

COUNTY OF ORANGE – HEALTH CARE AGENCY PRESS RELEASE

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More Than 3,000 Orange County Food Establishments Receive Awards of Excellence

(Santa Ana) – Public Health's Environmental Health Division has issued 3,274 *Award of Excellence* certificates to local Orange County food facilities, representing an increase of almost 30 additional food facilities from the previous year. From a qualifying group of 9,839 food facilities throughout the County, these establishments were recognized by Environmental Health's Food Protection Program for their outstanding food safety and sanitation practices during 2012.

The annual Award of Excellence was created to provide an incentive for food establishments to consistently meet or exceed health and safety standards for food facility operations. In 1999, the first year of the program, 584 food establishments received the Award. With increased outreach and improved compliance to food safety laws the number of recipients has grown significantly since its inception. Included in the Award of Excellence Program are food facilities such as restaurants, catering establishments, meat/seafood markets, retail bakeries, supermarkets, supermarket/bakery combinations, and public and private schools with food production service. A complete list of all recipients and award criteria is available online at http://ocfoodinfo.com/award.

The Food Protection Program focuses on the inspection of retail food facilities in order to promote the safe and sanitary preparation and service of foods, prevent foodborne illness, and protect consumers from adulterated food products. For more information about the Health Care Agency's Food Protection Program, visit http://ocfoodinfo.com/.

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