

# **The Impact of Desk Audits on the Consistency of Retail Food Inspection Reports in Alaska: A Trend Analysis**

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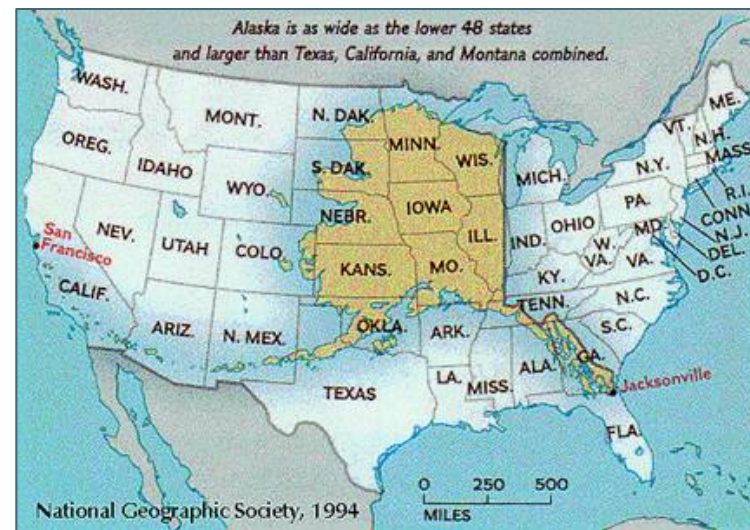
State of Alaska

Department of Environmental Conservation

Food Safety and Sanitation Program

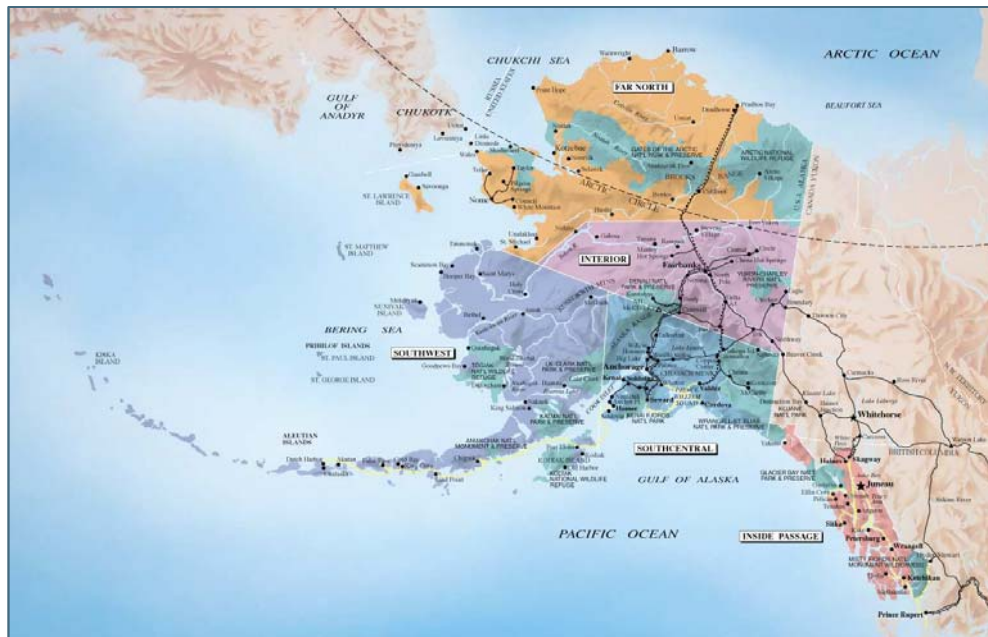
## Background

- Alaska is a BIG state.
- 25 full-time, Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) inspect 9,300 permitted facilities.
- Offices located in: Anchorage, Dutch Harbor, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Sitka, Valdez, Wasilla.
- Many are remote.



## Background (continued)

- High degree of autonomy is expected.
- Operate within the culture of their community.
- Result = varying inspection styles and methods.



## Background (continued)

### **To help address this:**

- Food Safety and Sanitation (FSS) Program enrolled in the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards (VNRFRPS) in 2005.
- Using the form in VNRFRPS, began desk audits on inspection reports in January, 2012.
- Staff apprehension.

## Problem Statement

The variation of interpretation to Alaska's Food Code and program policies does not provide uniform and consistent application of inspections. This may result in inconsistent, non-uniform enforcement which may pose a threat to public health.

## Research Question

What is the effectiveness of constant communication on Environmental Health officers using the desk audit form outlined in the VNRFRPS over the course of one year?

## Methodology

- Trend Analysis
- Review seven randomly-selected inspection reports per month over the course of one year (January 1, 2012 – December 31, 2012).
- Evaluate using the desk audit form; and
- Provide feedback to EHOs via their supervisor.

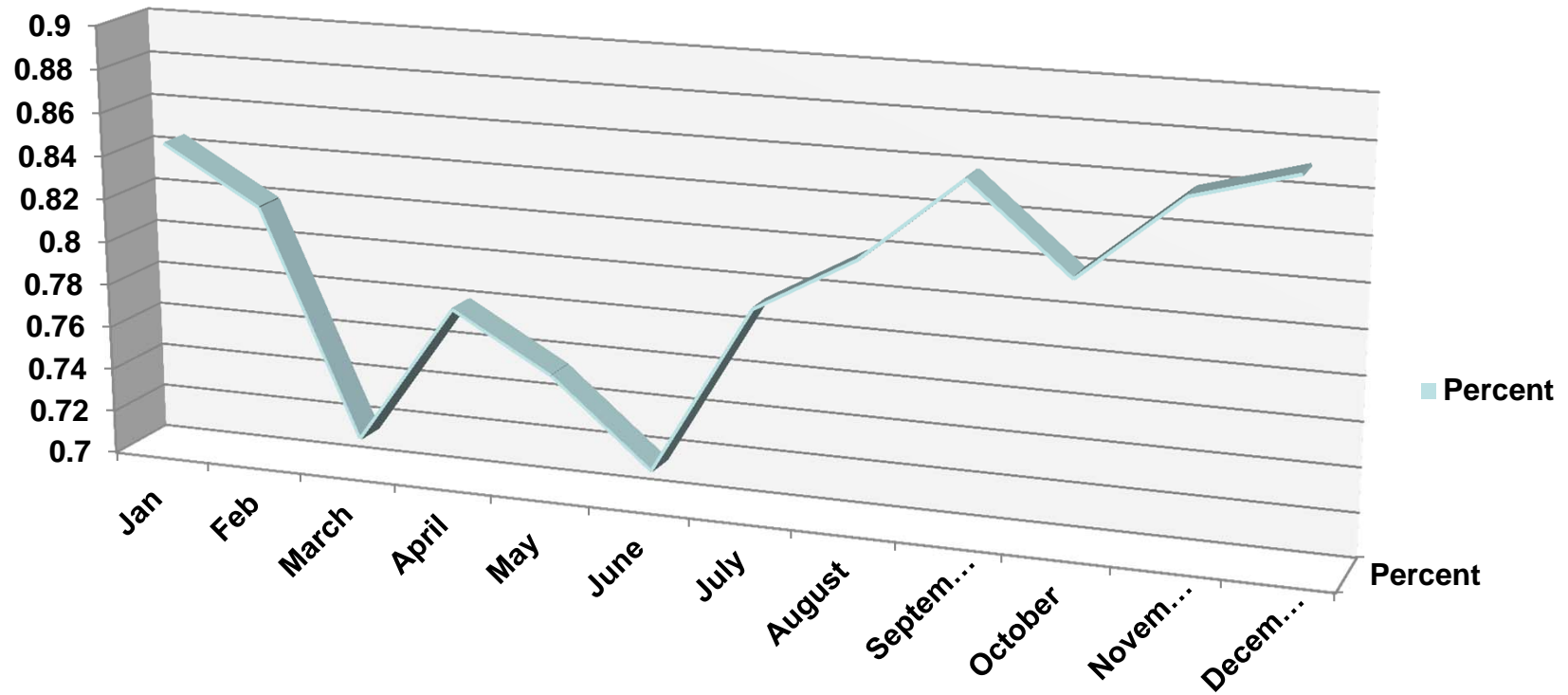
## Methodology (continued)

- 10 key items
- Including:
  - If violations were cited correctly.
  - If the inspection form was marked correctly.
  - Clear inspection report.
  - If follow-up was done.



# Results

## Effectiveness of Desk Audits through 2012

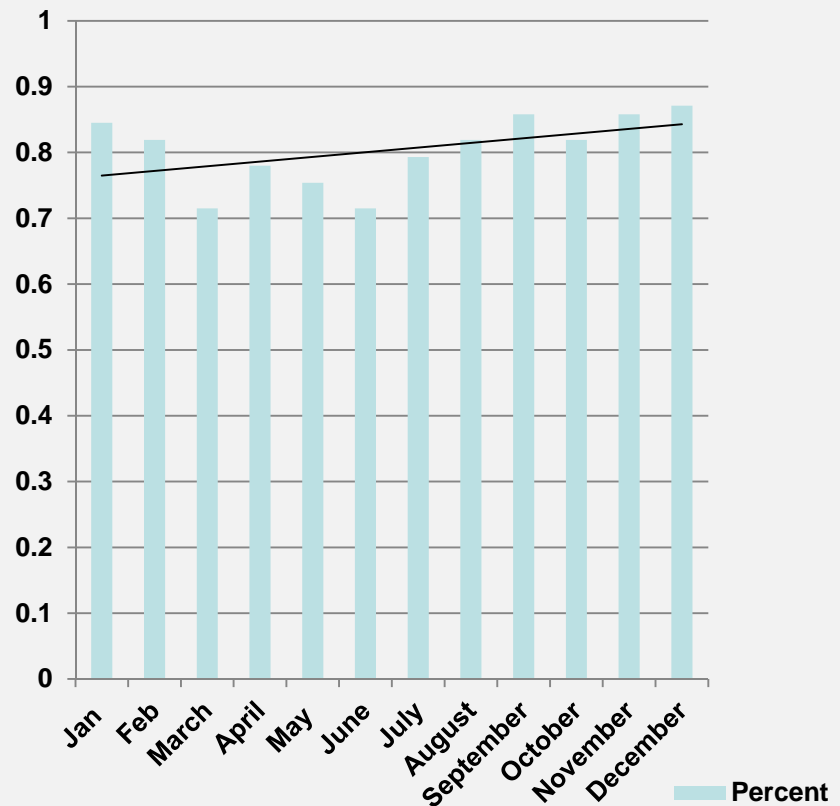




## Conclusions

- Upward trend in compliance.
- The dip can be attributed to the hiring of five new field EHOs.
- Inconsistency also may be due to the selection process.

**Effectiveness of Desk Audits through 2012**



## Recommendations

- Supervisors must understand that timely review with EHOs is important to the success of the desk audits.
- A thorough review of the inspection protocol and marking instructions should happen before beginning desk audits.
- Document all key questions pertaining to the desk audit, food code, or program policies and review them with all staff.

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# Questions?

