

HAPPENINGS

according to Bill Reagan, county agent. The dinner was held to recognize project club winners and to complete the annual winter program that involved 61 members, representing the largest tractor club membership ever enrolled.

The first year group winners were recognized by club leader Ronald Hissong, Mercersburg, with first place honors presented to Philip Mummert, Chambersburg. Second place honors went to John Farrow, St. Thomas and the third place award was presented to Steven Bricker, Chambersburg.

Second year winners were recognized by club leader Roger Dice, Chambersburg, as follows: first place honors went to Matthew Bricker, Chambersburg; second place was presented to Adam Hess, Chambersburg; and third place honors went to Joel Gayman, Shippensburg.

In the third year group, club leader Myron Young, Chambersburg, recognized the following winners: first place went to Luke Zaiger, Waynesboro; second place to Joe Hess, Shady Grove; and third place honors to Sherman Wisler, Waynesboro.

In addition, all third year members, who represent the graduating class, were awarded individual 4-H tractor trophies in recognition of their completion of the three-year program.



Franklin County 4-H Tractor Club award winners were presented recently. Seated left to right, first year winners Phillip Mummert, John Farrow, and Steven Bricker. Standing left to right, second year winners Matthew Bricker, Adam Hess, and Joel Gayman, followed by third year winners Luke Zaiger, Joe Hess, and Sherman Wisler.

Awards were made possible through the Franklin County 4-H Development Fund.



Franklin County recently attended the State Leaders Forum at the Nittany Lion University Campus. From Reading, Sandra Shorley, Boyertown; Reading; and Nancy Plushanski,

4-H Tractor Club

The 39th annual Franklin County 4-H Tractor Club awards banquet, held recently at the Franklin County Vo-Tech School cafeteria, was attended by more than 180 members, parents, and guests

Foodborne Illness

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• Study temperatures in the "danger zone" by taking milk and observing bacterial growth at different temperatures, including 40 degrees F, another at room temperature (68 degrees F), another at 98 degrees F, and another at 140 degrees F. The experiment will prove that milk kept under 40 degrees F or over 140 degrees F will prevent bacteria from growing. Milk kept at warm temperatures will support very rapid growth of bacteria. (The "danger zone" is the temperatures, from above 40 degrees F to below 140 degrees F, in which foodborne pathogenic bacteria grows. Food should be kept out of that danger zone.)

Steam tables in restaurants are kept at 140 degrees or above to prevent the growth of any bacteria present in the food.

"A major cause of foodborne illness is how temperature is controlled, in terms of cooling, in terms of thawing," said Knabel. "This is where many of the mistakes are made in terms of foodborne illness."

Temperature management

According to the food safety expert, teachers should become more aware of the causes of foodborne illness. Much of it has to do with food temperature management.

"The improper cooling and thawing of foods is the number one cause of foodborne illness," he said. Many people wrongly thaw food on a countertop, which can be dangerous since many of the pathogens live on the outside of the meat. So they multiply rapidly.

Home economics teachers should emphasize thawing foods in the refrigerator, according to Knabel.

Students should be taught to assume that all raw animal products are contaminated with pathogenic bacteria.

Bacteria die

Also, bacteria die in gradual steps, not all at once, when food is heated. "When you talk about killing bacteria, it is a time/temperature phenomenon," said Knabel. The higher the temperature, according to Knabel, the faster they die.

Many people make the mistake of not spending enough time cooking food at a high temperature. The heat must be distributed evenly and at a high enough temperature.

Conventional ovens heat evenly slowly while microwaves heat fast and somewhat unevenly. When using microwaves, according to the expert, the food needs a longer standing time at a higher temperature to kill bacteria.

Also, when cooling the food, it's important to understand that the food must be broken down into smaller units. The temperature of the "cold spot," or the location at the deepest part of the meat, must be measured. A large crockpot, if placed in the refrigerator, could take days before the correct temperature in the cold spot is reached. So food must be broken into shallow pans (no more than three inches thick) that can cool more rapidly, according to the food safety expert.

Also, cross-contamination — by transferring bacteria from a raw product to a ready-to-eat product — causes foodborne illness.

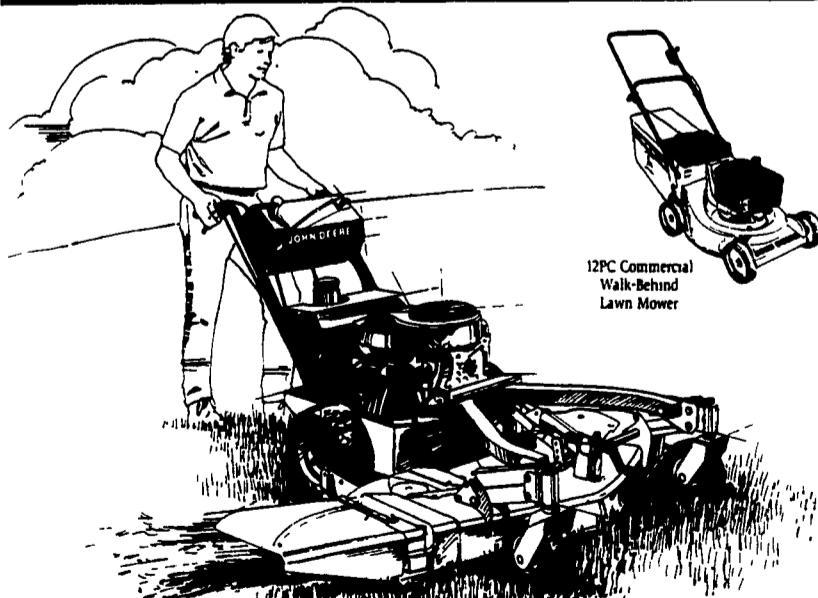
Students need to make sure they don't prepare salads and cut up vegetables on the same cutting board as raw chicken.

Knabel said about 80 million illnesses and 9,000 deaths occur in the U.S. each year because of foodborne bacteria. Most is due to the mishandling of foods in food service institutions and in the home.

He said students should be better educated about food safety issues to help reduce the problem.

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