



**PennState**

# Extension offers tools to small-scale, raw-milk cheesemakers for safer products

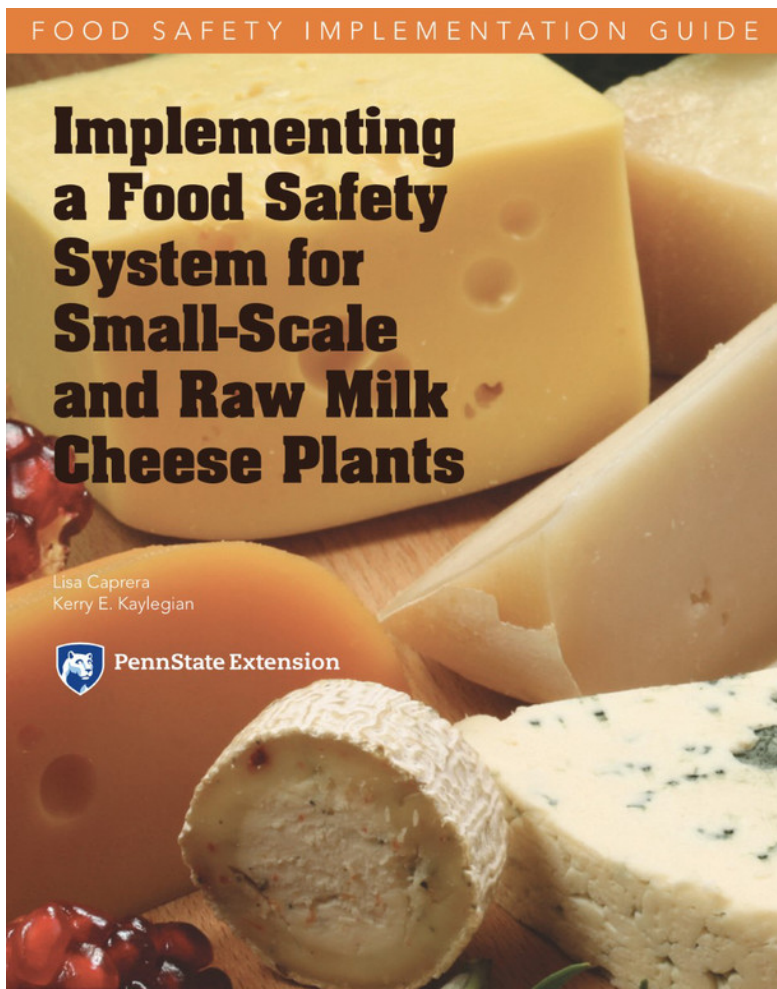
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UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. — Penn State Extension is now offering free online tools for small-scale cheesemakers to help them develop a food safety system for their facilities and conduct risk assessments of their processes. Printed copies are available for cheesemakers that do not have access to the internet.



Penn State Extension developed these tools because of the challenges small-scale cheesemakers face. Other food safety documents currently available are aimed at larger processors and do not meet the needs of smaller-scale processors and the unique requirements for raw-milk cheesemakers. **IMAGE: PENN STATE**

The goal, according to Kerry Kaylegian, dairy foods extension specialist, is to assist small-scale and raw-milk cheesemakers in conducting hazard analyses of their processes to ensure they are producing the safest product possible and to meet the requirements of the federal Food Safety Modernization Act.

"These documents are designed specifically for small-scale cheesemakers with a focus on those making raw-milk cheese," she said. "The production of raw-milk cheese poses additional risk because there is no pathogen-kill step applied to the milk, and therefore cheesemakers must manage the risk at various other steps in their process using a combination of hurdles."

Kaylegian, who has conducted dairy research for nearly three decades, pointed out that she and Penn State Extension are trying to help small-farmstead cheesemakers because they often lack the personnel and resources to track important information related to production. The two or three people who work in a small cheese plant also may be running a small dairy farm, she explained.

Funded by a grant from the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Kaylegian and her Penn State Extension colleagues developed the tools because of the challenges small-scale cheesemakers face.

"Food safety documents currently available are aimed at larger processors and do not meet the needs of smaller-scale processors and the unique requirements for raw-milk cheesemakers," she said.

The tools include the following:

- The “Guide for Implementing a Food Safety System in Small-Scale and Raw Milk Cheese Plants,” which provides an overview of what is needed and how to approach setting up a food safety system and conducting a hazard analysis.
- The “Food Safety Plan for Raw Milk Gouda Cheese Teaching Example,” which provides a comprehensive hazard analysis that can be adapted by cheesemakers.
- A blank template for building a food safety plan.

For more information, visit the website or contact Kaylegian at 814-867-1379 or kek14@psu.edu.

### **About Penn State Extension**

Penn State Extension is a modern educational organization, dedicated to translating scientific research into real-world applications to drive progress. In support of Penn State's land-grant mission, extension programs promote a vibrant food and fiber system, a clean environment and a healthier population for Pennsylvania and beyond.

Penn State Extension serves individuals, businesses and communities, helping them address problems and realize opportunities through a robust portfolio of educational programs, products and services. With support from federal, state and county governments, the organization has a tradition of bringing unbiased information and support to the citizens of Pennsylvania for more than 100 years.

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