WELCOME

We welcome our partners to the Partnership for Food Protection (PFP) newsletter!

THIS EDITION FEATURES:

- Welcome letter from the PFP Governing Council
- Spotlight on PFP Workgroup chairs
- Integration at Work:
  ◊ Listeria monocytogenes outbreak associated with caramel apples
  ◊ A story on FDA grants from NACCHO and AFDO to enhance retail food safety.
- Update from the PFP Training and Certification Workgroup
  ◊ Building a national training curriculum
Dear Valued Partner,

The Governing Council (GC) is excited to have newly formed and revived workgroups move forward in 2015 to implement the PFP Strategic Plan. This plan was released in November 19, 2014. The GC wanted to once again thank the 2014 PFP 50-State Workshop attendees who helped finalize the plan. During this workshop, held on August 12-14, 2014, more than 200 strategic partners were presented with the draft plan for review. The feedback received during the workshop was used to revise and then finalize the plan.

Seven goals outlined in the plan reflect PFP’s vision for an Integrated Food Safety System (IFSS). They will be implemented over the next six years through the work of many dedicated volunteers who comprise our seven workgroups. This issue highlights the workshop leaders.

The 2014 PFP 50-State Workshop report, released February 5, 2015, provides the development and thought process that occurred at the workshop as the plan was being discussed during breakout sessions. The workshop agenda and other meeting information are available on the PFP Website (www.fda.gov/pfp). Other highlights of the report include:

• Summaries of presentations and panels discussions with local, state, federal and association officials;

• Descriptions of accomplishments from the PFP workgroups; and

• Integration success stories.

We eagerly look forward to what the workgroups will be accomplishing in this new cycle!

Sincerely (On behalf of the Governing Council),

Barbara Cassens and Pat Kennelly
PFP Governing Council Co-Chairs
Spotlight on the PFP Workgroup Co-Chairs

The next phase of PFP activities has started! With the release of the new PFP Strategic Plan, new workgroups (WGs) have been formed and other groups are continuing to work on their projects. The success of PFP projects depends on the combined efforts of the co-chairs, members, the project managers, and Governing Council representatives. Let’s meet the people who will be leading these WGs.

COMPLIANCE & ENFORCEMENT

Millie Benjamin (FDA) has a B.S. in food science and technology from the University of Maryland. Millie began her career in research and development and quality control for Doxsee Food Corporation. Next, she joined the FDA’s Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN), first as a food technologist specializing in low-acid and acidified canned foods, and then joined CFSAN’s Office of Seafood as a compliance officer. In 2004, she joined CFSAN’s Office of Compliance and recently became the branch chief of the Food Adulteration Assessment Branch.

Steve Stich (NY) started his career as a food inspector with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, Division of Food Safety and Inspection in Albany, New York. Steve was promoted to a supervisory position, where he progressed through the ranks and was named director of the Division of Food Safety and Inspection in 2010. He is the current president of the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO). Steve also participates in several multi-state and federal food safety working groups and alliances.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Ashley Schascheck (MI) attended the University of Washington and graduated with a B.A. in environmental science. She began working in 2011 as a food industry field scientist for the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. In addition to her inspection duties and being a member of PFP, Ashley is also a part of Michigan's core team assisting in development of a new inspection system. Ashley is the mother of three wonderful children. She enjoys finding DIY projects at home and playing and practicing sports with her children.
Lisa Creason (FDA) is the new director of Information Systems Management at the Office of Regulatory Affairs within the FDA. She and her organization work to ensure ORA's information technology initiatives and plans support ORA's mission and align with FDA’s goals and objectives as outlined in the FDA Strategic IT Plan. Prior to joining the FDA, Lisa worked with Northrop Grumman supporting various IT initiatives for several government agencies.

LABORATORY SCIENCE

Tim Croley (FDA) is the chief of the Spectroscopy and Mass Spectrometry Branch at FDA’s CFSAN. Research in the branch is focused on new technologies and their application to food safety and food defense. Some specific applications include allergens, gluten, economically-motivated adulteration, bacterial identification, and software solutions for high resolution mass spectrometric screening.

Cindi Mangione (NY) is originally from upstate New York’s snow country, Oswego, and attended the State University of New York (SUNY) – Potsdam, graduating with a degree in biology. Cindi started her career with the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets’ food lab as a technician in dairy chemistry. She currently is the microbiology quality assurance (QA) officer for the food laboratory. Cindi is a member of AOAC, Central Atlantic Association of Food and Drug Officials (CASAFDO), AFDO, International Association for Food protection (IAFP) and New York State Association for Food Protection. She is also co-lead of the food and feed subcommittees of the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL’s). Cindi has two wonderful teenagers who keep her very busy when not working. They enjoy camping during the warmer months and especially look forward to their annual camping trip to West Virginia.

Brenda Snodgrass (OK) is the assistant laboratory director at the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry, where she supervises the quality manager, technical manager and the supervisors of feed, meat chemistry, fertilizer and environmental testing. She holds a B.S. in chemistry and has more than 30 years combined experience in laboratory administration, quality management, and manufacturing quality control. Brenda is active in Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) and currently serves as co-chair of the Quality Assurance/Quality Control Workgroup and is a member of AOAC International.
OUTREACH

Ryan Cates (FDA) joined FDA’s Office of Partnerships in 2011 and has worked on programs and projects focused on information sharing, fed-state integration, and FSMA implementation. Last year, Ryan was a co-lead on the PFP Response and Recall project aimed at creating a best practices document for information sharing during recalls and outbreaks. Ryan earned a master’s in business administration from the University of Maryland, received a master’s certificate in project management from George Washington University, and is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP).

Troy Huffman (NE) received his B.S. in education from the University of Nebraska. He is a Nebraska-registered environmental health specialist, and has worked for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services for the past 23 years. Troy currently acts as the food safety evaluation officer and coordinates all food-related programs.

SURVEILLANCE, RESPONSE & POST-RESPONSE

Brenda Holman (FDA) has been with FDA for 27 years. She holds a bachelor’s degree in microbiology and a master’s in food science and technology. Brenda has served in several positions and locations, including as the district director in the Detroit and New York Districts, and regional food and drug director in the Pacific Region. She currently is the deputy director of the Coordinated Outbreak Response and Evaluation Network (CORE) in the Office of Foods and Veterinary Medicine. Gardening and cooking are her passions. Gardening really got ahead of her cooking this year, so her freezer is jam packed full! Try to fit in the five grandkids on top of all that (not in to the freezer). So far, they are terrible gardeners.
Travis Goodman (FDA) has over 20 years of experience in food emergency response at the local, state and federal levels. He is a consumer safety response officer and a rapid response team program coordinator with the FDA in the Office of Partnerships (OP). Travis has been a co-chair of the PFP Surveillance, Response and Post Response Workgroup for the past two years, and a workgroup member for several more. Travis raises Black Angus steers and poultry on his farm and also enjoys gardening.

Michael Needham (CA) received his bachelor’s degree from California State University, Chico, and his masters of public health from San Jose State University. Michael started with the California Department of Public Health, Food and Drug Branch, as an Investigator in San Jose, and currently is the chief of the Emergency Response Unit, with oversight of staff throughout the state. Michael has been an active participant in the California Food Emergency Response Team. He enjoys spending time with his family, running between soccer, baseball, and basketball games. Michael also enjoys restoring old cars.

Brian Sauders (NY) is the New York State Rapid Response Team coordinator at the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. He manages the department’s involvement in CDC PulseNet and FDA GenomeTRAKR programs and subsequent cluster/outbreak investigations involving foodborne pathogens isolated from foods sold at retail. He specializes in the molecular epidemiology and ecology of foodborne pathogens and works on integrating emerging laboratory technology and IT technology to improve response to food and feed emergencies. Brian is an avid outdoorsman and can often be found exploring the outside world with his family or camera, and often both.
**TRAINING & CERTIFICATION**

**Allan Bateson (FDA)** works in the Division of Human Resource Development (DHRD) as a social science analyst. His work focuses on conducting job and task analyses, and developing tests for both training courses and for certification. Allan earned his doctorate in industrial and organizational psychology and has worked in the public and private sectors and in academia for over 30 years. He has been a co-chair on the PFP Training and Certification Workgroup for the past four years.

**Jim Fear (FDA)** began his career with FDA as a training officer. From 2002 to 2013, Jim managed DHRD’s state training team. He currently manages the Integrated Food Safety (IFS) staff at DHRD which oversees curriculum development through multiple cooperative agreements and grants. The IFS staff also supports the PFP’s Training and Certification Workgroup to advance training, national training curriculum standards and certification under the IFS Staff. Jim has a 1996, T-100 Toyota truck with over 370,000 miles that still does a lot of work on weekends.

**Keith Johnson (ND)** is the administrator of Custer Health, a five-county public health unit in western North Dakota, based in Mandan. He is a licensed environmental health practitioner and sits on the board of the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) as a regional vice president. He holds a bachelor’s in microbiology from North Dakota State University. Keith has served as a co-chair of the PFP Training and Certification Workgroup for four years. Keith plays and sings in a bluegrass gospel quartet. He has a couple of albums and is working on a new one.

**Stan Stromberg (OK)** is director of the Food Safety Division at the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry (ODAFF). He received a bachelor’s in animal science from the University of Arizona. He has been an employee of ODAFF for 29 years and previously worked for 17 years in the food production industry. He is the past president of the National Association of State Meat and Food Inspection Directors, and is currently the President-Elect of the AFDO. Stan owns two International Harvester Scouts, a 1974 and a 1977, both of which can be driven.
WORK PLANNING & INSPECTIONS

Jamie Hughes (FDA) is the chief of the Planning and Evaluation Branch, Division of Field Programs and Guidance, in CFSAN’s Office of Compliance at FDA. Jamie worked in the Office of Regulatory Affairs (ORA) for over 12 years before coming to CFSAN last May. She held positions as a microbiologist, consumer safety officer in multiple capacities, watch commander, and as a deputy district director.

Susan Parachini (CO) currently serves as unit manager of the Direct Implementation Programs with the Division of Environmental Health & Sustainability at the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE). Susan has been with the department for 21 years and has participated with the PFP in work planning since 2009. Prior to working at CDPHE, she served as the environmental health Inspector for Vail for nine years. Susan has a freshman daughter in the marching band without a driver’s license. (Spare time, what’s that?) She loves to read and enjoys hiking and biking.
INTEGRATION AT WORK

Listeria monocytogenes Outbreak Associated with Caramel Apples
Patrick Kennelly (California Department of Public Health)

The following story is a great example of state, local and federal agencies rapidly working together, and demonstrates what an Integrated Food Safety System can do when facing a public health emergency.

On December 12, 2014, members of the California Food Emergency Response Team (CalFERT) were notified of a Listeria monocytogenes outbreak affecting 28 individuals in ten states, including California. Preliminary food items of interest at that time included hot dogs, strawberries, and yogurt. The CalFERT is a multidisciplinary team from the California Department of Public Health and FDA.

Texas reported that interviews conducted in mid-December with two case patients identified caramel apples as a food both consumed. Considered an unusual food item for listeria, the caramel apple consumption was immediately shared with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), FDA’s Coordinated Outbreak Response and Evaluation Network (CORE), and affected state’s epidemiological staff.

Follow-up interviews conducted by officials from Arizona and Minnesota also indicated that additional case patients had consumed caramel apples prior to illness onset.

As additional cases reported exposure to caramel apples, a preliminary traceback identified a caramel apple manufacturer in California, CalFERT activated under the Incident Command System (ICS) and prepared to initiate an investigation.

Early investigation identified multiple caramel apple processors with a common apple-packing facility in California. With this information, CalFERT activated two teams to investigate the implicated apple harvesting and packing facility and one of the implicated caramel apple manufacturing facilities. At each facility, the investigators collected hundreds of environmental swabs, packaging material, and ingredients. To maximize efficiency, the environmental samples were split between state and federal laboratories.
The laboratories were able to isolate *Listeria monocytogenes* from seven samples collected during the investigation. The isolates were confirmed to match one of the outbreak strains by MLVA. Additionally, the State of Missouri collected samples of apples that originated from the California grower/packer and was able to isolate an outbreak-matching strain of *Listeria monocytogenes*. The traceback and environmental investigation resulted in the apple grower/packer recalling all Granny Smith and Gala apples packed in 2014. Additional sub-recalls of manufactured foods were completed by firms that had used the recalled apples as raw materials.

The most recent case count includes 32 cases in 11 states. Thirty-one of 32 patients were hospitalized, with seven deaths reported. The collaboration of state, local, and federal agencies in determining the likely foods implicated in the outbreak, coupled with the coordinated rapid response to investigate the processors and suppliers of the implicated products, was likely successful in reducing exposures to contaminated apples and preventing further illnesses and deaths.

**CUMBERLAND COUNTY, N.C., AWARDS NACCHO AND AFDO FUNDING TO ADOPT RETAIL FOOD REGULATORY PROGRAM STANDARDS**

The Cumberland County Department of Public Health’s Environmental Health Division recently received financial grants worth $12,000 to enhance the department’s food and lodging establishment inspections in the county by providing standardize training through staff development and mentorship programs.

Environmental Health received two grants - $10,000 from the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and $2,000 from the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO). The $10,000 grant will cover Environmental Health to participate in FDA’s Voluntary Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards Mentorship Program from December 2014 through August 2015. The $2,000 grant helped to cover the cost of the Environmental Health staff to attend the FDA’s Southeast Region Annual Food Safety Seminar, held in Savannah, Georgia, in December.

The grants will help Cumberland County’s staff of 11 inspectors to more efficiently conduct inspections of more than 2,000 food and lodging establishments in the county.

The county’s Environmental Health Division is one of 25 sites nationwide selected to collaborate and partner directly with NACCHO through support from the FDA.

A key principle of an IFSS is the uniform application of model program standards and a consistent approach to inspections across regulatory programs.
PFP WORKGROUP UPDATES

Building a national, competency-based training curriculum for regulatory food professionals

Nancy Doyle (FDA), Craig Kaml (IFPTI), and Chris Weiss (IFPTI)

Building a national, competency-based training curriculum for regulatory food professionals is a core element of an integrated food safety system (IFSS). Key to the development of this national training system (i.e., the National Curriculum) is FDA's support of the Curriculum Framework Process created by the International Food Protection Training Institute (IFPTI) with the PFP Training and Certification Workgroup.

This novel approach is the cornerstone of a Cooperative Agreement Grant between IFPTI and FDA's Division of Human Resource Development (DHRD), and has been formally adopted by the Partnership for Food Protection (PFP) Training and Certification Workgroup.

The draft Curriculum Framework is a color-coded, visual grid that demonstrates the interrelationship between, among, and progression through:

- content areas: topics or subjects in which regulatory food professionals should receive training (represented by each “box” in the framework);
- professional levels: entry, journey, technical specialist, and leadership (represented by the horizontal rows in the framework);
- professional tracks: specific areas of specialization (unprocessed, manufactured, and retail); and
- spanning content areas: topics or subjects that are applicable to multiple professional levels (vertical) or professional tracks (horizontal).

Link to the Draft Curriculum Framework for Regulatory Food Professionals


The Curriculum Framework Process approach has multiple benefits, including but not limited to:

- addressing the training goals identified in the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA);
- helping food regulatory professionals plan their career paths and receive the necessary training as their jobs evolve;
- helping regulatory agencies create career improvement paths for their employees;
- fostering the efficient use of resources, i.e., preventing duplication of efforts;
• providing a road map and standards for public, private, and academic outfits seeking to offer food safety training;

• assuring that federal, state, and local food regulatory professionals are being trained consistently and systematically;

• fostering collaboration among government agencies, industry, agriculture, and academia; and

• acting as an open-source cataloging system for food safety courses available across the U.S.

The DHRD and IFPTI have set an aggressive timeline for building the National Curriculum.

Members of the PFP Training and Certification Workgroup have been meeting with DHRD and IFPTI to develop five types of competencies (Communication, Core, Critical Thinking, Organizational Awareness, and Technical) needed in each content area of the framework, and these competencies will be mapped onto the framework over the next few months. At that point, instructional design teams will begin developing or re-developing courses and learning events so that new training can begin in 2015.

* The Curriculum Framework is an evolving document and will undergo modifications as the work between the Training and Certification Workgroup, DHRD and IFPTI proceeds.

Note: IFPTI is also collaborating with DHRD on a national curriculum standard for animal feed control officials.