

**Family Living
Focus**

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Welcome to the season for outdoor summer eating! After the long winter, we can enjoy picnics with refreshing, juicy fruits, crisp vegetables and grilled meats, fish and poultry. Eating outdoors can be great family fun, but spend some time checking your food safety habits to prevent food poisoning.

One of the most common type of foodborne illness is staphylococcus aureus (staph). About 50 percent of us are natural carriers of these bacteria in our throat and nasal passages. Staph also infects cut, boils, and pimples causing redness and swelling at the skin site. The bacteria can be transferred to the food from an infected wound or by coughing or sneezing onto the food. The bacteria then create toxins or poisons that have

no detectable odor or taste. Cooked foods or prepared cold salads are most susceptible to this type of contamination. To prevent staph intoxication from occurring follow these safety rules:

- Keep foods at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below or 140 degrees Fahrenheit or above. Keep products covered.
- Use clean and sanitized utensils, cutting boards and containers.
- Avoid hand contact with hair, face, nose, mouth while preparing and serving foods. Use tongs or forks to touch cooked foods.
- Wash hands after any act of contamination, including eating, smoking, or sneezing and coughing.
- Keep cuts and abrasions bandaged. It's safest to avoid handling food if you have any

infection.

Another microorganism responsible for many of the mild cases of foodborne illness is Clostridium perfringens. The symptoms of this illness are similar to the 24-hour flu and therefore can go unreported to health authorities. The vegetative cells of C. perfringens are normally killed by cooking, but some spores survive boiling and freezing temperatures. Occurrences of this illness are associated with cooked meats, poultry, gravy, and starchy beans. To prevent this bacterial illness from occurring, follow these safety measures:

- Serve and hold meat, poultry, and bean dishes at 140 degrees Fahrenheit or above.
- Reheat food to 165 degrees or higher within two hours.
- Rapidly cool hot meat dishes that will be eaten later. Divide large amounts into small, shallow containers for quick cooling in the refrigerator or freezing in the freezer. Do not allow foods to cool at room temperatures as this promotes rapid bacteria growth. To cool large amounts of food quickly, use an ice bath, stainless steel containers and stir frequently to release the heat.

Other general tips for safe barbecues and picnics are:

- Eat first, then play. Bacteria grow more quickly the longer the food sits in the heat.
- Try to minimize the number of times you open the cooler, because this allows air to escape. Keep the cooler in a shaded area.
- Don't place cooked foods back onto the same plate that held raw meat, fish, or poultry. The cooked product could become contaminated with bacteria from the raw food that was previously on the plate.

- Don't taste a meat product to check for doneness. Eating a little bit of undercooked meat could cause problems if the harmful bacteria in it are still alive.
- Add "lite" mayonnaise or salad dressing to cold salads when the food is prepared, not just before serving. Contrary to popular belief, mayonnaise actually retards bacterial growth in foods. It is the poor handling of the protein product that usually causes foodborne illness.

Poultry Scholarship Available

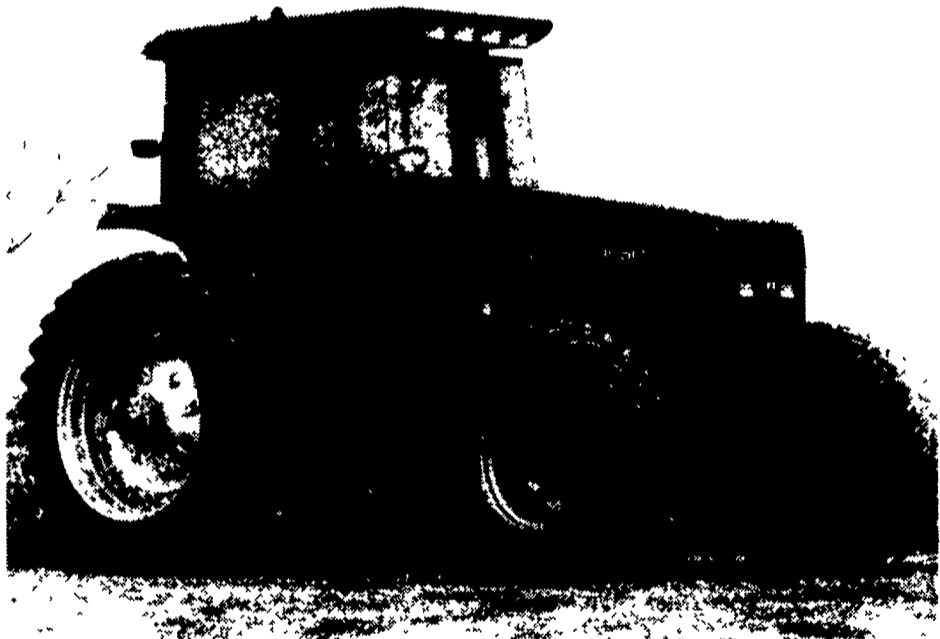
GETTYSBURG (Adams Co.) — Adams County Poultry Association is offering a \$2,000 scholarship to Penn State University for a student from Adams County enrolled or accepted in the College of Agricultural Sciences or Human Development. The applicant must have an acceptable scholastic average and be in need of financial assistance. Students should apply


for assistance through the Office of Student Aid.

Application forms and additional information can be obtained from Walter P. Griest, 2710 Mummasburg Rd., Gettysburg, or call (717) 677-8646. Or, from the Adams County Extension Office at (717) 334-6271.

Forms must be completed and returned by June 15.

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