

Tips given for Summer salad care

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — "A little extra time and care will go a long way towards helping to prevent spoilage or even food poisoning when preparing certain types of salads for your summer picnics and barbecues," says Cynthia Keller, a food scientist and microbiologist with Monsanto Company of St. Louis.

"There is no reason for ham, egg, tuna, chicken, macaroni salads or coleslaw to be spoiled by bacterial growth if the food is properly prepared and stored," she explained. "Actually, homemade salads are generally safe because they are most often eaten right after they're made. The problem of food poisoning,

which is caused by bacteria, can arise when salads are held for a period of hours at warm temperatures before they're eaten."

Certain conditions must exist before the mayonnaise-based salads and cole slaws become food poisoning hazards.

The salad can be contaminated with a type of food poisoning bacteria — via ingredients, utensils, containers, or people. Also, the salad must have a low acid content that can support the growth of food poisoning bacteria. Finally, the salad must remain at a temperature conducive to the growth of such bacteria.

There are a number of

precautions that can be taken to prevent the growth of bacteria in homemade salads:

"Don't leave any of these types of foods above refrigeration temperature for several hours at a time," the Monsanto scientist said. "If bacteria are present, they can multiply and reach harmful levels in a matter of hours under improper storage conditions."

Most commercially prepared salads, Ms. Keller explained, are usually formulated so that the product's high acid content prevents the growth of food poisoning bacteria. The chemical preservatives used in these salads are aimed primarily at inhibiting the growth of yeasts and mold — micro-organisms which can

grow in a high-acid environment and at lower temperatures than bacteria.

"Common sense is the best tool of all," she said. "Use clean utensils, containers, and food preparation areas."

"Make sure you use good quality ingredients. In fact, use plenty of good quality mayonnaise or salad

dressing in the salads. Despite what many people may think, mayonnaise and salad dressings do not increase the potential of spoilage or health hazards. Instead, because of their high-acid content, these ingredients retard the growth of spoilage organisms and food poisoning bacteria".

DHIA cows must be properly identified

UNIVERSITY PARK — The National DHIA rules state that every cow in the herd must be positively identified on the DHIA reports. Registered cows must have registration numbers and grade cows must have eartags of the uniform series such as 23 WAC 3742 (two digits, three letters and four digits), adopted by the national organization for permanent identification. Everyone needs to be reminded from time to time that this area must be kept up-to-date, says Larry Specht, Penn State Extension dairy specialist.

Another area of identification that needs constant attention is the individual herd numbering system. It is the responsibility of the herd owner to maintain an accurate and legible numbering system to aid in the positive identification of animals at the time of the monthly test.

Herd numbers should be clearly visible to the tester to insure an efficient and accurate test. No one wants to slow down the milking operation on test day. Remember, it takes a more readable system when cows are moving rapidly through a milking parlor than when being milked in a stall barn.

Cow identification seems to be an area that is taken for granted. Eartags are lost and some are difficult to read. Neck chains also have problems; numbers are not easily read, some are missing and some chains are so tight that the tag is tucked into a position where it's hard to see. Things will go

more smoothly on test day (and later on at the processing center) if quick and accurate identification is available on all cows.

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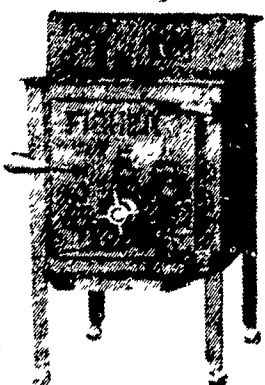
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