



UNH Hosts National Training Session For Food Emergency Response Network

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DURHAM, N.H.- - The University of New Hampshire will host microbiologists from across the United States and Canada as part of a national Food Emergency Response Network (FERN) training program June 22 through June 26, 2009. UNH is one of a handful of institutions in the U.S. that has a laboratory designed for developing technologies to screen for potential food-borne diseases.

According to UNH microbiologist Aaron Margolin, FERN is akin to the Red Cross, in that it is comprised of volunteers from around the country and Canada who respond to food emergency issues - such as the contaminated peanut incident earlier this year and the tainted cilantro last year. The network is designed to integrate the nation's food-testing laboratories for the detection and identification of threat agents in food at the local, state, and federal levels. Threats can include biological, chemical, and radiological agents.

The course being taught at UNH will focus on microbiological techniques used in the identification and analysis of pathogenic bacteria. Organism specimens used in the course will not be the real pathogens, but participants will work as if they are and hence, they will be wearing appropriate attire which may seem unique to those individuals not familiar with microbiology.

Instructors include microbiologists from the federal government, including the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and from UNH.

For more information, contact Margolin at (603) 862-0211.

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