

## LSU extension specialists discuss on pecan safety at Tristate Pecanference

(06/22/2018) Baton Rouge, LA- Food safety extension agents from Louisiana State University AgCenter presented on pecan safety during the Tristate Pecanference on June 22.

The meeting was successfully held in Raymond, MS where consumers, growers and food safety extension agents from different states including Arkansas, California, Chicago, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas were present to discuss about various topics on pecans from its cultivation, to its safety aspect. The LSU AgCenter team led by Dr. Achyut Adhikari, Assistant professor and Food Safety Extension Specialist with a post-doctoral researcher Dr. Veerachandra Kranti Yemmireddy and two graduate students, Ms. Karuna Kharel, a PhD student and Mr. Cameron Cason, a Masters student represented LSU in the meeting. Ms. Karuna Kharel presented her two-year long research findings in the meeting that would help the consumers and growers to safely process their pecans and be safe from food safety risk.



LSU AgCenter Food Safety Extension Specialists attending Tristate Pecanference. From Left to Right, Dr. Kranti, Mr. Cameron Cason, Ms. Karuna Kharel and Dr. Achyut Adhikari

Nuts have been frequently associated with outbreaks and recalls. The bacteria of public health concern have been found to survive even in the low moisture foods. “Pecan growers carry out the hot water treatment step in their farm to make it easier for de-shelling. So this would be a very convenient way for them to decontaminate the nut without adding any economic burden of using other advanced methods/technologies”, said Dr. Achyut Adhikari, LSU AgCenter Food Safety Extension Specialist.

“Hot water treatment when done at a particular temperature for a certain time can kill the pathogens that could potentially be present in pecans and make it safe for consumption. Moreover, from our consumer study with 112 participants we found that consumers liked the hot water treated pecans even more for its color and aroma”, added Ms. Karuna Kharel, PhD Student in food safety lab, LSU who conducted this research and delivered the information to growers and consumers in the meeting.



Ms. Karuna Kharel delivering her findings to consumers and growers during the meeting.

After the presentation, there was an active discussion among the presenters and the audience including consumers, growers and other pecan stakeholders. Growers shared the time-temperature they had been working with and other “conditioning”- pecan treatment method currently being used in their farm. The discussion focused on the ways of implementation of the hot water treatment, time and temperature that could be adopted at farm and at homes as well.

“It was great to learn about the processing conditions we could adapt in our farms and at home to make pecans safe. This is going to be helpful to a lot of us pecan growers and consumers”, Mr. Stephen Norman, President of Louisiana Pecan Growers Association said during the meeting.

The meeting also included orchard tour and exhibitions from various other pecan stakeholders.

*Source: Dr. Achyut Adhikari, Assistant Professor and Food Safety Extension Specialist*

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