

Chapter 15
Food Safety: Protection, Preparedness, and Response

Student assignments and activities designed to enhance learning and stimulate critical thinking.

1. Why is it difficult to accurately estimate foodborne illness in the United States? How could the collection of this information be improved?

2. Perform a quick Internet search of foodborne illness outbreaks in the United States over the past five years. Based on what you read, support or refute the following statement:

The United States is prepared in the event of an intentional attack on its food supply.

3. Should genetically modified foods be labeled as such? Provide arguments for both sides of the question.

4. Answer the following questions from Box 15.4 (pages 475-477):

- Why does the ability to patent biotechnology make it potentially more profitable? Does increased profitability ensure that research dollars will be devoted to the technology, or does it create too large an incentive to take shortcuts that may have serious safety consequences?
- How can a court simultaneously rule that a patient has a right to informed consent, and that a physician has a property right in any discoveries that a physician made during the course of the patient's treatment? Are not the two parts of the decision incompatible?
- Contrast how scientists have used the court system to establish their intellectual property rights with how some large corporations have used the courts to silence critics. Is either or both of these legal tactics an abuse of process? How can the rules of the game be amended to avoid such abuses?

5. Research the agency that licenses and inspects the restaurants in your community. Is the agency on the state or local level? Describe the agency's process for restaurant licensing and inspection.

6. Visit the FoodNet website (<http://www.cdc.gov/foodnet/reports.htm>). Based on the most recent report available:

- What is the most common foodborne illness?
- How have the rates of this illness changed over time?
- What are the most common sources and symptoms of contracting this illness?
- How could future illness from this foodborne pathogen be prevented?

7. What is HACCP? Describe the HACCP process for three different food items. (For more information about HACCP, see the Gateway to Government Food Safety Information at: <http://www.foodsafety.gov/~fsg/fsghaccp.html>).

8. You have been appointed to be the Nutrition and Food Security Emergency Advisor to the Governor of your state. Research the current emergency plan (including response, recovery, mitigation, prevention, and preparedness) through your state's Health Department or Emergency Management Office website.

- Briefly describe your state's emergency plan.
- What are the different disasters that you need to plan for?
- What are the food security and food safety issues that should be considered?
- Name the different state and local organizations that you would collaborate with, both prior to and in the event of an emergency.

9. Research a natural disaster that occurred in the United States within the past 10 years.

- Briefly describe the disaster: What type of disaster was it? When did it happen? Where did it take place? Who was affected?
- What was the emergency food response?
- Based on what you read, was the emergency food response adequate? Why or why not?

10. Using the websites listed in Table 15.6, create an emergency supply kit for your household. What items did you include (include quantities when applicable)? What items, if any, are you missing? What types of emergencies will this kit prepare you for? How would your kit change if your household were twice the size it is currently?

11. Describe the disaster response plan at your workplace or school, including the provisions for food and water. Is this plan adequate? Why or why not?