



# CONSUMER COUNCIL OF FIJI CAMPAIGN LAUNCH

**‘MAKE RESTAURANT HYGIENE  
YOUR CONCERN TODAY’**

19<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST – 30<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2008

# INTRODUCTION TO THE CAMPAIGN TOPIC



Do you know if the food in your favorite restaurant is safe to eat?

Have you ever found a cockroach in your hot food or cockroach eggs in your drink?

Have you found a rat tail in your takeaway?

# Intro cont...



Since when does a lamb pea food order come with a **RAT TAIL**



Anyone for cockroach filled sandwich....?

# Intro cont.



→ Tuna fish stored in the restaurant restroom



# CASE STUDY 1



## Cockroach eggs in soft drink

A group of family and friends gathered at a renowned restaurant in Suva for lunch on 18th February, 2006 to celebrate the birthday of a two year old boy in their family. While waiting for their food order they were served with cold fizzy drinks. A lady in the group decided to open the lid of her soft drink to get an ice cube. To her surprise she found cockroach eggs floating in her drink. Other members checked their drinks only to find the eggs in them as well.

The restaurant manageress refused to refund the drinks money when the group approached her for redress. A complaint was lodged with the Council where following successful mediation, the group received compensation for their drinks and discount on their food order.

**A matter of hygiene practice**

# CASE STUDY 2



## Cooked cockroach

To my surprise while enjoying my lunch of chicken and black bean at a Suva restaurant, I found a cockroach cooked in my dish. I showed the cockroach to the manager, but she only closed the door in front of me. I request the Health Department of Suva City Council to continue surveying these types of restaurants that dish cockroaches with the food.

*M Tawake, Lami (FS 20/2/06)*

**A matter of hygiene practice**

# CASE STUDY 3



## Stale roast chicken

I took my family for dinner at a restaurant in Nabua on the afternoon of 4th June and ordered roast chicken and chips worth \$8.50 for my children. When we got home my daughter got sick. Her body temperature rose and she vomited a lot. My son also developed the same symptoms later that night. I think the roast chicken had been cooked for sometime and was warmed and served to my family. Its annoying that some restaurants are not consumer friendly and disregard its patrons health.

*Semisi Meo 6/6/08, Complaint lodged via Council website*

## A matter of food-borne illness

# CASE STUDY 4



- Some of the most unhygienic eating places can be found in Nadi town and the Council has leased some of them and has overlooked their condition.
  - The sea food and curry houses are operating in the den of cockroaches, rats and toads.
  - Kitchen space small – staff have no room for movement, perspiration drops on food

*Som Sundaram, Nadi*

*FT 1/09/08*

# Rationale for the campaign



1. Increase in the number of consumer complaints against restaurants and eateries:
  - 38 complaints upto 2006;
  - 17 complaints during the campaign (12 from Suva, 2 from Nadi, 2 from Nasinu & 1 from Nausori)
  - Many more concerns & suggestions on hygiene improvement in restaurants and support for a food grading system.
2. Consumer concerns about food safety practices in restaurants, eateries and even street foods;
3. Difficulty in seeking consumer redress when restaurant related problems surface (as can be seen from the case studies);

# Rationale for the campaign cont...



- No/lack of action by regulatory authorities (municipal councils/ rural health authority) on the implementation and monitoring of the Public Health Act Cap. 111;
- Prevent food borne illnesses from the consumption of contaminated food/drinks; and
- Fiji's dependence on the tourism industry and the importance safe food practices in restaurants. (eg. Suva is striving to be a tourist destination and needs to ensure the clean ambience of restaurants and eateries including serving hygienically prepared and quality foods.)

# Campaign Objective



- Put pressure on the regulatory authorities to stringently enforce the Public Health Act;
- Lobby for a national food grading system and ensure its implementation by food outlets.
- [Council may consider having a Restaurant of the Year Award in the near future].

# The Practice Overseas



- **South Africa** – The Tourism Grading Council of South Africa has a restaurant grading system that does hygiene audits. The audits are made public.
- **Hong Kong** – The Food & Environmental Hygiene Dept conduct frequent inspections and record hygiene conditions of restaurants, including the general cleanliness of the premises, the hygiene standards of food storage, food handling, refuse storage and disposal, cleanliness of equipment and utensils and the effectiveness of pest and rodent control.

# Practice Overseas cont...



- San Francisco – hygiene inspections are conducted wherever food preparation takes place – restaurants, schools, hospitals, bakeries etc. The results are posted on a website.
- Australia – Every state in Australia have hygiene inspection and ratings. Some businesses are inspected every six months. But Australian consumers are fighting for the inspection information to be made public.

# USP-IAS LAB TEST



- Food safety test by USP IAS Lab for aerobic and total coliform counts.
- **Total aerobic count** is an important index of good sanitation, handling, processing and storage practices.
- **Total coliform count** is the indicator microorganisms for unhygienic handling of foods including possible presence of certain pathogens.
- Sampling & testing of the ready to eat food from the Suva city area and food outlets.
- Random food samples collected from the bus stand area, Flea market, Cumming st, Raoji bhai Patel st, and Victoria Parade.
- One cold and one hot dish bought from each outlet.

# USP TEST cont...



- Results were mixed for coliform counts and aerobic counts. Some had acceptable levels of both while others had one slightly higher than the other.
- Food contamination noted from food handlers (personal sanitation), storage temperature, unclean equipment/utensils usage or from added ingredients.

# Consumers Involvement



- All consumers are encouraged to join the Council campaign on 'Make Restaurant Hygiene Your Concern Today'
  - Lodge their complaints by filling out a complaint form at the Council or on our website
  - Share their experiences/observations with restaurants via letter, email, fax, phone
  - Suggest/recommend how to make restaurants/eateries more responsible for their services

# PROGRESS TO DATE

- Council is embarking on a pilot project on food grading system in conjunction with SCC.
- 20 food outlets will feature in the project.
- Once successful, lobbying of the food grading system at the national level will follow.
- Independent group comprising selected individuals from TPAF, FIT, USP, SCC, Consumer Council & Central Board of Health to inspect and grade the food outlets.

The inspection will focus on the following areas:

- the physical condition of the premises
- the conduct of the operator and staff
- cleaning and sanitising of the premises
- training of staff
- food safety procedures in place.



Consumers are encouraged not to miss out on this one time opportunity to make their voice heard against food safety practices in restaurants and other eateries.