THE U. S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE MODEL POULTRY ORDINANCE AND CODE

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The new Poultry Ordinance and Code which is to be recommended to State and local health departments by the U. S. Public Health Service marks another milestone in the efforts of public health agencies to provide more effective protection to the health and welfare of the consuming public - that is to say, we realize the food for human consumption is not fabricated from clean, wholesome ingredients and is not prepared, preserved, and handled in such a manner that its wholesomeness is preserved. This hazard includes everything from impaired nutrition to actual illness or even death. It can exist in any food and can occur during any stage of its preparation - during manufacture, transportation, storage, or delivery to the consumer.

The problem that has always existed - it exists in some fields today - is to determine what constitutes an adequate safeguard to the consuming public - one which will assure protection from adulterated or contaminated food and at the same time will permit a given food industry to function economically in its particular field. It is possible to set sanitation standards so high that they will be enforceable, or so low that they will not meet the public health objectives for which they were designed. It is also possible to have so many differing requirements for the same industry in various health jurisdictions that they become confusing to the industry and stifle normal distribution.

If it were possible to draft a single standard that would apply alike to all food industries, the problem would have been solved years ago. We know, however, the diversity of foods, the differences that exist in the raw materials that go into their manufacture, the special problems involved in their processing and preservation require the use of techniques tailored to the individual foods or related groups of foods involved. This, in turn, requires public health people to apply sanitation standards tailored to the particular food or groups of food which are to be controlled.

Such a standard, then, must be practicable of enforcement, effective in its requirements, and acceptable to the various public health or related agencies responsible for supervising the particular industry and the regulated industry itself. Furthermore, it must be amenable to uniform interpretation and enforcement. All of these criteria have been met in the fluid milk and the retail public eating and drinking establishment fields where the U. S. Public Health Service ordinances and codes relating to those fields are universally accepted standards.

A similar standard, with the same objectives in view, is nearing completion for poultry and poultry products. It is to be known as the Public Health Service Recommended Poultry Ordinance and Code.

Before discussing the new Recommended Ordinance and Code in detail, it might be well to review briefly the history of the poultry industry, some of the problems that exist in that industry, their effect on the consumers of poultry and poultry products, and the public health considerations that led to the drafting of the ordinance.

Until a comparatively short time ago, poultry and poultry products were consumed generally in the immediate area where the birds themselves were raised. Birds raised for consumption in distant markets were usually shipped alive and slaughtered and processed for local consumption at the point of destination. During recent years, however, improved refrigeration methods, rapid transportation, advances in the science of poultry husbandry which have resulted in the mass production of poultry, and the demand of the consuming public for a wider variety of ready-to-eat poultry and poultry products has brought about a revolution in the processing and distribution of poultry. It is no longer a local industry. Poultry consumed in New York or Chicago may have been produced in California or Virginia or at some point hundreds or thousands of miles away. Today, poultry processing is not only big business but it is a highly competitive industry. Plants in the southwest and west are competing vigorously with plants in the middle west and east. As a result, the consumer is offered a wider variety of poultry products at a lower price than ever before. Per capita consumption of poultry in the United States in 1953 was 34.4 pounds, or a total consumption in excess of 5 billion pounds.

This, in turn, has brought about two principal problems affecting public health. Public Health agencies enforcing sanitation laws or ordinances can no longer supervise the operation of the plants where the poultry consumed in a given jurisdiction is being processed, or observe the birds before and after slaughter. Secondly, the tremendous increase in the mass production and consumption of poultry has brought about the construction of large, complex establishments which utilize new and revolutionary techniques in growing, processing and handling this type of food.

These, in turn, gave rise to a third problem - an increase in the number of food-borne diseases attributed to poultry or poultry products. Many of these outbreaks were caused by mishandling at the retail level or in the home, but a sufficient number were found to have been caused by contaminated poultry itself. To cast suspicion on poultry as a food product, Health authorities voiced concern particularly over the sanitation controls in plants processing poultry and poul-

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try products in their own and other
ejurisdictions. Consumers themselves
have from time to time expressed
displeasure at some of the poultry and poultry products sold
to them. As a result, some states
and many cities adopted laws or
ordinances or strengthened already
existing ones designed to protect
the consuming public in those
jurisdictions from adulterated
poultry. As might be expected,
neither the ordinances nor the in-
spection programs were uniform
between jurisdictions. Some left much
to be desired from the standpoint
of protecting the consumer. Some
erected trade barriers which pre-
vented the normal distribution
of poultry.

Other states and municipalities,
realizing these difficulties, request-
ed assistance from the U. S. Public
Health Service in meeting the
problem. Numerous state and local
officials individually requested the
Public Health Service to develop
a model poultry ordinance. The
U. S. Livestock Sanitary Association
and the Conference of State
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As a result of these growing de-
mands, the U. S. Public Health Service undertook the task of
developing a model poultry ordi-
nance, with joint responsibility de-
glated to the Milk and Food Pro-
gram, and the Veterinary Public
Health Section. Field studies were
conducted to determine the prob-
lems of public health significance
within the poultry industry. EXis-
ting Federal, State and local regu-
lations and ordinances were studied
and compared. From these, a tenta-
tive draft of sanitation provisions
were prepared. The poultry in-
dustry itself was invited to assist in
the preparation of the ordinance
and advice and consultation were
solicited from state and local health
agencies.

This resulted in the formation of
a public health-poultry industry
liaison committee. This committee
is composed of seven representa-
tives from the Institute of American
Poultry Industries and seven repre-
sentatives of the Public Health Service and state
and municipal health agencies. This committee
was formed in 1952 and was charg-
ed with the prime responsibility of
drafting the ordinance itself. The
Public Health Group appointed to
the committee was selected from State and local health
departments and from specialists in the Public
Health Service so that a broad
spectrum of experience could be
brought to bear on the problems.
The group included: Dr. John D.
Porterfield, Ohio State Health
Commissioner; T. E. Sullivan,
Director, Division of Food and
Drugs, Indiana State Board of
Health; Dr. R. K. Anderson, Public
Health Veterinarian, Denver, Colo-
rado City-County Health Depart-
ment; Charles L. Senn, Director,
Bureau of Sanitation, Los Angeles
Department of Health; Dr. James
H. Steele, Chief of Veterinary
Public Health, U. S. Public Health
Service Communicable Disease
Center, Atlanta, Georgia; Dr. Joe
W. Atkinson, Poultry Inspection
and Sanitation Specialist of the U.
S. Public Health Service, and R. W.
Hart, Kansas City Regional Engi-
neer, U. S. Public Health Service. In
addition, Dr. R. J. Helvig and Dr.
James Lieberman of the Public
Health Service rendered valuable
service as consultants and advisors.

It should be recorded here to the
credit of the poultry industry
that its representatives contributed
much to the success of the com-
munity's work. They gave whole-
heartedly of their time and technical
knowledge and exhibited to a
high degree their awareness of the
industry's responsibility to the
health and safety of its consumers.
In the process of drafting this
ordinance, the public health mem-
bers of the committee obtained a
liberal education in poultry econom-
ics and the industry members re-
ceived a liberal education in public
health philosophy and objectives.

The functioning of this commit-
tee illustrates another important
point — the value of understanding
between industry and public health
and regulatory groups. Most of the
early difficulties in the committee
stemmed from misunderstandings
or diverse interpretations of the
various ordinance provisions. As
soon as the reasons for a require-
ment were understood by industry
representatives or as soon as the
public health members were shown
the practical difficulties that would
result if a provision were included,
it became only a matter of ad-
justment to arrive at a complete
understanding without sacrificing
either public health objectives or
industry economy.

After numerous meetings and
much correspondence, study drafts
of the sanitation part of the ordi-
nance were sent out for review and
comment to all state and territorial
health officers; all major organiza-
tions within the poultry industry;
the Food and Drug Administration;
the Association of Food and Drug
Official of the United States; the
U. S. Department of Agriculture;
the Army, Navy, and Air Force; the
American Veterinary Medical As-
sociation; the Conference of State
Sanitary Engineers; the Conference
of Municipal Public Health En-
gineers; the Association of Public
Health Veterinarians; the Inter-
national Association of Milk and
Food Sanitarians; the National As-
sociation of Sanitarians; and the
National Sanitation Foundation, as
well as to various other individuals
in educational institutions, in in-
dustry, and in health agencies.

All comments and recommenda-
tions received were considered and
discussed by the Liaison Committee
during a four-day meeting in June
of 1953. Revisions were prepared
and various provisions discussed in
detail with officials of the U. S.
Department of Agriculture and the
U. S. Food and Drug Administra-
tion. These efforts resulted in a
draft which was considerably
shorter than the one previously
circulated for review but which re-
tained provisions essential to en-
forcement and sanitation control.

At a meeting held in March, 1954,
the final draft was reviewed by the
Liaison Committee. Technical as-
sistance was provided by specialists
in the U. S. Public Health Service,
the U. S. Food and Drug Admin-
istration, and the poultry industry.
Legal guidance was obtained from
attorneys from General Counsel's
office of the U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and from counsel representing the poultry industry. Substantial agreement was reached on all provisions, and the ordinance has since been put into tentative final shape. It is now subject to editing and possible final revision prior to publication. While officials of the U. S. Food and Drug Administration, the Department of the Army, and the Department of Agriculture have concurred in the ordinance as it now stands, it has not yet received official clearance by these agencies or the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

During the discussions by the Liaison Committee, it was determined to separate the two basic problems related to the poultry industry. One involved the sanitary conditions which must exist in an establishment where poultry is slaughtered and processed; the other involved ante and post-mortem inspections of the birds themselves at the time of slaughter. This separation was made because the technical problems relating to inspection of poultry for wholesomeness are complex ones and differ sharply from those involving sanitation. They, therefore, require special study and consideration. Furthermore, the pressing need of states and municipalities, judging from the inquiries made and requests for assistance received by the Public Health Service, principally concerned sanitary procedures and controls. Therefore, the part of the ordinance which has been completed thus far involves the commercial processing, storage, transportation and sale of poultry and poultry meat products, and includes sanitation and refrigeration factors.

Consideration is now being given to the drafting of Part 2 which will involve problems dealing with ante and post-mortem inspection of poultry. Health jurisdictions desiring to adopt the first part of the ordinance can do so, since provisions have been incorporated in the sanitation portion which will make it possible for those same jurisdictions to adopt the ante and post-mortem provisions at a later date, if they so desire. Since inspection of poultry for wholesomeness should be done only in a clean environment where adequate sanitary safeguards exist, compliance with the first part of the ordinance is necessary before inspection for wholesomeness begins.

The basic purpose of the ordinance is (a) to provide a guide to state and local regulatory officials and to the poultry industry in those matters involving sanitation of poultry plants and wholesomeness of poultry products, and (b) to provide uniformity in state and local regulatory programs affecting poultry so as to facilitate the acceptance of poultry and poultry products between jurisdictions, both in interstate and intrastate commerce.

The ordinance itself follows the familiar pattern used in the fluid milk and public eating establishment ordinances and codes. It provides a short form for adoption by reference and a long form to be adopted by those jurisdictions whose laws prevent adoption by reference. It provides for the issuance of permits, detailed enforcement procedures, serving of notices and orders, suspension or revocation of permits. One section contains detailed plant operating procedures; another deals with construction and general layout of the establishment. Other sections refer to floors, walls, ceilings, light, ventilation, water supply, toilet and handwashing facilities, etc. One section outlines in detail what constitutes satisfactory methods and procedures for chilling, freezing and refrigerated storage and transportation of carcasses or products including time and temperature factors.

This ordinance is unique in several respects:

1. The definitions section includes not only the usual definitions of health officer, establishment, person, etc., it also defines what is adulterated poultry, what is misbranded poultry, and includes definitions for the various types of poultry such as dressed poultry, ready-to-cook poultry, giblets, and similar terms.

2. It provides for the prior approval of plans and specifications by the health officer for newly constructed plants or for extensive alterations of existing plants.

3. It prohibits the sale or possession of adulterated or misbranded poultry.

4. It specifies the type of labeling or identification that can be placed on packages or containers of poultry and prohibits the placing of any official stamp or other indication on the retail package which might imply to the consumer that the poultry has been inspected unless such poultry or poultry products were actually processed and packaged under continuous inspection including ante and post-mortem examination by qualified persons.

5. It provides for the examination of pertinent records of the poultry plant or the dealer by the health officer having jurisdiction and authorizes the health officer to seize and hold any poultry or poultry products that he finds, or has probable cause to believe, are either adulterated or misbranded.

6. It authorizes the health officer to order the immediate closing of a poultry plant when danger to public health exists from its operation.

7. It sets up an orderly procedure for the revocation or suspension of permits, for hearings, appeals and other similar matters dealing with the issuance of orders, suspensions, and revocations.

8. It authorizes the tagging by the health officer or his representative of equipment or packaging materials which he knows, or has probable cause to believe, will contaminate poultry or poultry products and prohibits the use of such packaging material or equipment unless it has been brought into compliance with the provisions of the ordinance.

9. The detailed operating procedures to be followed by the poultry plant include disposition of dead birds, withholding of feed, the use of bleeding cones, the requirement that scald tanks be provided with a continuous flow of water, venting, separation of giblets from inedible offal, the washing and chilling of eviscerated poultry, refrigeration, storage, packaging and labeling of the finished product.

10. The ordinance is designed in such a manner that it can apply equally to the large processor who slaughters several hundred birds an hour and to the small operator who slaughters a comparatively small number of birds during the weekend.

11. It provides a method for the acceptance of poultry and poultry.
products from other jurisdictions and prohibits the distribution of poultry or poultry products within a given jurisdiction unless they meet certain requirements as outlined in the ordinance.

12. Last, but by no means least, it is the first document of its kind in which the affected industry has had an opportunity to collaborate from its inception to its completion.

In short, it provides comprehensive sanitation controls for all phases of poultry processing and distribution. Together with effective methods to be employed in removing adulterated poultry from the market and preventing the use of contaminated materials or processing equipment. It goes farther than the usual public health ordinance since it empowers the removal of mislabeled poultry from the market and sets up a method whereby the identity and acceptability of poultry processed in other jurisdictions can be determined and evaluated.

Time and space will not permit the detailed examination of each section of the ordinance; however, they include all of the known factors which would affect the wholesomeness or acceptability of the product. Expert advice and consultation from public health and industry specialists and the research that went into the various problems have, we believe, resulted in including adequate protection in those matters involving public health and welfare and the elimination of unimportant or controversial provisions or requirements which are not enforceable.

F. E. HOLDAY

Mr. F. E. Holiday, a former member of the I.A.M. & F.S. and a past president of the Michigan Association of Sanitarians (when it was known as the Michigan Milk Insp. Assoc.) passed away in Florida, April 10, 1955 at the age of 70, burial was in Detroit.

Mr. Holiday had retired from the Detroit Health Department, Milk Insp. Division, on August 29, 1953 after 27 years of efficient conscientious service. His passing is mourned by his many friends especially those among the Sanitarians, the Dairy Industry, and the fraternal groups.

WASHINGTON STATE HOLDS SUCCESSFUL INSTITUTE

Over 200 representatives of the dairy industry from the Pacific Coast, Canada, Alaska and the Midwest completed a session of lectures, demonstrations, panel discussions, banquets, conducted tours and entertainment features at the recent 24th annual Washington State College Institute of Dairying, March 7-11.

Dr. H. A. Bendixen, acting chairman of the college’s Department of Dairy Science, was program chairman for the five day session.

Also, more than 250 entries in the quality ice creams, cheeses, butter and milk contests were judged by a board of experts, and later, in part, by members of the Institute in open judging contests and quality clinics.

The Institute’s educational fare included the operation of federal milk marketing orders; advancements in detergents and sanitizers; work simplification procedure; cause and prevention of milk flavor defects, especially in connection with modern bulk handling methods; sanitary standards: waste disposal, and the importance of osphrophils, organisms that live at low temperatures in finished milk products.

Outstanding speakers were Norman Myrick, New York, editor of American Milk Review; O. E. Ross, Chicago, Ill., Chief Chemist for National Pectic Products company; Lee Minor, technical service department, Wyandotte Chemicals Corporation and C. B. A. Bryant, Director of Field Service, Johnson & Johnson, Chicago.

Other notable out-of-state staffers were Hurl E. McSweeney, Director of Merchandising, American Dairying association, Chicago; G. D. Sperry, technical department, Kelco company, San Diego; and Dr. J. C. Bord, associate professor of dairy husbandry, and Scott A. Walker, assistant agricultural economist, both of the University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho.

Four featured speakers were awarded the honorary degree Doctor of the Institute of Dairying (DID) by Dr. Bendixen. The four were: Dr. V. H. Nielsen, Extension Dairyman, Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa; Dr. W. C. Cole, Research Director, Arden Farms company, Los Angeles; C. A. Abele, Director of Public Health Research, Diversey corporation, Chicago, and Perry R. Ellsworth, Milk Industry Foundation, Washington, D. C.

Valuable prizes were awarded to winners in the dairy products scoring and judging contests. Some of the awards were donated by 80 firms allied with the dairy industry.

Outstanding entrants in the scoring contests also received Diplomas of Merit from the State College.


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SWAP SESSION: Four of the speakers at WSC’s 24th Institute of Dairying swap comments between sessions. They are (l to r) C. A. Abele, Chicago, director of public health research, The Diversey corporation; Dr. V. H. Nielsen, Ames, Iowa, Extension dairy manufacturing specialist, Iowa State College; Perry R. Ellsworth, Washington, D. C., assistant to the executive director of the Milk Industry Foundation; and Dr. W. C. Cole, Los Angeles, research director, Arden Farms Company. The Institute opened on the WSC campus Monday and continued through Friday. Dairy producers, manufacturers, sanitarians and researchers from 8 states, Alaska, British Columbia, and Washington, D. C. are attending. States represented include Washington, Oregon, Idaho, California, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan and New York.