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## NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Beth McLaughlin, Director of Community & School Affairs, 478-988-6390, ext. 0, [Beth.McLaughlin@hcbe.net](mailto:Beth.McLaughlin@hcbe.net)

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### **Northside Middle Teacher Trained in Food Safety & Nutrition**

*From Farm to Table, Teachers Explore the Science Behind Nation's Food Supply*

HOUSTON COUNTY, GA - Northside Middle School teacher Ginger Caldwell was one of 32 teachers nationwide chosen for a food science professional development program held this past summer in Washington, D.C. The one-week program was created for middle and high school science teachers, as well as family and consumer science and health education teachers. The training was developed and implemented in a partnership between the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) and Graduate School USA.

The training is part of the FDA/NSTA Food Science Professional Development Program. Teachers are trained on using the FDA's curriculum to educate students about critical food safety issues, such as foodborne illnesses, by exploring the science behind them. Teacher participants learn firsthand about the development and spread of foodborne illnesses; the vulnerability of at-risk populations; and the science behind safe food handling, storage and preparation. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 1 in 6 Americans get sick from food poisoning each year.

Teachers also learn about nutrition, food allergies, cosmetics safety and color additives from FDA experts. They receive nutrition education material to teach students how to use the Nutrition Facts label to make better food choices and assess the nutritional value of foods. In addition, the teachers talked with scientists from FDA and conducted laboratory experiments to further increase their understanding of food science.

"Many teenage students have jobs in the food service industry or have food preparation responsibilities at home," said Louise Dickerson, FDA's Project Manager for the Professional Development Program in Food Science. "This program will better educate them about the importance of handling food safely and why precautions must be taken. From FDA's perspective, our professional development program for teachers is an effective way to support the goal of reducing the incidence of foodborne illness in this country."

Among the topics covered, teachers investigated how a single bacteria cell can multiply to millions in just a few hours, and they observed how different temperatures (heating, room temperature, chilling, and freezing) affect the growth of bacteria. The teachers explored these concepts by putting their culinary skills to the test. After cooking hamburgers to various temperatures, the teachers

**P.O. Box 1850 • PERRY, GEORGIA 31069  
(478) 988-6200 • FAX (478) 988-6259  
WWW.HCBE.NET**

tested them for bacteria and other organisms that cause disease.

The *Science and Our Food Supply* curriculum is available online for free for any teacher at [www.fda.gov/teachsciencewithfood](http://www.fda.gov/teachsciencewithfood). It covers the science behind the production, transportation, storage and preparation of our nation's food supply, and contains a video, hands-on experiments, activities and evaluation tools. The food safety curriculum covers aspects of food science that affect millions of people every day, such as how a trace back investigation is used to stop the additional sale and distribution of contaminated food and the likelihood of certain foods to cause foodborne illness more than others. The companion nutrition curriculum offers lesson plans on nutrients to get more of, nutrients to get less of, and meal planning.

Caldwell is pictured at the training with her fellow participants. Northside Middle is located at 500 Johnson Road in Warner Robins. Jan Melnick serves as principal. For more information on this curriculum, please email [isabelle.howes@graduateschool.edu](mailto:isabelle.howes@graduateschool.edu) or contact Caldwell at [Ginger.Caldwell@hcbe.net](mailto:Ginger.Caldwell@hcbe.net).



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