

Improper Food Handling Leads to Foodborne Illnesses

- More than 200 known diseases are transmitted through food.
- Foodborne diseases cause approximately 48 million illnesses, 128,000 hospitalizations, and 3,000 deaths each year in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Food can become contaminated at any stage, from the farm to the dinner table, including in food-service operations in restaurants, nursing homes, day care centers, and hospitals.
- Most outbreaks of foodborne illness are a direct result of improper food-handling practices, such as improper holding time and temperature, poor personal hygiene, and contaminated equipment.

AgriLife Extension's Response

- The primary benefit of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's *Food Protection Management Program* is to reduce incidents of foodborne illness by improving the food-safety practices of food-service managers and employees. The program's accredited, certified Food Handlers' Course trains participants on safety principles related to food preparation and storage, personal hygiene, maintenance of a sanitary facility, and pest management.



participants were in underserved rural areas of the state, where public health oversight is limited.

- As a result of AgriLife Extension's "train-the-trainer" approach, course participants in turn provided food handlers' training to their employees, reaching approximately 3,400 more food-service employees in 2015.
- The *Food Protection Management Program* directly supports approximately 3,800 food-service and food-preparation jobs, with an estimated annual salary base of \$84 million (estimate based on average annual wages for food-service and food-preparation professionals).

Economic Impacts

- In 2015, more than 460 food-service managers and employees attended the program. Many of these