



**WELCOME**

We welcome back our partners to the second issue of the Partnership for Food Protection (PFP) newsletter! This newsletter is intended to spread the word on the great work that the PFP is accomplishing. The PFP Workgroups have been busy developing and distributing a variety of resources since the last PFP Newsletter. Please take some time to review these documents and see how they can be used in your Agency. This issue contains information on recently released resources, perspective on an Integrated Food Safety System (IFSS) from a Local government official, and a highlight from the territory of Guam's Food Safety Awareness Month.

As always, please let us know if you have integration or food safety activities you would like to highlight in future PFP Newsletters. The newsletter will be published on a quarterly basis. If you have contributions to future newsletters, please send your contributions to Cathy McDermott at [catherine.mcdermott@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:catherine.mcdermott@fda.hhs.gov).

**THOUGHTS ON AN IFSS FROM  
A LOCAL AGENCY PERSPECTIVE**

*Adam London, Administrative Health Officer of the Kent County Health Department in Grand Rapids, Michigan*

A recent report published by the National Association of City and County Health Officials declared that Local health departments have lost 43,900 full-time equivalent positions since the beginning of the "Great Recession." Despite these losses, Local health officials still represent the largest portion of our public health workforce with over 155,000 professionals located in towns, large and small, across the nation. Many of these employees are food safety professionals who know their local farmers, grocers, restaurant owners, and elected officials on a first name basis. And yet, they often do not have a good understanding of who their colleagues are at the FDA and what they do. I recently polled some attendees at an Environmental Health conference on this very topic. Only two out of an audience of approximately thirty communicated that they had a solid understanding of what FDA is doing nationally to protect the food supply. While my poll was not scientific, I do believe the results demonstrate a basic deficiency in our nation's defense of food safety: we are not well integrated. This is especially concerning due to the diminishing size of our public health workforce. Federal, State, and Local agencies must collaborate better to leverage our abilities and protect our citizens.

As the Administrative Health Officer of the Kent County Health Department in Grand Rapids, Michigan, I have great appreciation for the outstanding work that Federal and State agencies are doing for public health. I was recently impressed to learn from my local newspaper that Grand Rapids is one of the leading producers of baked goods and snack foods in the Midwest. Perhaps not coincidentally, Grand Rapids has also retained its crown as "Beer City, USA" for two consecutive years. And yet, with all of this food and beverage production, not a single county health official sets foot in those production facilities. Meanwhile, Local health departments are working hard to ensure safety at the retail/food service end and compiling extensive epidemiological information for their respective communities. To be clear, I am not endorsing any realignment of responsibilities, but rather the re-invention of our systems of communication and collaboration. To that end, Local health departments applaud the FDA for its leadership role in convening the Partnership for Food Protection and endeavoring to building a truly Integrated Food Safety System.

## Examples of Integration at Work:

### Highlights from Guam's Food Safety Awareness Month



Thomas Nadeau, Chief Environmental Public Health Officer, Department of Public Health and Social Services, Mangilao, Guam



The Division of Environmental Health (DEH) of the Guam Department of Public Health and Social Services held its 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Guam Food Safety Education Month (GFSEM) in September 2013. This year's theme was "Improving Guam's Food Safety for All." The many events that were held during the month were geared toward food safety education, including a conference, which focused on the recently adopted Guam Food Code.

The celebration kicked-off on August 26, 2013, as Governor Eddie B. Calvo proclaimed the month of September 2013 as GFSEM. In September, several events were held to educate the community about preventing foodborne illnesses: a poster contest for the island's elementary school students on food safety; media campaign on food safety using daily tips and quizzes; a conference on the major changes between the current food regulations and the upcoming Guam Food Code; three days of training in retail food Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP); and concluded with a food safety fair at the local mall (Micronesia Mall). All the events were spearheaded by DEH with the support of the Guam Food Safety Task Force, which is comprised of various representatives from the Local government and non-government entities.

The GFSEM was established by DEH to tackle its many challenges by partnering with Local and Federal stakeholders who have shared responsibility in keeping food safe on Guam. By partnering with the island's food industry, the military, FDA, and others, DEH was able to secure support and resources in providing education and training to the population. GFSEM is part of a wider strategy of DEH in establishing a plan for a comprehensive food safety system for Guam that seeks to integrate the knowledge, authority, and resources of the division's partners in preventing foodborne illness and responding to outbreaks if it were to occur.

**PFPP RESOURCE DOCUMENTS FOR FOOD SAFETY OFFICIALS**

The 2010 – 2012 PFP Workgroup partners produced several documents aimed at specific areas of food safety. These documents were developed based on the functions and procedures that exist in food safety work of Federal, State, and Local officials. Each of these resource documents are available on the [PFPP Website](#).

**Model for Local Federal/State Planning and Coordination of Field Operations and Training**

The 2010-2012 PFP National Work Planning Workgroup created a model for coordinating work plans. A National Work Plan for Food Facilities and a National Food Sampling Surveillance System are long term goals of the FDA and partner agencies collectively responsible for building an IFSS. Local FDA District and partner agency planning and coordination of field operations are an achievable short term goal that can be implemented now. Best practices for carrying out such planning and coordination of field operations, as well as associated training, serve as a basis for the “Model for Local Federal/State Planning and Coordination of Field Operations and Training.”

**National Program Standards Crosswalk Resource Paper**

The 2012-2012 National Standards Workgroup compiled information on four nationally recognized program standards and requirements that apply to government agencies responsible for the oversight of various sectors of the food industry in the U.S. The food regulatory program areas included in this document are: Grade ‘A’ Milk and Milk Products, Manufactured Foods (excluding meat and poultry), Retail Food Protection, and Molluscan Shellfish.

The crosswalk document allows for a side-by-side comparison of how key program elements (i.e. training, inspections, and laboratory capability) are addressed in each of the different sets of program standards in order to identify commonalities and differences among the existing program standards and to recognize opportunities for harmonizing the program standards and their implementation by regulatory agencies.

The target audience for this document are State and Local government programs (mostly human food programs) who are interested in implementing standards or for programs that have implemented standards and want to see how the various standards inter-relate to determine what that could mean for their programs.

**Recycled Organic Waste as Animal Feed: A Recommendation for Regulatory Programs to Address Current Information Gaps**

Produced by the 2010-2012 PFP National Work Planning (now National Feed Sampling) Workgroup, this document provides recommendations for regulatory officials and waste management firms on how to identify knowledge gaps in the practice of feeding animals organic waste that has been collected from wholesalers, distributors, or retailers.

**Food/Feed Testing Laboratories Best Practices Manual (Draft)**

The highly anticipated “Food/Feed Testing Laboratories Best Practices Manual” (in draft form) was developed by the PFP Laboratory Task Group (LTG). The PFP LTG was charged to document best practices and procedures for food/feed laboratories to support confidence in the integrity and scientific validity of laboratory analytical data and facilitate the acceptance of laboratory analytical data by regulatory agencies. The “Food/Feed Testing Laboratories Best Practices Manual” provides a set of tools, definitions, and references that laboratories can use to improve their operations towards mutual reliance.

**Information Technology Data Principles**

The “Information Technology Data Principles” were developed by the current PFP Information Technology (IT) Workgroup. The IT Workgroup envisions a wide variety of food safety stakeholders with a diverse inventory of IT systems, functionality, and compatibility. The establishment of Data Principles begins to create a repository of artifacts that stakeholders can refer to as they move towards a more integrated and harmonized IT environment over time. The PFP IT Workgroup envisions the document to be a living document that will be reviewed over time to ensure it maintains ongoing relevancy.

**NOTE FROM THE PFP GOVERNING COUNCIL**

Dear Valued Partner,

The PFP Governing Council met in Kansas City, Missouri, on November 13-14, 2013 to set the PFP priorities for the next five years. This objective was completed by identifying the current gaps within the IFSS in the areas of inspections, laboratories, training, and other capacity building advancement. Once the gaps were identified, the Governing Council worked on developing priorities and strategic planning to address those gaps thru the PFP Workgroups. With the passage of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), Congress recognized the importance of working with our regulatory and public health partners at Federal, State, and Local levels to enhance integration. And towards that end, the Governing Council also set forth to begin developing the agenda for the next 50 – State Workshop with a theme geared toward collaboration and coordination between partners to build mutual reliance.

Also at the face-to-face meeting, the Governing Council reflected on the accomplishments of the PFP and lessons learned to date. The group identified successes that include building a stronger operational structure by way of support and renewed commitment from FDA and State and Local health leaders, enhanced communication, and official procedures for implementing PFP integration activities. Since the 2012 50 – State Workshop, the PFP WGs have produced several resource documents which are featured in this newsletter. And while attending business and food safety meetings, the Governing Council members have been avidly acquiring feedback on areas the PFP could improve such as broader communication outreach and sharing.

This is the type of feedback that we appreciate from our Partners. We want PFP stakeholders at all levels to be aware of our activities and resources. In addition to this newsletter, we are developing ways to visibly enhance PFP activities online thru improving our online presence and creating the ability for Partners to sign up for updates via email alerts. We hope that these investments demonstrate that we are listening and addressing gaps in PFP procedures.

As the PFP continues to develop and holds course towards meeting FSMA integration mandates, we thank you for your continued support towards integration.

Sincerely (on behalf of the entire PFP Governing Council),

Barbara Cassens and Pat Kennelly, PFP Governing Council Co-chairs

Barbara Cassens—FDA Office of Regulatory Affairs

Brian Collins— Plano (TX) Environmental Health

Claudia Coles—Washington Department of Agriculture

Jeff Farrar—FDA Office of Foods and Veterinary Medicine

Tracey Forfa—FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine

Patrick Kennelly—California Department of Public Health

Adam London—Kent County (MI) Health Department

Melinda Plaisier—FDA Office of Regulatory Affairs

Daniel Rice—New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

Roberta Wagner—FDA Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition

Robert Waltz—Office of Indiana State Chemist

