

MEDIA Release

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New Food Safety Rules Take Effect January 1, 2014

DES MOINES, IA (December 18, 2013) – Restaurants, grocery stores, and other food establishments operating in Iowa will be subject to updated food safety standards effective January 1, 2014, under rules recently adopted by the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA). “The updated rules focus on making Iowa’s food regulations consistent with current scientific evidence and preventing foodborne illness.” DIA Food and Consumer Safety Bureau Chief Steven Mandernach said.

The rules further protect Iowa consumers by requiring food establishments to have a certified food protection manager to oversee the safe handling, preparation, and service of food items in most food establishments. Research in Iowa and across the country indicates that food establishments with a certified food protection manager are less likely to have violations that could lead to foodborne illness.

The Department estimates that between 25-40 percent of all food establishments currently have a certified food protection manager. Currently about half of the states require certified food protection managers, including Minnesota, Illinois, and South Dakota, which have all required this certification for many years.

The requirement for a certified food protection manager will be phased in, with new establishments opening after January 1, 2014, being required to employ an individual who is a certified food protection manager within 6 months of opening. Older establishments must meet the requirement within six months of receiving a violation that could contribute to foodborne illness, or by January 1, 2018.

Also contained in the new rules are all standards needed for food processing. In the past, the Department has updated food processing standards as a new industry came into the state. “This haphazard approach to rulemaking has often left gaps in the standards needed as new industries enter the state,” Mandernach said. “Without regulations in place, new products produced by new industries could not be certified for foreign export.”

“Adoption of the new rules focuses on those items that may lead to illness by ensuring a person in each establishment has been trained in food safety and illness prevention,” Mandernach concluded.

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