

FALL 2025

# KENTUCKY

RESTAURANT JOURNAL

The Official Publication of the Kentucky Restaurant Association

## **Chefs That Sizzle**

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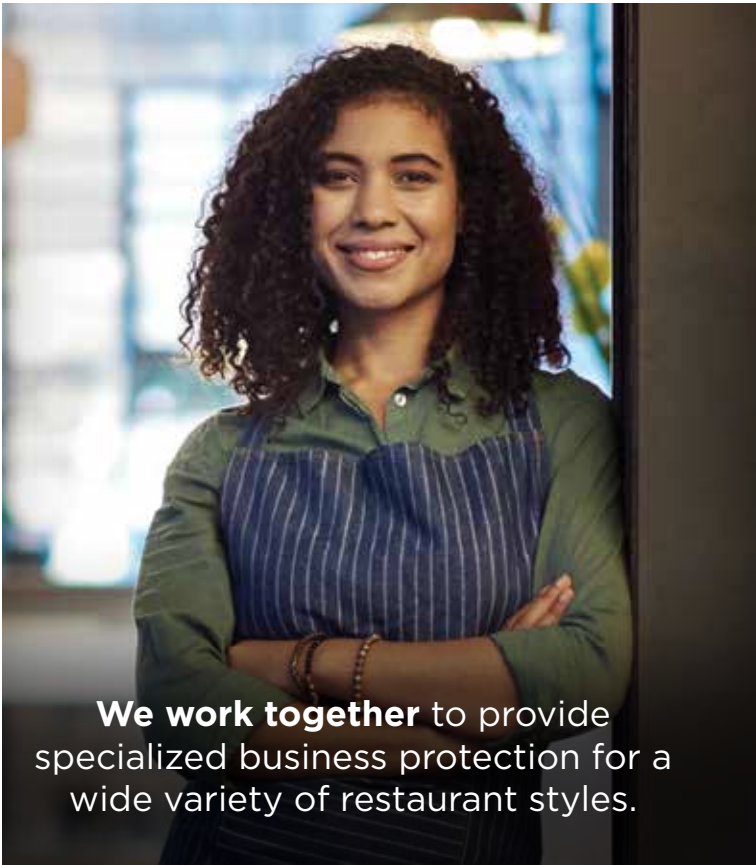
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## SAVE THE DATES

- October 6 Golftoberfest
- October 15 Taste of Louisville
- November 17 Fall Restaurant Forum
- January 26, 2026 Restaurateur's Gala

Chefs That  
**Sizzle**

# A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Fall is upon us, and for KRA that means event season is officially kicked off! Golftoberfest on October 6 (sponsor! play! bring food!), Fall Restaurant Forum at Topgolf on November 17 (sponsor! play! enjoy food and drink!), Restaurateur's Gala on January 26 of 2026 (nominate! buy tickets! celebrate!) ... there are many ways to connect to one another, learn from each other and get yourself out of your business for a reset. [kyra.org/events](http://kyra.org/events) or all over this issue of the Kentucky Restaurant Journal, and watch your email for frequent (nagging) reminders.

If your company isn't a current member of KRA, please accept my invitation to join and get plugged in. Association membership is invaluable and pays with savings on insurance, music licensing, services, training and more. I know I sound like a broken record, but it's my job and I love it! I want you to love it too. You can easily join online at [kyra.org](http://kyra.org), or email/text/call me and I'll get you what you need. I still believe our long ago tagline, "Membership doesn't cost, it pays!"

Before the holiday season is a great time to train staff. Amy Shankle conducts outstanding classes on ServSafe Food Manager and ServSafe Alcohol, and as a restaurant operator for many years her perspective and approach are practical and relatable. We've been dealing with member issues from Kentucky OSHA changes to construction projects affecting restaurant business, from local and state fee increases to better local food sourcing. We want to help you connect to the channels that will help your business not only live through this unpredictable time but grow and work smarter.

If I can help you, can answer a question or connect you with a new supplier or source, that's what makes my work more enjoyable. I hope to see you this Fall out and about!

*Stacy Roof*

Stacy Roof

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# Calendar of Events

## SEPTEMBER

National Food Safety Education Month

- 1 Labor Day
- 8 ServSafe class - Louisville
- 22 ServSafe class - Louisville

## OCTOBER

- 6 Golftoberfest - Persimmon Ridge Golf Club
- 14 ServSafe class - Louisville
- 15 Taste of Louisville
- 27 ServSafe class - Louisville
- 31 Halloween

## NOVEMBER

- 3 KRA Board of Directors meeting
- 3 ServSafe class - Louisville
- 10 ServSafe class - Louisville
- 11 Veterans Day
- 17 Fall Restaurant Forum at Topgolf
- 27 Thanksgiving Day



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# FRONT BURNER

## THE TIME IS NOW

by SHANNON STIGLITZ

While the legislature doesn't officially convene until Jan. 26, 2026, the work has begun on issues that will be considered for the upcoming legislative session. Interim committees have met as have newly appointed task forces that will discuss issues including ways to improve health of Kentuckians, housing challenges, artificial intelligence, and disaster preparedness. It is important to take note of these discussions for two reasons—first, waiting until the 2026 legislative session convenes to meet with legislators and discuss issues important to the restaurant industry should start now. Legislators are already developing legislation they will consider in the 2026 legislative session and other advocates are meeting with legislators currently to push issues important to their organizations. Additionally, when legislators are not in session, it is more convenient to meet with them, and advocates are likely to have more of

their attention. One may argue that an issue hasn't come up with expressing an opinion either way to elected leaders, but that doesn't mean that you shouldn't develop a relationship with your elected officials. Most importantly, having a relationship with them throughout the year means that when critical legislative issues come up during the hustle and bustle of the legislative session, it is easier to call and ask them to support the restaurant industry's position.

Secondly, legislators are faced with constituents who are constantly asking for issues or concerns to be addressed. There is a lot for them to remember and a lot of issues they face over the interim, the policymaking process starts now, and it is important to get on the ground floor in discussing these issues. The more consistently legislators hear from the restaurant industry, the more likely they will address the issue

in the upcoming legislative session. Legislators need to be educated on issues to understand how a given policy change may impact a restaurateur's business. Education is key relationship development is key and the time to cultivate both is now.

### **So, what issues might be coming in the 2026 legislative session?**

While many issues that may be addressed in the upcoming legislative session may be unknown to all of us, it is important to pay close attention to issues that legislators are learning about over the Interim legislative session. For example, the Make America Healthy Again Kentucky Task Force is evaluating issues including additives in foods, seed oils, and restricting products SNAP beneficiaries can purchase with their benefits. U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., and his advisors have

developed their own report regarding Make America Healthy Again. These recommendations include eliminating seed oils, such as corn and canola oil from American diets, but for restaurants the alternatives may be too costly if they are available to purchase at all. The research is not definitive on seed oils and their impact on the health of Americans, but there is a grassroots movement across the country including Kentucky pushing for eliminating seed oils and artificial sweeteners from food products.

The upcoming legislative session is the so-called long session, because it will last 60 days and requires the General Assembly to craft a two-year budget. While Kentucky is projecting a budget surplus with revenue growth meeting economists' expectations, they are facing significant budget challenges after the passage of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, that requires states to cough significant state funding for the Medicaid program and for the SNAP program. Kentucky legislators have already raised concerns about the growing budgetary pressure that Medicaid is putting on state revenues, which could limit the General Assembly's ability to achieve its primary legislative goal of eliminating the personal income tax.

For restaurants, it is critical to pay attention to these budgetary pressures, as it could lead the General Assembly to look for tax solutions that could impact the industry. For example, expand the sales tax to more services that businesses utilize, which of course these increased costs would be passed on to consumers. An increase in the state sales tax could raise the revenue necessary for the state to afford the new expenses the

federal government is passing on to states. Combine an increased cost of doing business with the impending tariffs and it could lead to consumers reducing the number of times they dine out. Reducing unnecessary cost increases in the restaurant industry, is critical to its survival.

Tariffs and potential tax increases are not the only challenge restaurant owners face, one of the biggest is workforce challenges. The General Assembly continues to look at policies that could improve workforce, but some of the challenges from the federal government, including cracking down on immigration could exacerbate workforce challenges in Kentucky. In the 2025 legislative session, a measure was filed to require local law enforcement to cooperate with immigration and check the legal status of residents they interact with, but the measure failed to advance in the 2025 legislative session, but as the politics of immigration continues to a hot button political issue, it is expected to come back in the 2026 legislative session. Another workforce issue, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) inspections are leading to large fines for restaurants, and it is important to make sure that the business has all the necessary procedures and policies in place to meet the federal OSHA requirements. After the passage of HB 398 (2025), Kentucky OSHA must have only policies that mirror the federal OSHA policies, while this should be a benefit to the industry, it is important to reevaluate policies and procedures regularly to make sure the restaurant is in compliance with the federal law.

There are many challenges that restaurants are facing at the federal and state levels, but local governments continue to push the boundaries of the law to generate

more revenue from businesses. While we await the formal opinion of the Kentucky courts on whether the City of Hazard should legally be allowed to levy a restaurant tax, other cities and counties are increasing health inspection fees and 911 fees. The restaurant tax case has much broader implications than just the City of Hazard, as it could authorize all cities to levy a restaurant tax, increase those who can, or return the issue to the General Assembly. Either way, it is likely that the issue of the restaurant tax will be a major legislative issue for industry for years to come. But as always, as previously mentioned, local governments aren't afraid to look for creative ways, this includes Louisville Metro Government increasing annual health inspections fees by \$5 annually and establishing late fees for filing for food permits. Madison County is levying a 911 fee collected through the property that will increase from \$47 to \$.122 per square foot, which depending on the size of the property, could significantly increase the amount of 911 fees paid to the county.

Whether at the federal, state or local level, restaurants are facing challenges that could significantly increase the cost of doing business in the Commonwealth. This is the reason why the time is now for restaurants to meet with legislators and educate them on the importance of the restaurant industry in the amount of state and local revenue it generates and as a major employer of Kentuckians. Teaching legislators and policymakers the value of the restaurant industry to the state and communities is critical to ensure that when policymakers are making impactful decisions that they are taking the valuable opinion of the restaurant industry into account.



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# STAYING STRONG IN A SLOWING ECONOMY



by ANNE SHADLE

FOUNDER OF LEFT BRAIN SOLUTIONS CONSULTING CO  
& CO-OWNER OF MAYAN CAFÉ

There is a lot of uncertainty in the world these days. Tariffs are just one of many things that threaten to hurt our already low-margin businesses. Concern for immigrant employees and decreased consumer spending are making it hard to plan for the future. If you're like me, you're looking at caterings you have booked for the upcoming year and comparing your sales categories this year with prior years to try to predict what may be around the corner.

Food-based businesses run at a 4% average profit margin, but I'm preaching to the choir here. It's always been challenging to break even in the restaurant business. My list of tips and tricks to prepare for a shrinking economy are really just a set of guidelines that can be helpful in any moment of running a restaurant, so take a moment to consider the following:

- Analyze your labor model and see where you can **decrease variable labor costs**. Can you tweak the service model to drop hours or positions? (ie. a QR code on a table for ordering instead of a staff member taking orders)
- Plan ahead for **targeted marketing campaigns**. Map out a special/events calendar for your slowest months to stay top of mind with your customers. Analyze your specials/events from all aspects – financial, time, messaging strategy, internal operations – to make sure it is valuable on multiple levels.
- Use **cash flow analysis** tools to run various scenarios to help understand when you could run short on cash.
- Apply for a **line of credit** to have access to extra cash if things get tight. If you don't use it, you don't pay interest, so this is the best form of security net for seasonal

sales shifts. \*NOTE: you will need collateral to back a line of credit.

- Implement **weekly inventory management practices** to ensure you aren't over-buying inventory and increasing your variable costs beyond what sales demand.
- Look at adding any **new streams of revenue** that can be implemented without increasing fixed operating costs.
- Assess your **fixed operating costs** to see if you can decrease any of them. Get quotes from other insurance companies, phone/internet companies, etc.

This year, I am also teaching classes for restauranteurs who want to start catering and restauranteurs who want to improve their overall operations. Learn more and apply here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/2025-restaurant-trainings-from-anne-shadle-3932173>

In 2007, I opened Mayan Café with my business partner, Chef Bruce Ucán. Over these past 18 years, I have learned countless lessons about how to run our business sustainably and enjoyably. After working with over 400 small business owners as a business coach with the Kentucky Small Business Development Center, I decided to start my own consulting firm. With my clients now, we do a deep dive into their financial management habits, HR practices and marketing strategies with the goal of increasing efficiency, profitability and their quality of life as business owners. If you're interested to learn how to run your business smarter, please reach out to me.

[anne@leftbrainsolutions.io](mailto:anne@leftbrainsolutions.io)





# THE LINK BETWEEN FOODBORNE ILLNESS OUTBREAKS AND EMPLOYEE HEALTH

*by* AMY SHANKLE

September is National Food Safety Month. This is a great opportunity to revisit your food safety practices and systems to ensure your team understands and follows all your safety protocols to ensure you are serving safe food to your guests. This article discusses how employee health can affect food safety.

Unfortunately, food establishments are often at the center of U.S. foodborne illness outbreaks. One study conducted by the CDC found that 40% of all U.S. foodborne illness outbreaks could be tracked back to sick foodservice workers. In many cases, a single sick food handler working while ill or infectious was enough to trigger an outbreak.

The health status of employees in food service and food production facilities plays a pivotal role in the risk and scope of foodborne illness outbreaks. There are several key factors through which employee health impacts food safety:

**Direct transmission of pathogens** – Employees who are ill, especially with gastrointestinal symptoms such as vomiting or diarrhea, can directly transmit pathogens to food, surfaces, utensils, and ultimately, consumers. Viruses like norovirus and bacteria such as *Salmonella* or *Staphylococcus aureus* are commonly spread from person to person through inadequate hand washing or handling food while sick.

**Asymptomatic Carriers** – Not all employees who spread food borne pathogens show symptoms themselves. Some may be asymptomatic carriers, harboring bacteria or viruses and shedding them in their stool or via coughing or sneezing. These individuals can inadvertently contaminate food, especially if rigorous hygiene and handwashing protocols are not followed.

**Chronic Health Conditions and Food Safety** – Certain chronic health conditions among food workers can also increase risks. For example, employees with skin infections, open wounds, or hepatitis A may shed infectious agents. Additionally, workers with compromised immune systems may not only be more susceptible to foodborne pathogens but can also serve as reservoirs for infection if not properly protected and managed in the workplace.

**Employee Behavior and Compliance** – Employee health is not solely about the presence or absence of illness; it's also about behavior and compliance with food safety protocols. An employee who fails to wash their hands thoroughly after using the restroom, regardless of health status, can spread pathogens. A culture of health and safety, reinforced by training and proper oversight, can dramatically reduce risks. Factors Influencing Employee Health and Outbreak Risk. Several factors determine whether employee health translates to foodborne outbreaks:

**Workplace Policies and Sick Leave** – Food service workers are often among the lowest-paid employees and may lack access to paid sick leave. Faced with the financial pressure to work while ill, employees may report to their jobs even when experiencing symptoms of foodborne disease. This phenomenon, known as “presenteeism,” is a major risk factor for outbreaks. Organizations that prioritize paid sick leave, flexible scheduling, or non-punitive absence policies help break the chain of transmission by empowering workers to stay home when sick.

**Training and Education** – Comprehensive and ongoing training in food safety and hygiene is essential. Employees must understand not only how diseases spread but also how their own health and behavior can impact customer safety. Training should cover handwashing, glove usage, proper cleaning and sanitizing, and recognition of symptoms that necessitate exclusion from work.

**Workplace Culture** – A culture that values health, safety and open communication encourages employees to report illnesses without fear of retaliation. This culture must be led by example from management, with clear policies and transparent enforcement.

**Employee Turnover and Staffing** – High turnover rates can lead to lapses in training, insufficient experience among staff, and gaps in policy enforcement. Ensuring robust onboarding and regular training helps mitigate these risks.

**Physical Work Environment** – Crowded, poorly ventilated kitchens or food preparation areas increase the risk of transmission among employees, particularly for airborne or droplet-spread pathogens. Ensuring a clean, well-organized, and adequately equipped workplace supports both employee health and food safety.

To curb the spread of foodborne illnesses, the FDA has included explicit health policy specifications for employees and employers in the 2022 Food Code. In section 2-201, the FDA has listed restriction and exclusion requirements for foodservice leaders based on symptoms and/or diagnoses presented by the ill worker. It has also developed “The Employee Health Policy Tool” encouraging practices that help prevent the transmission of foodborne viruses and bacteria in food establishments from ill employees. Here’s how it works: Users click to identify as either a “Person-in-Charge” (manager, supervisor, or other leadership role)

or an “Employee”. The Person-in-Charge will be asked to choose among several reporting options based on whether the employee is displaying symptoms, has received a medical diagnosis, or has been exposed to an illness. Based on their choice, leaders will be directed to a list of symptoms, diagnoses, or exposures. Each option will list specific instructions for employee exclusions, restrictions, requirements to return to work, and state whether health department approval is needed. Employees will be asked to select from a list of general symptoms. If symptoms are not considered foodborne illness related, employees will be told to inform their manager or supervisor, follow internal policies and follow their state/local/tribal/territorial health department requirements. If symptoms are or may be related to a foodborne illness, employees are told to stop working immediately, not report to work, and let their manager or supervisor know right away. The health of employees in food establishments is inevitably linked to the safety of the food supply and the well-being of the public. Foodborne illness outbreaks are preventable tragedies, often rooted in the intersection of workplace culture, employee health, and organizational policies. By prioritizing employee health through supportive policies, comprehensive training, adequate sick leave, and a culture of openness food establishments can protect their customers, their reputations, and ultimately, public health. The fight against foodborne illness must begin with those who prepare and serve our food, ensuring that health and safety are always at the forefront.

Learn more about Employee Health and other risk factors to your food by signing up for a ServSafe® manager class with the Kentucky Restaurant Association.

To utilize the Employee Health Tool, visit this FDA website: [Employee Health Policy Tool - Retail Food Safety Collaborative](#)

As Always, Food Safety First!  
Amy R Shankle  
Director of Training  
Kentucky Restaurant Association



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# KENTUCKY OSHA UPDATES

## TOP 5 TIPS ON WHAT RESTAURANT OPERATORS NEED TO KNOW

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by JOHN ROGERS & EMILY LITZINGER  
FISHER PHILLIPS

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Kentucky, along with 22 other states, runs its own OSHA program (KOSH) covering private and public employers. HB 398, effective June 27, 2025, changes KOSH rules to better match federal OSHA. This means more consistent enforcement, fewer Kentucky-only rules, and simpler training requirements — all without removing core safety protections.

Here are the top five things Kentucky restaurant operators need to know:

### 1. One Standard Across States

- KOSH can no longer adopt or enforce rules stricter than federal OSHA.
- Multi-state restaurant operators will now train employees on one consistent standard instead of navigating different Kentucky-specific rules.
- Less confusion means lower training costs and reduced risk of surprise fines for obscure state-only violations.

### 2. Safety Requirements Remain

- All federal OSHA rules still apply.
- First Aid: Federal rule now applies — first aid trained staff are only required if there's no nearby medical facility.
- Incident Reporting: You must report amputations, in-patient hospitalizations, or loss of an eye within 24 hours (fatalities still within 8 hours).
- Restaurants should review proximity to clinics, first-aid kits, and eyewash needs.

### 3. Streamlined Complaint & Inspection Process

- KOSH investigations must now be completed within 6 months (previously an internal policy, now law).
- Complaints must involve the employee's actual workplace and recent events.
- Safety discrimination complaints must be filed within 30 days (previously open-ended).

- Repeat violation lookback reduced to 3 years (down from longer periods).
- New “de minimis” category for harmless technical violations that don't affect safety — avoiding costly fines for minor paperwork mistakes.

### 4. No Costly Fixes Until the Case is Decided

- If you contest a citation, you no longer have to make expensive corrections before the case is resolved.

### 5. Ability to Recover Legal Fees

- Employers may be able to recover attorney's fees if they win on appeal — similar to federal OSHA's Equal Access to Justice Act.
- Public hearing on this rule is August 21, 2025, via Zoom: [Join Here](#).

### Bottom Line for Restaurants:

HB 398 means one set of OSHA rules, clearer timelines for investigations, fewer costly technical violations, and new protections for employers who challenge citations — while keeping core safety requirements in place for employees.

John Roger and Emily N. Litzinger are attorneys in the Louisville office of Fisher Phillips, a national labor and employment law firm representing employers, including restaurants, bars and other businesses. Emily has experience advising and defending employers in all phases of labor and employment matters and John is an experience workplace safety attorney guiding employers of all sizes in workplace safety concerns. If you need specific advice, please contact Emily or John at [jrogers@fisherphillips.com](mailto:jrogers@fisherphillips.com) and [elitzinger@fisherphillips.com](mailto:elitzinger@fisherphillips.com) or 502-561-3978. The foregoing provides an overview of certain legal issues. It is not intended, and cannot be construed, as legal advice for any purpose.

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by RICH CLEAVES, KENTUCKY PROSTART COORDINATOR

The 2025-2026 school year is back in session, and we have numerous activities planned for the new school year. The first order of business for me is to visit as many ProStart schools in Kentucky as possible in the upcoming weeks and meet with the educators and discuss how the Kentucky Restaurant Association Educational Foundation can help support their program. Some educators may ask if we can arrange for an industry chef to come into their classroom and give a cooking demonstration, plus explain how they now own their own restaurant. Others may want a restaurant industry professional to share with the students their personal story of how they started in the hospitality industry as a line cook or a server and through hard work and perseverance worked their way up the corporate ladder to become vice president of operations over multiple restaurants and hundreds of employees. Some educators ask if we can arrange a field trip for the students to a hotel or restaurant kitchen or visit and tour corporate offices such as the Texas Roadhouse Support Center. In the past we have arranged for ProStart students to spend a day at Sullivan University and work side by side with the Sullivan chefs learning new cooking techniques and working on different pieces of equipment they may not have in their classroom. So, whatever the educators tell us what they feel would be beneficial for the students, we can recruit chefs and industry professionals to come into their classrooms, arrange field trips, or coordinate with Sullivan University in Louisville or Lexington a day of instruction at their campus.

This summer the Dine Company in Louisville, C-Worth Super Store in Lexington, and Ecolab Company donated restaurant supplies to be given to current or potential ProStart schools I call on in Kentucky. So, when visiting the schools we will supply the classrooms with grill scrapers, grill cleaning kits, knife sharpeners, digital thermometers, cutting gloves, vinyl gloves, sanitizer buckets, spatulas,

whisks, and various other supplies needed for their kitchens. Thank you, Dine Company, C-Worth Super Store, and Ecolab for your generous support.

In July Nicole Fitzpatrick and Doug Bennett at Louisville Tourism invited all of us from the Kentucky Restaurant Association office to tour their new and beautiful upgraded offices in downtown Louisville. The best way to describe their offices which overlook downtown Louisville, and the Ohio River is, "any of us would love to work at Louisville Tourism". Thank you, Nicole and Doug, for a wonderful tour and later a luncheon at Doc Crow's. We truly appreciate Louisville Tourism being an important supporter of Kentucky ProStart. At the end of August, I attended the quarterly meeting of the Kentucky Livestock Coalition held at the Kentucky State Fair in Louisville. The Kentucky Livestock Coalition has supported the ProStart program for many years, and we look forward to continuing our relationship with this wonderful organization.

In October we will be holding a Professional Development Day for our educators. We will have speakers who represent restaurants, culinary institutions, and farms from around Kentucky sharing their time and experiences with the teachers. At that meeting we will also discuss the Kentucky ProStart Invitational being held at Sullivan University in Louisville on March 5th and 6th next year. We want as many schools as possible to compete at KPSI and hopefully many of the educators will decide to field a culinary or management team at our state competition after learning more about the benefits of the competition during the Professional Development Day. And we want to welcome Taylor County High School in Hodgenville who just joined our Kentucky ProStart roster of schools. We are looking forward to a busy new school year for Kentucky ProStart.

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# Chefs That Sizzle

by CHEF DAVID DANIELSON

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## THE MUSTANG CLUB WINE BAR & SPEAKEASY: WHERE KENTUCKY'S FLAVORS MEET TIMELESS HOSPITALITY

In the heart of historic downtown Bowling Green, The Mustang Club has quickly become the city's most talked-about culinary and social destination. Upstairs, guests discover an upscale farm-to-table restaurant and wine bar celebrating the region's bounty with refined, seasonal menus. Downstairs, a hidden door leads to a Prohibition-era speakeasy- a candlelit world of classic cocktails, live jazz and blues, and intimate conversation. From the aroma of charred peaches and bourbon gastriques drifting from the kitchen to the clink of crystal in the speakeasy below, The Mustang Club offers an immersive, one-of-a-kind experience.

At the helm of The Mustang Club is Executive Chef and General Manager Demian Lee Haas, whose culinary journey blends classical technique, farm-to-table passion, and a deep respect for Kentucky's food heritage. With decades of experience in fine dining and leadership, Demian has cooked coast-to-coast, drawing

inspiration from both his Italian-American upbringing and Southern roots.

"My philosophy is clean, honest food-prepared with intention, sourced with integrity," Haas says. "When you start with the best ingredients, you let them speak for themselves." He maintains close relationships with regional farmers, ranchers, and artisan producers, ensuring that every plate tells a story of the land. From Johnson Farms, Pekin duck, to Pick N Grin Farms' hickory bark syrup, Haas builds menus that evolve with the seasons, capturing fleeting flavors at their

peak. His dishes are composed with a painter's eye for color and balance, often incorporating unexpected but harmonious pairings- such as sweet potato and pawpaw purée brightened with yuzu, paired with Casey Jones bourbon and port gastrique.

The Mustang Club's menu is a celebration of Kentucky's fields, orchards, and rivers. Standout dishes include Cast Iron Seared Johnson Farms Duck Breast with KY sweet potato-pawpaw-yuzu purée and a Casey Jones bourbon-port gastrique, Bluegrass Lamb Rack with sorghum glaze, and the seasonally rotating Market Boards- artfully arranged with regional cheeses, charcuterie, and house-pickled vegetables. Haas and his team take pride in preparation that honors tradition while embracing innovation- slow-seared proteins for perfect texture, garden-fresh herbs clipped to order, and presentations that engage every sense. With each season, the menu transforms, inviting

All Photos Courtesy of Garrett Woodrum

guests to return often for new flavors and creative interpretations of Kentucky classics.

Curated by Beverage Manager Travis Dickens, The Mustang Club's wine program strikes a balance between local vineyards, such as the University of Kentucky Winery, and a thoughtful selection of international labels. Each bottle is chosen to complement the restaurant's evolving menu, from crisp whites for spring asparagus dishes to robust reds for winter braises. Signature wine flights and themed tasting allow guests to explore new regions and varietals. The atmosphere is refined yet welcoming, with knowledgeable staff guiding guests toward perfect pairings for their meal, whether it's a bold zinfandel alongside bourbon-glazed pork belly or a sparkling rosé with seared scallops. Behind an unassuming door, a staircase descends into the glow of The Mustang Club's speakeasy- a tribute to the glamour and intrigue of the Prohibition era. The air hums with the sound of live jazz and blues, while bartenders craft drinks with precision and artistry. The cocktail program features house-made infusions, bitters, and syrups, blending Prohibition classics with fresh twists- think of a Southside with bourbon black tea syrup served in a teacup. Original creations, like the Untouchables, The Naked Man, and Green Door, showcase Kentucky spirits and seasonal ingredients from the upstairs kitchen. A private cigar lounge adds another layer of old-world indulgence, offering rare selections to savor with a well-aged pour.

At The Mustang Club, the kitchen and bar work in harmony, crafting pairings where flavors flow seamlessly from plate to glass. Wine dinners highlight vineyard collaborations, while chef's tasting menus often include custom

cocktail pairings- a Casey Jones bourbon gastrique duck course might meet its match in a smoked cherry Manhattan. This synergy of culinary and beverage artistry ensures every visit feels like a curated event.

Rooted in community, The Mustang Club supports the local economy through regional sourcing, artisan partnerships, and hospitality careers. Future plans include seasonal festivals, charity dinners, and collaborative events with guest chefs and winemakers. By blending local loyalty with destination appeal, The Mustang Club is poised to become

a landmark for travelers seeking authentic Kentucky hospitality. From farm-to-table cuisine and curated wines to the mystery of a Prohibition speakeasy, The Mustang Club offers Bowling Green an unparalleled dining and social experience. Join us for an evening where the flavors of Kentucky meet timeless elegance.





## CAST IRON SEARED, JOHNSON FARM'S, DUCK BREAST, KY SWEET POTATO & PAW-PAW-PURÉE, KY MADE PORT WINE & BOURBON GASTRIQUE

By Chef & General Manager, Demian Lee Haas

Serves: 4

### Marinade Ingredients

- 4 Johnson Farms Pekin duck breasts, skin on (6–8 oz each)
- ¼ cup Casey Jones Kentucky Straight Bourbon
- ¼ cup Bluegrass Vineyard Port wine
- 2 tbsp local honey
- 1 tbsp Kentucky apple cider vinegar
- 1 tsp fresh thyme leaves
- ½ tsp cracked black pepper
- ¼ tsp kosher salt
- ½ cup Sweet Potato, Pawpaw & Yuzu Purée (see below)

### Sweet Potato, Pawpaw & Yuzu Purée

- 2 medium sweet potato \*United Heart Farms, Woodburn, KY
- 1 medium ripe pawpaw fruit (or substitute mango if out of season)
- 1 tsp fresh thyme leaves, finely chopped • 1 tsp fresh yuzu juice (or substitute ½ tsp lemon juice + ½ tsp grapefruit juice)
- Pinch of white pepper
- Pick N Grin Farms Hickory Bark Syrup to taste • Pinch of kosher salt

*Roast the Sweet Potato* – Preheat oven to 400°F. Pierce sweet potato several times with a fork. Roast until completely tender, 45–50 minutes. Cool slightly, peel, and mash until smooth.

*Prepare the Pawpaw* – Halve and scoop out pulp, discarding seeds and skin.

*Blend the Purée* – Combine sweet potato, pawpaw pulp, thyme, yuzu juice, white pepper, and salt. Process until smooth.

*Finish with Hickory Bark Syrup* – Add syrup to taste, blending just until incorporated.

*Measure for Marinade* – Use ½ cup for the duck marinade; reserve extra for plating.

### Glaze & Garnish

- Reserved marinade (reduced to syrup)
- 2 Jackson Farm peaches, halved & charred
- ¼ cup toasted Kentucky pecans, chopped
- Extra local honey for drizzle

### Method

*Prepare the Marinade* – Whisk Casey Jones bourbon, port, honey, vinegar, thyme, pepper, salt, and the purée until smooth.

*Marinate the Duck* – Score skin in crosshatch pattern, place in dish/bag, pour marinade over, refrigerate 4–6 hours.

*Sear the Duck* – Remove duck, pat dry, reserve marinade. Sear skin-side down over medium heat 6–8 min, flip and cook 3–4 min. Rest on warm plate.

*Make the Glaze* – Reduce reserved marinade in saucepan until syrupy, 5–7 minutes.

*Char the Peaches* – Grill or sear peaches cut-side down until caramelized, 2–3 min.

*Plate & Serve* – Slice duck, glaze, add peaches, sprinkle pecans, drizzle honey.

### Chef's Notes

The addition of yuzu brightens the richness of the duck, while Pick N Grin Farms Hickory Bark Syrup lends a distinctive smoky-sweet finish unique to Kentucky. Pawpaw and sweet potato produced and sourced from United Heart Farms, Woodburn, KY, add a naturally creamy texture, thyme adds herbal lift, and the Casey Jones bourbon–port base ties the flavors into a deep, warming glaze.

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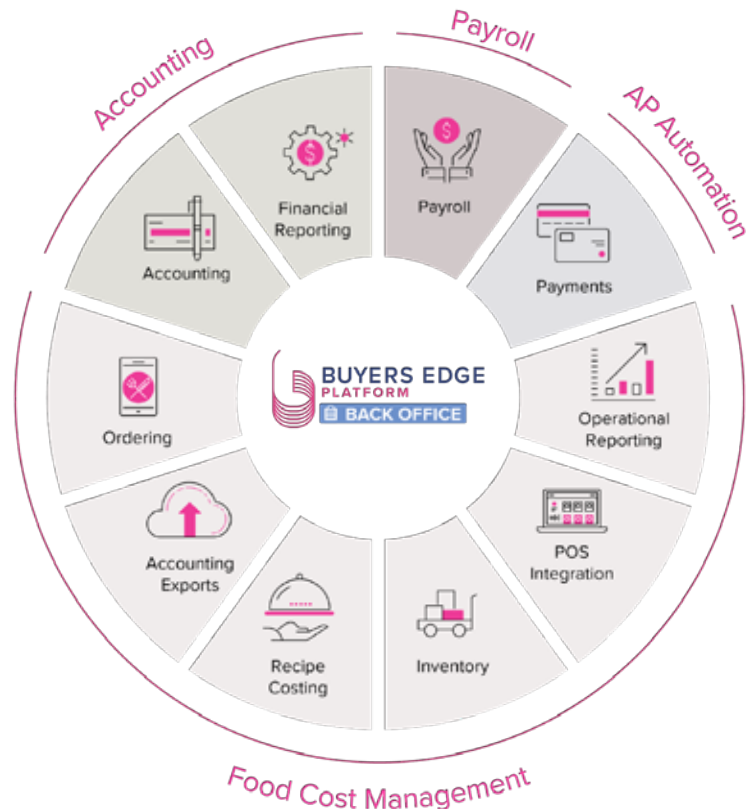
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# Questions & Answers

**Q: Does the State of Kentucky require managers in food establishments to become certified in food safety?**

A: Yes – At least one certified food protection manager must be present during all hours of operation. This manager must have successfully completed an accredited food safety training program, such as ServSafe® or ANSI certification.

**Q: Can Kentucky OSHA enforce standards not equal to Federal OSHA standards?**

A: No, Kentucky OSHA cannot interpret or enforce any standard that is not equal to a Federal OSHA standard.

**Q: Does a restaurant need first aid trained staff?**

A: First aid trained staff are only required if there is not a medical facility nearby.

**Q: What is the Bloodborne pathogen standard for restaurants?**

The OSHA standard protects workers who are occupationally exposed to blood or other potentially infectious materials - a majority of the time this may not apply to restaurants, but cuts do happen. So,

restaurants need to make sure they have the correct PPE (personal protective equipment) and to train their employees on how to use them when cleaning up blood or other bodily fluids. If there is exposure, the employee should be given the option to receive a Hepatitis B vaccination. They can choose to get one or sign a document saying they decline the option to receive the vaccination.

**Q: What kinds of PPE must a restaurant have on hand to clean up blood or other bodily fluids?**

A: Masks, gloves, gowns and eye protection. The guidelines on how to use this equipment and how to clean up blood or bodily fluids must be in written form and posted in an employee area.

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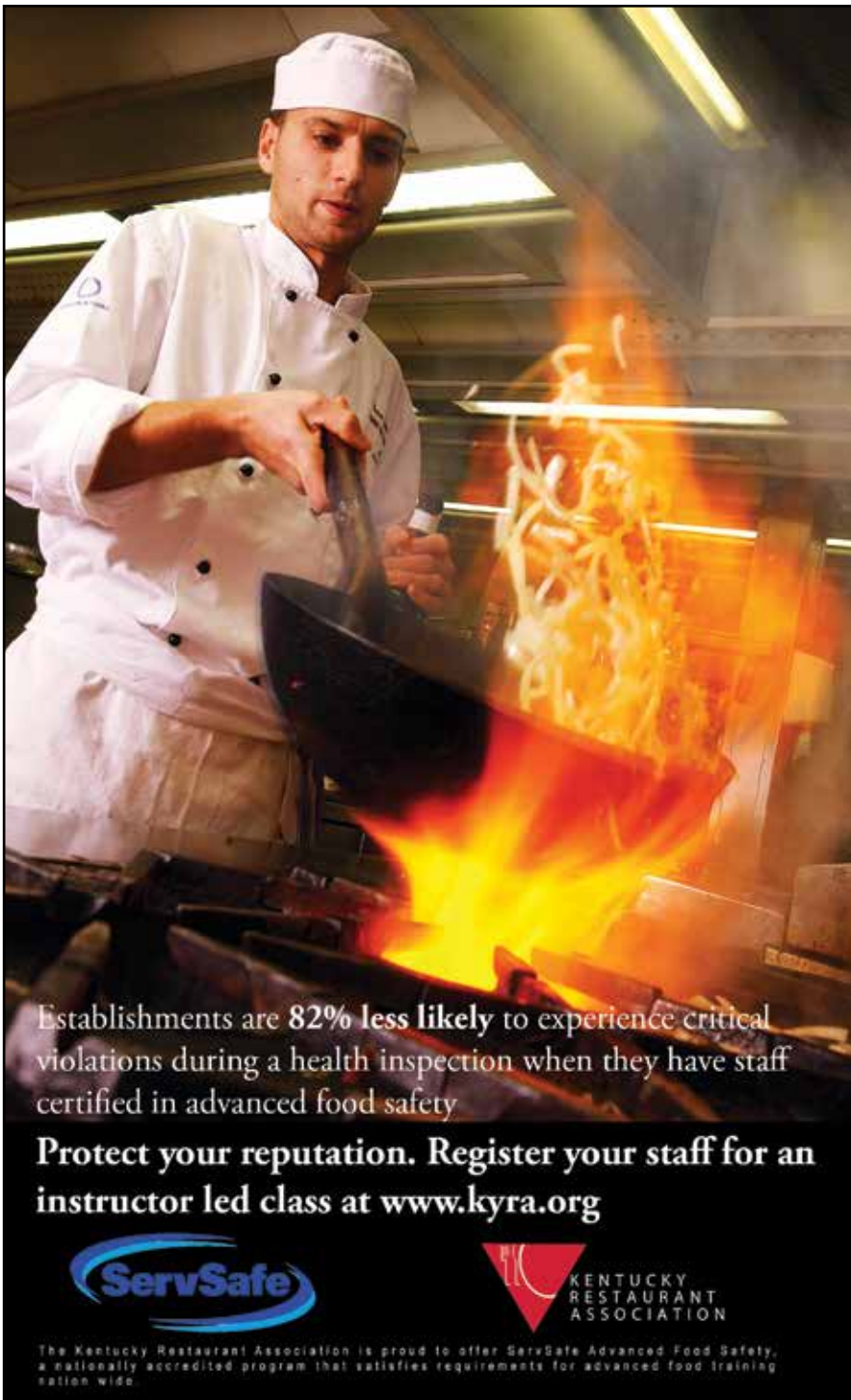
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Individual notices may be printed from the US Department of Labor website at [www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov) or an all-in-one poster containing these six federal notices may be obtained from the KRA office. Kentucky state law requires all employers post the following notices as well:

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