THE PITTSBURGH RESTAURANT PROGRAM

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In carrying out the Pittsburgh restaurant program, a fact-finding survey was initially made to determine the extent and cause of the problem. This survey revealed that the most important factors did not have to deal with money, structure, or equipment, but rather with attitudes on the part of the inspection staff and the proper rapport between restaurant owners and the inspectors. This decay in moral fiber had developed over a long period of time and was very deep-seated. The years from 1948 until 1951 were spent in intensively rebuilding a proper attitude between the industry and the inspectors. This was done primarily through in-service training and by a good deal of assistance from the training forces of the USPHS. A very cooperative press assisted materially in keeping the public and staff, along with the industry, informed and on their toes as to what was occurring. A fact-finding survey by the USPHS in March, 1952, at the request of the Pittsburgh Health Department, disclosed that there had been a 35 percent improvement in restaurant sanitation.

I consider it an honor and a distinct pleasure to be asked to appear on your program here in Minneapolis to discuss "The Approach to the Administrative Problems in Restaurant Sanitation in an Urban Area.

First, I must confess that I do not pretend to know the answers, and it is with reservation that I discuss the program that is being carried out in Pittsburgh lest somebody might consider me so presumptuous as to hold this program up as an ideal. The progress that was made was accomplished by the restaurant owners and the inspection staff; not by any one individual.

SANITARY CONDITIONS AT START

It might be well to take a few minutes to paint a word picture describing the situation at the start of the program in the fall of 1948. In September, 1948, the City Council passed the Restaurant Grading Ordinance with the provision that grading should be instituted on January 1, 1950. Also in September, 1948, the City employed an experienced public health engineer to direct the program. There were 25 food inspectors on the Health Department staff to supervise some 2700 eating and drinking places. There was no record system, no inspection form, and no field equipment for the inspectors, such as flashlights, thermometers, etc.

In order to provide a non-partial statistical base-line, against which we could measure improvement, the U. S. Public Health Service was asked to make a survey of the status of the restaurants. This was completed in January, 1949. The survey determined our restaurant status to rate 55 percent. Some of the items that were most frequently found to be in non-compliance were:

- toilet facilities 78%
- lavatory facilities 72%
- lighting 66%
- bacteriological treatment of eating and cooking utensils 88%
- storage of utensils 61%
- floors 69%
- rat proofing 49%
- construction of equipment 60%

In addition to these facts found by the survey, the Health Department showed specific details, such as potato peelers and meat slicers that had not been disassembled, and personnel within the establishment not knowing how to disassemble such equipment. Dishwashing machines were found not having an adequate supply of hot water, and rarely were they installed with a booster heater; inefficient detergents were used, such as soap made from grease and fats resulting from cooking. Dipper wells for ice cream scoops were practically non-existent, open sugar bowls prevalent. Cats were present in approximately 50 percent of the establishments. There were improvised facilities for locker rooms for employees, such as a convenient hook in the kitchen, toilet room, or storeroom.

Herbert J. Dunsmore was raised on a dairy farm in central Michigan, received his engineering degree from Michigan State College in 1935 (Major in Civil Engineering with a sanitary option), and worked with the Calhoun County Health Department from 1938 to 1948. This county is the largest unit of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation Community Health Project. During the 1946-47 school year, he attended the University of Michigan, Public Health School, where he received a MPH degree. From 1944 to 1948 he was administratively responsible for the restaurant grading program in Battle Creek, as well as other activities of the Bureau of Sanitation. In September 1948 he entered the City of Pittsburgh Health Department, in charge of the Bureau of Sanitation.

One then raises the question as to why conditions, such as are enumerated here, prevail? The majority of restaurant owners are sincerely interested in running clean establishments. It is their business and they have pride in it. It was a case of not being able to recognize carelessness because of living so closely with these insanitary practices. There was a lack of proper rapport between the restaurant owner and the inspector. Too often
the inspector would be greeted with "come back later; I'm busy now."

Some of the other factors that cause these conditions are the owner's natural resistance to change, too much government.

The most important positions within the restaurant—so far as sanitation is concerned—are those with the least job pride: the porter, dishwashing machine operator, bus boy, etc.

Our records show that, of 25,000 people employed in the restaurant industry, 5,000 are new each year and an additional 5,000 are shifting from one establishment to another. While we have not analyzed the statistics by positions held within the industry, it seems obvious that these new people and the ones who change positions most frequently, also are the ones who have the least job pride and are most closely associated within sanitation. A combination of these factors is largely responsible for the lack of proper sanitation standards in the establishments.

Many administrative techniques have been tried over a period of years to improve these conditions. Early in 1948, raids had been made on restaurants, particularly during the evening hours, for the purpose of finding violations in dish sterilizing. When no chlorine was found in the sterilizing water, warrants were issued, arrests made—as many as 15 or 20 arrests in a single night—with considerable fanfare from the newspapers. Other police procedures had been used for years, but they had little or no effect on improving sanitation. A new system and new technique had to be employed.

NEW PLAN

The first thing that was done was to have in-service training programs for the inspection staff. A team from the Field Training Center at Troy, N. Y., was sent in to give a two-weeks course in restaurant sanitation. Approximately a half day a week for the following 6 months was taken in round table staff meetings, going over each item of the ordinance to make sure that every individual on the inspection staff knew and understood the requirements, and knew the public health reasons "why."

During these sessions an inspection form was developed, a record system set up, inspectors were equipped with a brief case, complete set of equipment which included flash lights, 2 thermometers (a maximum registering and a 0° to 220°F standard thermometer), chlorine test kits with starch iodide method and sample bottles—swab and slants, two light meters were purchased for the use of all the inspectors, a Duaflex camera, and bacteriological equipment.

The training classes had the effect of lifting the sights of the inspectors, giving them more confidence in their ability. This increased their job pride and gave the inspector more prestige with the restaurant owners and his colleagues on the inspection staff.

Concurrently with these training sessions, meetings were held in neighborhoods throughout the city, which were attended by 50 to 80 percent of the restaurant owners. Twenty-five such meetings were held to discuss the restaurant ordinance, explaining what was expected of industry, and to give them a chance to ask questions. Many questions were asked and a better understanding of what was expected resulted.

A community-wide educational program was carried on through radio, newspapers and illustrated talks before the women's clubs, service clubs, and other community organizations.

Every opportunity was extended to train the inspection staff and improve their qualifications which was of real benefit in aiding them to earn status. The size of the inspection force was reduced from 25 to 16, taking advantage of those inspectors who showed the most willingness to learn and enthusiasm and aptitude for their work.

RETARDING LEGAL ACTION

In May, 1949, after six months of this intensive program, the Western Pennsylvania Restaurant Association took legal action in the form of an injunction against the Health Department to enjoin the Department to enforce the provisions of the ordinance. Members of this Association are some of the larger operators in the City and they should be in a position of leadership to the industry. A few of their members used newspaper advertising and table placards with a highly emotional appeal which boomeranged and alerted the citizens to the fact that the restaurants exhibiting these folders were against grading which meant to the customers they were against cleaning-up.

The outcome of this litigation is well-known to all of you. The lower court enjoined the Department. This decision was appealed to the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania by the City. The Supreme Court, in turn, handed down a very important and far-reaching opinion. I doubt if it could have been made broader by a group of food sanitarians themselves, had they been asked to write it. Remember, this was a unanimous opinion of a group of legal minds. Miss Anne X. Alpern, City Solicitor, deserves high praise for her presentation of the case.

In relation to the grading provision of the ordinance the Court stated: "... certainly it would not only be the right, but even the duty of the authorities to inform the public as to the conditions found on such inspections . . . .".

Another point raised was the legality of the grade B, since the state law is the non-grading type of ordinance and only "A" restaurants are supposed to be licensed. Under consideration of this phase the court ruled that "... therefore, the City may properly license a grade "B" restaurant in order to give it a reasonable opportunity to bring its operations up to the grade "A" standard; if it fails to do this the license granted to it may be revoked at any time . . . .".

Those places indicating the most enthusiasm for remodeling and improving were given first attention. Many establishments asked for a complete and detailed survey and started at once to employ architects, contractors, equipment houses, etc., to aid in bringing their facilities into full compliance with the ordinance. This voluntary attitude and
In June 1949, approximately 50 members of the restaurant industry were invited to a meeting attended by Messrs. Hollis, Fuchs, and Robinson of the USPHS, as well as the Health Officer and Public Health Engineer. This meeting was called for the purpose of trying to find the underlying causes as to why the industry was taking legal action against the department, and to determine if there was any satisfactory way of settling the differences of opinion without going to court. Many helpful suggestions came out of this meeting, and as a direct result of it, an Administrative Practices Committee of seven members of the restaurant industry was appointed by the Health Officer. This committee met for the first time in August 1949, and then every week or 10 days until November. This committee helped the Department to understand better what really was going on within the restaurant industry. Likewise, it provided a medium through which the Health Department could get its program across to the restaurant industry. At one time, prior to the actual court-room hearing of the case, this committee had worked out a compromise solution to grading, which was acceptable to the City but unacceptable to the group of restaurant owners involved in the litigation.

The U.S. Public Health Service loaned a food and milk consultant (Stephen Koelz) to the Health Department for a period of one year for the purpose of assisting in carrying out the food program and to explore new techniques in the field of education, and to determine the amount of effort necessary from in-service training and supervision viewpoints to bring about an effective program. In carrying out this assignment the Food Consultant was given a free hand in relation to his contact with the staff and the restaurant owners, without responsibility in relation to administration and matters of policy.

Several effective techniques were developed. The most important and enthusiastic on the part of the restaurant industry was caused by the classes conducted in the establishments, in which each member of the restaurant personnel contributed his knowledge to the class. This pointed out the inter-relationships of the jobs, showing that each employee had an important function that must be carried out properly so that all of the employees could benefit by each other's work. After several such meetings, a demonstration class was held for the restaurant owners, at which 250 restaurant operators were present.

Another effective procedure was in the judicious use of the camera, taking about 1200 feet of colored film to show the "before and after" effects of the program. This was shown to many restaurant groups and greeted with a great deal of enthusiasm.

The Food Consultant also was successful in interesting the leading newspaper in developing a feature article for a Sunday roto section, with photographs showing the good and bad features in restaurant sanitation. Many hours were spent by the Food Consultant with each inspector, in staff meetings with all the inspectors to synchronize their ideas on each item of inspection, particularly as it related to disassembling equipment in the establishment, and familiarizing the staff with equipment and standards for equipment that were new to them.

Estoppel Injunction

On December 31, 1949, Common Pleas Court of Allegheny County enjoined the Health Department from enforcing the grading provision of the ordinance which was to go into effect the next day. As a result of this court decision, several restaurant operators cancelled orders for construction work and sent back equipment that already had been purchased.

Within the next 60 days the Health Department conducted hearings for approximately 50 restaurants, in which 9 licenses were suspended, 8 revoked, and the remainder placed on probation—a specific time being given to clean up. These hearings were adequately covered by the three daily newspapers and developed considerable community response. Also, this increased the importance of the inspector's position in the establishment and gave the inspector greater status than he previously had.
In March, 1950, a committee was appointed by the Health Officer to develop standards for interpretation of the state law, which for all practical purposes, is the non-grading USPHS recommended restaurant ordinance. This committee was made up of three men each from the Western Pennsylvania Restaurant Owners Association, the Pittsburgh Hotels Association, Allegheny County Retail Druggists Association, and the Allegheny County Retail Liquor Dealers Association, as well as three members of the Health Department: The Health Educator, the Food and Milk Consultant, and the Public Health Engineer.

This committee developed an interim program, with the principle of self-inspection in mind. It was agreed that it might be considerable time before litigation on the Supreme Court case would be completed and that during this period of time some kind of award, plaque, or symbol could be exhibited by those restaurants that were following the self-inspection program. An eight-page folder, explaining this program and illustrating the Code of Interpretation, was developed.

This committee agreed that the licenses, which were to be renewed on July 1, would not be re-issued unless the establishment complied fully with this Code of Interpretation. A numerical percentage point system was developed, in which establishments having a score of 90 percentage points or more would be granted a license.

As a result of this procedure, 561 (or 20 percent) of the licenses were withheld. The department waited 30 days—until August 1—before starting legal action against these restaurants for operating without a license. Notice was sent to 44 establishments, informing them that an injunction was to be filed against their establishments in the Common Pleas Court in 8 days, for not having corrected the violations that were enumerated on the several previous inspections. This gave the owner time to consult with the City Solicitor's office and the Bureau of Sanitary Engineering Services, and with his lawyer, to determine what could be done.

In each case, the restaurant owner, with his attorney, was in the office the following day. In all cases, the establishment voluntarily closed to make such alterations or repairs as were necessary to bring it into compliance. To some, that meant closing for only 2 or 3 days, a few others were closed for a week or two and the employees given their annual vacation, and, in a few cases, the restaurants were closed for as long as six weeks to make extensive alterations. Again, this procedure was adequately covered by newspaper stories informing the public and other restaurant operators what was going on.

As a result of the legal action and the newspaper coverage, the other 517 operators brought their establishments into compliance within the next 30 days so that by September 15, all establishments were operating with a license, or were not operating.

**Inspection Improvements**

About every 6 to 9 months the inspectors' districts were changed. This also seems to be an effective procedure. As inspectors would go into new areas, they would see different problems that the former inspector either had overlooked or failed to note on his report. It also kept each inspector on his toes because he knew he would be in the district a relatively short time, and none of them wanted the succeeding inspector to find violations that they had overlooked. This developed a healthy spirit of competition on our staff. In a few cases, the inspector would wear out his welcome, or, because of the pressure of the program which forced operators to make extensive alterations to their restaurants, feelings would become strained. This was relieved by the shift of districts as the new man would carry no onus with him.

Concurrently with the training program a record system was developed, permitting comparison, item by item, of each area. Each inspector was assigned approximately 150 restaurants and, in tabulating the results of their inspections in each area, it was obvious that there was a wide difference in interpretation of the ordinance by the various inspectors: e.g. one man called floor violations 98 percent of the time, while 2 others called this item in non-compliance 34 percent and 38 percent of the time. Average for the total group was 71 percent non-compliance.

On equipment, one inspector found this item in non-compliance 94 percent of the time, while 3 others found it in violation 3 percent, 12 percent, and 17 percent of the time, and the average for the group was 44 percent of the time.

One inspector called the item of housekeeping in violation 95 percent of the time, while another found it in violation only 7 percent of the time. The group average for non-compliance on this item was 56 percent.

Through tabulation of these results and discussing them in staff meetings, getting expressions from the inspectors as to what was a violation of these items, the differences of opinion were ironed out. It is incumbent on the Health Department so to administer and supervise the program that each owner is treated fairly and alike.

A record system was set up in which each establishment had an individual folder with the color of green, yellow, or red to indicate the sanitation status of the establishment, and using a small flag on the heading as a visible means of indicating when the establishment was last inspected. This gave a simple color picture of the status of the establishment, as well as being able to make certain that all the establishments had been inspected.

A suspension type of folder was used for this purpose; this helped the clerical personnel in maintaining the files in a neat and orderly manner.

**Control Program**

On January 2, 1951, the Supreme Court handed down its decision, permitting the city to grade restaurants. From that point on, the restaurant program took on a new approach. The Court decision removed all doubt, both from the Health Department and the restaurant industry, as to where we stood on the matter of grading. The responsibility to grade was squarely up to the Department. It seem-
ed wise to grade as rapidly as possible, consistent with thoroughness and uniformity.

On February 13, 1951, grading was started. During the first ten days 200 "A"s were posted on establishments that were known by the Department to be the most nearly ready for this grade. No establishment was graded until a complete inspection was made the day it was graded to make sure that all items were in compliance. The final inspection prevented many potential A restaurants from attaining this grade at this time.

After ten days the inspectors started posting "B"s, concentrating on "B"s nearly entirely, and several days later started posting "C" grades. Seventy-seven "C"s were posted in 5 days. An equal number of restaurants closed their establishments to improve the sanitation status rather than post the "C" grade. The policy of the Department was to give each restaurant operator a choice: either to post the "C" grade or close the establishment as of the day it was inspected.

By May 15, 2200 of the 235 establishments were posted. By July 1, every public eating and drinking place in the city was posted. These last few ultimately received "A"s. They remained ungraded for a period of several weeks, during which time extensive alterations, which were already under way, were completed. The policy of the Department was to withhold a grade from those places that obviously were making a serious effort to comply, rather than post a "B" or a "C" grade on them during this construction.

Again, during this period, an intensive campaign of newspaper articles appeared daily, letting the public and other restaurant operators know the actions of the Health Department. It was obvious to everybody that the places that received "A"s first were ready and those who had to wait 60 to 90 days, because of construction or last-minute changes, were known to be fixing up, trying desperately to comply with the "A" standards.

From an administrative viewpoint the Department's policy was to try to encourage the industry to attain the "A" rating, rather than do anything that might discourage the individual operator to strive for other than the best.

The final results were approximately 40 percent (900) "A", and 60 percent (1100) "B". Since the original grading, there has been a 15 percent change in grades—either down-grading or up-grading of various establishments—but the total remains 40 percent "A" and 60 percent "B".

Approximately 4 "C"s are posted each week. Only 3, of all the posted "C"s, failed to upgrade before the 30 days expired. The average length of time for upgrading from "C" has been 3 to 5 days. In 3 instances the restaurants went out of business at the end of 35 to 40 days. No "C" operation has been taken into court for prosecution. Only 2 operators removed the "C" from their window without permission, but they were restored promptly and no further problem of this kind developed.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

The grading of restaurants is an effective administrative device which is a two-pronged tool, putting not only the Health Department but the restaurant industry on their toes. The grade on a restaurant is notice to the public of the Department's evaluation of the sanitation status in that particular establishment. The public has its own impression of the evaluation, and it is not hesitant to let the Department know if it thinks that the restaurant is improperly graded or does not deserve the grade that is displayed. Letters, phone calls, visits to the office, etc., let the Department and the individual inspector know that certain types of violation are obvious and repulsive, but still occur in some establishments.

The public likes grading and has said so on many occasions. Restaurant owners have expended a great deal of time, effort and money to inspire confidence in "eating out" on the part of the public. They have found the grading program to be the most effective tool in accomplishing their purpose. One operator, who was an official of the Restaurant Owners Association, had this to say: "It makes little difference what we think of grading; it is much more important to us what the public thinks of it."

In March, 1952, a second survey was made of our restaurant inspection program by the USPHS at the request of the Health Department. Fortunately the same team that made the original survey was assigned to make the second one. Their findings showed a substantial improvement in the status of restaurants—a 35 percent increase in our rating, or from 55 to 75.

Some of the comments that the survey staff made while here were very significant, at least to us. One was that the attitude of the restaurant owners towards the Health Department is much improved. Our inspectors are more sure of themselves. There is a healthy respect on both sides and a seriousness regarding restaurant sanitation that did not prevail during the former survey.

The survey staff said that the inspectors' approach was a friendly one, but genuinely full of business. I was most happy to have this particular report because it is exactly the attitude that I had hoped our staff did exhibit.

During the last six years Institutions Magazine has given awards annually for the winners in their Food Service Contest. According to the statement the award is a symbol of advancement and achievement in sanitation and food service efficiency.

In 1952, 44 such awards were given throughout U. S. and 2 to establishments in Pittsburgh, namely: Kaufmann's and the H. J. Heinz Company. In 1951 the Hotel Webster Hall of Pittsburgh received such an award and in 1949 the Dutch Henry restaurant of Pittsburgh received a similar award. These restaurants are proud as we are of their accomplishments. Two of these operators were members of the administrative practice committee referred to above.

The vigorous support of the Mayor and Council and their continued active interest in the restaurant program, is but a part of

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Results

Figure 2 shows the relation between the S.P.C. and the B.A.C. The 104 samples taken in February averaged 61,000 for the B.A.C. and 52,600 for the S.P.C. The 100 samples taken in July averaged 84,100 for the B.A.C. and 83,700 for the S.P.C. The grand average for 204 samples was 72,400 for the B.A.C. and 68,800 for the S.P.C. In averaging the B.A.C. results, those bottles showing no colonies were recorded as 1,000 and are also plotted as 1,000 on figure 2.

Summary

The B.A.C. method has been employed routinely once a week for over a year with completely satisfactory results. No unusual difficulty has been encountered due to spreaders, the incidence being normally well below 5%. The method has been found to consume about one-half as many man-hours as the Direct Microscopic Count previously employed. The results obtained with the B.A.C. are comparable with the S.P.C. and thus average counts of individual samples of incoming milk may be compared with the Standard Plate Count of a composite sample of the mixed milk for bulk shipment.

Acknowledgment

The suggestion of Dr. R. P. Myers concerning the use of the Imperial Oblong Bottles as an improvement over the Owens Oval Bottle is greatly appreciated.

Thanks are also due to Mrs. J. G. Parker for making the 100 comparisons between the two methods during July.

References


PITTSBURGH RESTAURANT PROGRAM

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the larger movement to improve the environment in the City of Pittsburgh. The effective elimination of smoke from the air, extensive re-development of some of the blighted areas, reorganization of the Health Department, and the development of the University of Pittsburgh Public Health School are all symbols of how Pittsburgh is moving ahead toward a better place to live.

You might ask which of the procedures was primarily responsible for this rapid improvement. This I cannot answer. The most valuable outgrowth of the program is the change in attitude on the part of the people involved—the recognition by the restaurant owners and the inspection staff that they have a common purpose; that of striving for continued improvement in restaurant sanitation.

Bottle Agar Method

a stream of .......... CONFIDENCE
That leads to ................. LOYALTY
And ................. COOPERATION
Take it home to your family,
its ................................ LOVE
But let anyone place a barrier to
break that stream of Confidence
and you have another way of life—
We see it in the world today FEAR
People will ........................ GIVE IN
They will ...................... RUN AWAY
Or they will .................... FIGHT
Yes, they will even ............... HATE
God forbid that it should ever happen to us here. That's not our way of life. We must learn to keep the proper balance between loyalty and cooperation, thereby doing our part to maintain this American way of life and pass it intact to succeeding generations.

Out in a meadow, on a sunshiny day,
Were two had doddles of new mown hay.
In between where two stubborn mules. Now get this dope

They were tied by their tails with a piece of rope.

Said one to the other, "You come my way
Until I get some of that new mown hay."

"Why, no," said the other. "You come with me
Because I have hay too—Do you see?"

So they got nowhere—Just pawed up dirt

And, Oh by golly, how that rope did hurt!
They turned about those stubborn mules

And said, "We're acting like a couple of human fools.
Let's pull together. I'll go your way."

"Then you come with me and we will both eat hay."
So they ate their fill and liked it too,
And swore they'd be comrades good and true.
When the sun went down they were heard to bray,

"Now this has been the end of a perfect day."

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