

December 5, 2006

Tracey Weeks, MS, RS  
Coordinator, Food Protection Program  
State of Connecticut Department of Public Health  
410 Capitol Avenue, MS # 11FDP  
P.O. Box 340308  
Hartford, CT 06134

Re: Restaurant Made Yogurt

Dear Tracey:

It has come to our attention that some of the Indian and Middle Eastern restaurants within our District have been making yogurt in their restaurants. We have been told that making the yogurt "in-house" is more cost effective and the product reportedly tastes better than commercial yogurt.

The process seems to be very similar in each restaurant. Commercially pasteurized milk is boiled, then allowed to cool slightly to around 90°F. A small amount of yogurt culture is added to the milk and the mixture is left around 90°F overnight (for several hours), until the mixture firms up into yogurt. Once the product forms the consistency of yogurt, it is refrigerated prior to use.

I understand that the pH of commercially prepared yogurt is below 4.6 and that it is not a potentially hazardous food. I am hesitant to assume the same for restaurant made yogurt due to the other activities occurring in food establishments and the potential for contamination of the yogurt during the preparation process.

I have also been told that the Glastonbury Health Department has banned their restaurants from making their own yogurt. I am unaware of any other health department taking such a stand.

Can you please provide some direction to local health departments regarding restaurant-made yogurt and whether or not we can allow them to prepare this food item "in-house"? If we observe that they can prepare it in a protected environment and determine that the final product has an acidity of 4.6 or below, can we allow them to prepare yogurt in their restaurants?

Thank you for taking the time to look into this matter.

Sincerely,

Karen E. Reid, RS  
Health Program Coordinator

yogurt