

NEWS RELEASE
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Contact: Lisa V. Horn
Communications Coordinator
Office: (785) 843-3060

Budget cuts force elimination of food inspection program

(Lawrence, KS) – Recent Kansas Department of Agriculture budget cuts have prompted the termination of several county food inspection programs, including the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department’s program, which began in May 2008.

Douglas County was informed last week that its food inspection contract had been terminated, resulting in a loss of about \$90,000 in agency revenue. As a result, the positions of two long-term employees from the department’s Environmental Health program have been eliminated.

“We were told by KDA that our contract’s termination was initiated to improve the operating efficiencies of KDA’s food safety program and to respond to its budget allocation,” said Dan Partridge, Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department Director. “To maintain program standards set by the Food and Drug Administration, KDA would have to assign one inspector for every 280 to 320 annual inspections to maintain the quality and safety to public health the Health Department provided.”

During the contract, Health Department staff inspected approximately 435 Douglas County food establishments, which included restaurants, schools, caterers and mobile vendors. From Jan. 1 to Nov. 30, 2009, Health Department staff conducted 823 inspections, 87 of which were complaints that were responded to within 24 hours.

From the start of the contract, the Health Department has been inspecting each facility at a minimum of twice a year. State law requires annual inspections of food establishments.

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