for recognition:
 - Establishments selling prepackaged, non-potentially hazardous food.
 - Minimal-risk food establishments (e.g., espresso shops, small grocery stores and taverns).
 - Moderate-risk food establishments (e.g., fast food restaurants and bakeries).
 - High-risk food establishments (e.g., full service restaurants and supermarkets).
 - Bed and Breakfast Inns.
 - Mobile Food Preparation Units (e.g., lunch trucks).
 - Mobile Food Facilities (e.g., hot dog carts and espresso carts).
- 2) Recognition is given once per year based on the previous year's inspections.
- 3) The certificate of recognition includes the year for which it was achieved and states that the recognition is based on past performance.
- 4) Criteria to receive the recognition:
 - Critical and noncritical violations do not exceed allowable levels for the category of facility.
 - Compliance with the food handler certification requirement.
 - Permit renewal is paid before becoming delinquent.
 - A facility with a private well has water that meets applicable requirements.
 - Food Facility Permit and sign advising that the most recent inspection is available for review is posted. The most recent inspection report is available on the premises.
 - No confirmed foodborne illness outbreaks during the previous year.
 - No permit suspensions or revocations during the previous year.

Now in its seventh year, the EHD consistently receives positive feedback from food facility operators about the benefits of this program. Recipients are proud to display the certificate and sticker that gives the public a visible way to locate facilities recognized for exemplary food safety practices.

Fiscal Impact: None.