



Capital Region Thermometer Postcard

ATTN: This Thermometer Postcard project received the Eastern Regional Finalist Award for Food Safety at the NEAFCS Conference in Philadelphia in September 2005

AGENTS: The Capital Team

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PROGRAM

Family Living Agents in the Capital Region worked as a team to develop an impact evaluation suitable for the thermometer usage display (with different examples of positive food safety practices, different types of thermometers and their uses) that they created. The display boards were designed to be used in a variety of venues, for instance by themselves at a fair or grocery store, or, integrated as part of a workshop. A general consumer audience was targeted; groups reached included:

- Food Shoppers at grocery store staffed display
- Senior Citizen Groups
- Day Care Providers
- Health Fair Attendees
- Farm Women Groups
- Take Pounds Off Sensibly Group (TOPS)

Participants who discussed use of thermometers or participated in a program with agents or volunteers received two T-stick disposable thermometers to take home and try. In the envelope with the T-sticks, was an instruction sheet on using the T-sticks, and a short, postage paid postcard survey to return (see below) relating to their food safety behavior. When participants returned the survey, they had the option of including their names to be eligible for a drawing for two bi-metallic stemmed thermometers to be given away per county.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Consumers will increase their awareness of the need to take temperatures of food to verify it is cooked thoroughly to reduce the risk of food-borne illness.
- Consumers will increase their use of thermometer devices to take internal temperature of food prepared and/or served at home.

EVALUATION STRATEGY

This evaluation has four advantages: what it measured, the quality of the measures, its brevity and postage paid format. The questions measured three types of impact: behavior, knowledge, and intentions. One question, #3, measured intention both before and after the program. This type of measure gives agents the evidence they need to claim that extension made a difference. The three other questions also attempt to nail down extension's role.

Question #1 mentions the material distributed by extension, "I used the T-sticks received at the PSCE display to . . ."

Questions #2 and #4 begin with "As a result of the thermometer display . . . Additionally,



Question #2 increased the validity of the data because it asks about awareness of something very specific; not just overall knowledge. It asks, “. . .to what extent have you increased your awareness of the need to take the temperature of food to make sure it is cooked thoroughly?”

This evaluation is easy for the participant to complete because it is short and already has postage paid, thus increasing the likelihood of high response and a more valid database.

Agents used the results in the past in the following ways:

- For stakeholders including the county commissioners
- For a grant proposal report
- To improve food safety program outreach
- County reports about impact
- For a Pennsylvania Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences awards program
- For a Regional Report
- For dossier for promotion

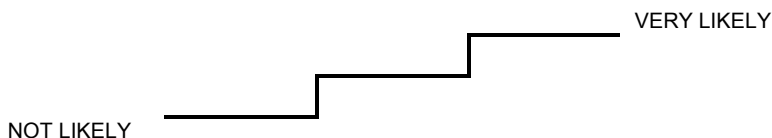
Thermometer Response Postcard

BEHAVIOR QUESTION I used the T-sticks received at the Penn State Cooperative Extension display to measure the temperature of _____

KNOWLEDGE QUESTION As a result of the thermometer display, to what extent have you increased your awareness of the need to take the temperature of food to make sure it is cooked thoroughly?

NOT AT ALL VERY LITTLE SOMEWHAT A GREAT DEAL

INTENTION QUESTION **Checking temperature** — Place a (B) on the step signifying how likely you were to check temperatures *before* visiting the exhibit. Place an (N) on the step indicating how likely you are to check temperatures *now*.



BEHAVIOR QUESTION As a result of the thermometer display, I have: (Check all that apply)

- _____ purchased a new food thermometer
- _____ used a food thermometer more often
- _____ shared the information with _____ people

Thank you. Your information will help Penn State Cooperative Extension improve programs.

_____ *This section will be removed when the card is received.* _____

If you would like to participate in a drawing for a bimetallic food thermometer, please complete the following:

Name: _____ Address: _____

For further information about the evaluation, please contact Nancy Wiker (nwiker@psu.edu); Nina Redding, (nlr2@psu.edu); Marcia Weber (mew192@psu.edu); Jane Landis (jmecum@psu.edu); MaryAnn Oyler (mko4@psu.edu); Marg Malehorn (mmalehorn@psu.edu); Sandra Hall (sph3@psu.edu). This Web site is copyrighted by the Pennsylvania State University. The information may be used for educational purposes but not sold for profit.