Acid. These products are not made by the normal culturing or souring process. Thus, the product is not exactly what the consumer has been purchasing under a given name over the years. For this reason, the product should have a distinguishing name and, of course, all of the ingredients must be listed.

Foods made in semblance of cultured cream, sour cream, or sour cream dressing but with the milk fat substituted whether in whole or in part by another fat are “imitation” products. This decision stems from Section 403(c) of the FDC Act. Although there are products on the market resembling sour cream or sour cream dressing which contain a vegetable fat and some form of milk, there has been no decision by the Federal courts as to whether such products come within the definition of “filled milk.” We have indicated we will not seek a ruling from the courts so long as the articles are labeled as imitations and otherwise comply with the FDC Act.

Imitation Cheese Products

I have said nothing so far about imitation cheese products. Many products which imitate standardized cheeses or cheese products are on the market. Most of these are properly labeled as imitations. As you know, the addition of any vegetable or other fat or oil to cheese brings it within the definitions of “filled cheese,” making it subject to the Filled Cheese Act administered by the Internal Revenue Service. You may not be aware that this includes cheese made with milk or skimmed milk admixed with butter. Filled cheese may be shipped interstate if it is manufactured and labeled in accordance with the Filled Cheese Act and complies with the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act.

Usually a filled cheese is made in imitation of one of the cheeses for which a Standard of Identity has been established. In addition to the labeling required under the Filled Cheese Act, such cheese should be labeled “Imitation———Cheese” (the blank being filled with the name of the cheese imitated). Since the article is not standardized, all ingredients should be listed.

Sanitation in the Retail Food Industry'

Gale Prince

Eisner Food Stores
Champaign, Illinois

The subject of this paper involves a very important commodity, namely food. Throughout history food has been one of man’s major concerns. Of the essentials of life, none is more vital. Yet over the years, mishandling of food has caused illness, and occasionally death. Thus, food distribution is an important part of our daily lives. Sanitation in the retail food distribution channels has been receiving more attention from both governmental agencies and industry. Before sanitation aspects in the retail food channels are described, some information on the magnitude of the retail food industry will be presented.

Size of Retail Food Industry

The cans which you see on the shelves in your local supermarket do not appear there automatically as some people think. It takes people to put them there, and lots of them. In fact, of every seven people working in this country, one person works in some field of the food industry. Just the number of store employees alone is approximately 1.2 million or a population equivalent of about four of our states.

If all the eleven million shopping carts used in the nation’s food stores were lined up, they would reach from Chicago to Paris. The 365,000 checkout counters would form a line 425 miles long (1). Some 36 billion paper bags are used in the retail food stores in a year, and the register tape used for totaling customer transactions would reach to the moon and back twice, with a little to spare. Banking is an important aspect of food retailing. Food stores cash checks totaling about 150% of their gross sales; an amount second only to banks.

Food retailing is a big operation; for America has a big appetite. The average sized U.S. family of four persons consumes over 2.5 tons of food a year. Of this amount nearly 1.75 tons are of a perishable nature.

Profit is the life blood of business. It is through profit that a company obtains the capital needed to enlarge facilities and update equipment and products. Profits for the retail food industry averages only about 1.0% net profit compared with 11% for the tobacco industry and 4.3% for the mail order houses. The

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retail food industry is very competitive. There are 28 food stores for every department store and 10 for every variety store.

Today the American consumer spends only about 19% of his take-home pay in a food store, compared to 26% in 1948. Only about 80% of this 19% spent in the food store is actually for food. The British spend about 29% while the Russians spend 50% of their take-home pay for food (1).

With the abundance of food available in the United States, the consumer can choose freely from many types of products, different forms, and at different price levels. Thus we live in a consumer-oriented economy, and Mrs. Consumer is the boss. The typical supermarket shopper is a woman between 25 and 40 years old, with two children, who makes 150 shopping trips a year to the food store, and spends on an average of $28.69 a week. Her average purchase on a trip to the market is 12.4 items, but on the major shopping trip of the week she buys 30 items. Each stay in the store averages 22 min. On her tour of the market, she passes approximately 270 items a minute or 4.5 items every second (1). This is the reason for increased emphasis on packaging methods. The manufacturer must attract the consumer’s eye because only about one-third of the shoppers use a shopping list.

**Selection of a Store by Consumer**

What determines why a shopper selects a given store? A recent survey indicated price is the main reason, followed by customer service, cleanliness of the store, and fresh high quality perishables.

These points are all taken into consideration when a new store is designed. It costs at least $250,000-$400,000 to build and equip and another $125,000 to stock a supermarket. Within this beautiful decor of today’s supermarket, Mrs. Consumer does her weekend shopping with the confidence she is buying food which is free of foreign matter and microbiological contamination. She has developed this trust from the past record of the industry in providing high quality products. As the volume of food sold goes up because of the increase in population, so does the chance of a breakdown in the food distribution process. Eighteen months ago the Corporate Officers of the Jewel Companies foresaw this potential problem and the need for more emphasis to be placed on sanitation. With this decision came the author’s assignment to develop a sanitation program for the Eisner Operation. Prior to this assignment, sanitation within the retail stores was handled by the store operations manager.

**A Sanitation Program**

Eisner Food Stores is one of the 11 divisions of the Jewel Companies with operations in Central Illinois and Western Indiana. The Eisner operation consists of 30 corporate retail stores, 40 franchise stores, a distribution center, 2 bakeries, a salad kitchen, an Institutional Foods Division, and a catering service. Each operation has its own sanitation problems and it is the author’s responsibility to see that proper sanitation procedures are followed in all operations. In this paper we will be limited to a discussion of the sanitation aspects of the retail food stores.

The sanitation program for the retail food stores is quite involved. A store, depending on the size, will stock from 4,000 to 8,000 different items, all the way from soup to nuts. Nearly 50% of these items were not available 10 years ago. Each year our buyers are shown approximately 5,000 new items, and of this number they may select only 10%. The average life for a new product is about 3 years. Thus, the industry is continually faced with a rapid influx of new products. But for the store to be profitable and to maintain the product in a sanitary condition, it is necessary to have a rapid turnover of each item on the shelves. This means in the grocery department we need 13 turns of stock per year. In other departments the turnover rate expected is as follows: frozen food, 39 turnovers; dairy, 41; meat, 58; produce, 78; and bakery, 125. To control product it is necessary to have a coding system for every item. One that can be easily read. An example of this is our Hillfarm milk products. In the training programs various store employees find the F1F0 rotation method is continually stressed. The industry uses a large number of part timers and most of them are young people. In some instances 60% of the retail store employees are part timers. This creates an endless training job, but, we need this flexibility, because about 75% of the shopping is done on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

Our quality control program consists of sampling products with bacteriological and chemical analysis and taste testing to meet our specifications. Labeling and weight checks are also made. Perishable goods are constantly checked for adequate temperature at time of receipt and during distribution. Bacteriological swabs are taken from equipment in food processing areas to check on cleaning procedures and also as an educational tool. Visits also are made to supplier’s or to prospective supplier’s plants.

In conjunction with the quality control program previously mentioned, periodic in-store inspection tours are made before, during, or after working hours by supervisors. It is during these inspections that
checks are made to see if the recommended cleaning schedules are followed. Is the hourly, daily, weekly, and monthly dirt being kept up to date? Is any equipment in need of repair or replacing? What is the temperature of the various coolers and display cases? Is food being properly stored and handled? Are hazardous compounds stored away from food ingredients? Is product displayed within the load level limits of all display cases? Has damaged product been removed from the display shelves? Are there any peculiarities noted in the appearance of products or packaging? These are examples of the many things that need to be checked when inspecting a store operation. When problems are found they are discussed with the manager and area supervisor. The legal requirements and the reason why and what could happen are discussed along with preventive measures.

Meetings are held with managers where the sanitary science of food handling is discussed in detail. These meetings have been very helpful and have yielded many interesting comments. This is the first exposure most of these people have had to the growth of bacteria.

So far nothing has been mentioned about pest control. Just like humans, rodents and insects need food to survive; and where is there a better place than in a supermarket? Pest control is a science in itself, not and the job of our own store employees. Presently we are using an outside pest control service on a regular basis. However, this program must be constantly monitored to avoid complacency on the part of the service. Store employees have the responsibility to report any problems they may have with pests between visits to the sanitarian. In our distribution center we have a full time pest control employee.

We are constantly reviewing new cleaning compounds and cleaning processes which will do a better job at reduced labor costs. The present cost of cleaning up is far too high. New methods of cleaning for the retail store have to come about. With this comes new design for stores and equipment. Although great progress has been made by the National Sanitation Foundation and the Commercial Refrigeration Manufacturers Sanitation Code in equipment design for the retail operation, they still leave things to be desired. These standards are not the complete answer for better equipment design but do give us a basis with which to start.

Sanitation begins in the early planning stages on the drawing board. For sanitation to be effective and efficient it must be built in. In the past sanitation has not received the necessary emphasis in new building. Hence the author spends part of his time going over blueprints and making recommendations on new building and store remodelings.

Presently an educational sanitation program is being prepared which will be made available to all Elsmor employees.

One is very fortunate if one has a good working relationship with the Public Health officials in the area; people with whom one can sit down and discuss solutions to sanitation problems. This is very important. Sanitation in the retail food industry is not a once a day job or a one man’s job; it is everyone’s job throughout every working day. The program described above is not necessarily the best, but it is giving results, and we will be able to accomplish even more in the future.

Reference


LISTING OF SOURCES OF SHORT-TERM TRAINING FOR LABORATORY WORKERS

The Laboratory Consultation and Development Section of the National Communicable Disease Center is compiling a list of organizations which offer short-term training for persons working in clinical and public health laboratories. Academic training for full-time students will not be included. When completed, the list will be made available to all individuals interested in continuing education for medical laboratory personnel. The compilation will serve to alert training coordinators, supervisors and prospective students to the existence of many little-known sources of short-term training, some at no cost to the student.

Companies, professional associations, individuals, and schools who desire to furnish information for inclusion in the listing should write: National Communicable Disease Center, Attention: Mr. John H. Krickel, Education Specialist, Laboratory Division, Atlanta, Georgia 30333. No information will be included in the published list without prior clearance from the organization or individual offering the training.