

# Department of Agriculture and Markets Fact Sheet

## Division of Food Safety and Inspection

The Division of Food Safety and Inspection provides a vital service to the Department with the enforcement of the New York State Agriculture and Markets Laws and Regulations. Most importantly, the Division is responsible for ensuring the safety of the food supply from producer to the retailer. It has jurisdiction over 28,000 food handling establishments, and conducts a variety of activities, including the following:

**Sampling:** Food samples are taken as a matter of routine during inspections, or if violation of state or federal standards is suspected. Samples are sent to the Albany-based State Food Laboratory for analysis. Samples found to be in violation are removed from commerce to protect public health. The Division collected over 1,700 food samples for analysis in 2013.

**Licensing:** Many individuals and establishments involved with the distribution of food and milk in New York cannot operate in the state without a license issued through the Department of Agriculture and Markets. (Food service establishments such as restaurants and vending operations are some exceptions because they fall under the New York State Department of Health's jurisdiction). Grocery stores, food processing facilities, food warehouses, and other establishments that fall within the Department's jurisdiction, must demonstrate compliance with sanitation regulations, as well as safe food handling, processing and storage procedures, in order to obtain and maintain their license.

**Inspection:** Division Food Inspectors conducted over 35,000 food safety inspections at food establishments in 2013. At any given time over 95% of these food establishments have passed their most recent inspection.

**Recalls:** Based on results of food sampling, products that are found to be violative are recalled to prevent further distribution. The Division initiates approximately 300 recalls annually.

**Enforcement:** New York State has some of the most stringent and far-reaching food safety laws in the nation. The Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act of 1938 and its amendments serve as the pattern, but through the years, regulations specific to New York State have been added. The Department has broad powers for enforcing food protection laws. Depending on the severity or frequency of the violation, penalties can be levied, establishments can be closed through injunctions obtained in New York State courts, and food can be seized, or destroyed. If deemed necessary following a Hearing, the Commissioner may revoke a firm's license to operate within New York State.

For more information, call (518) 457-4492

