The Surveillance of the Microbial Quality of Selected Ready to Eat Foods in the State of Qatar

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Foodborne illness continues to cause significant morbidity and mortality both nationally and internationally. Protecting the human host from exposure to foodborne pathogens and reducing the incidence of foodborne illness are the central goals of established national food safety intervention programs. Foodborne illness is a reportable disease in the State of Qatar. Protecting the food supply from the microbial risk of known foodborne pathogens is critical to national food security; particularly in the State of Qatar where the population has a high level of dependence on imported food.

There are many surveillance activities utilized by local public health officials targeted at mitigating the risk associated with foodborne illness and improving food security. A risk based method of sampling high risk ready to eat foods in the State of Qatar is one such activity to monitor the distribution and incidence of hygiene indicators and pathogens in the food supply. Three common retail hypermarkets were chosen with high risk ready to eat foods items identified for inclusion in the study.

The aims of this paper are: -To perform baseline surveillance of Ready to Eat Foods at the retail level in the State of Qatar. To identify ready to eat foods (RTE) which may pose a greater risk to the population in acquiring foodborne illness. To determine if gaps exist in the food safety surveillance system related to public health and hygiene.

Sample collection was conducted at three retail hypermarkets in the State of Qatar over a one year period. The laboratory will utilize a variety of wet laboratory procedures - pre-enrichment, enrichment, selective isolation and confirmatory microbiological procedures according to the National Health Authority Central Laboratories-Microbiological Analytical Manual-1st Ed., 2008 on all food samples analyzed. All samples analyzed by the Central Food Laboratory were done in duplicate.

There are no significant common foodborne pathogens infecting High Risk Ready to Eat foods from identified retail hypermarkets in the State of Qatar (E. coli 0157:H7, B. cereus, Staphylococcus aureus, Clostridium perfringens, Salmonella spp., Listeria monocytogenes, Vibrio parahaemolyticus).

There is a statistical difference in levels of hygiene indicators (Enterobacteriaceae, SPC) by retail store location.

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Measuring Entrepreneurial Potential in Students at The College of the North Atlantic-Qatar

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The state of Qatar has embarked upon an unprecedented period of investment in human, social, economic and environmental development in line with its Qatar Vision 2030 plan. With significant investments in support of the Small and Medium Enterprise Sector, Qatar is making impressive gains towards building a knowledge economy. The College of the North Atlantic-Qatar (CNA-Q) has developed its own Strategic Plan in line with the State’s to ensure that the college is providing the best service to Qatar and its people. Within CNA-Q’s School of Business Studies, the Entrepreneurial Center (EC) was created to assist with the planning and development of small businesses.

In order to better understand the requirements of budding entrepreneurs at CNA-Q, a research project was initiated to measure the Entrepreneurial Potential (EP) of students based on their attitudes towards entrepreneurship and the constituent elements of achievement, personal control, creativity, leadership, intuition and risk taking. The project also gathered data about gender, sponsorship, age, program-of-study, country of citizenship, post-graduate intentions and extra-curricular activities in order to understand any demographic or behavioral characteristics that may be important.

In this cross-sectional, quantitative study, a sample of over 400 diverse students from various faculties at CNA-Q was surveyed. Results showed that students at CNA-Q register relatively high EP in general but lower in the areas of intuition and personal control. There were differences observed in various groups as well. Non-sponsored students scored higher in EP than sponsored students, male students scored higher than female students and business & information technology students scored higher than average. Students who participate in extra-curricular activities scored higher than those who do not and a large percentage of students intend to continue their education while very few intend to start their own businesses after graduation.

The results indicate that if CNA-Q wants to increase EP in students, among other things, the school needs to adapt curriculum to improve students’ intuition and personal control as well as encourage students to take part in more extra-curricular activities. CNA-Q should also pursue further research to better understand why so few students have entrepreneurial intentions.