

AFDOSS Fall 2010

Newsletter

AFDOSS President's Message



Excerpts from Opening Remarks at AFDOSS' Fall Education Conference, September 13, 2010

Greetings to all in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Puerto Rico. Wow, that encompasses a wide geographical area, and just thinking about all the people it includes, people that are dedicated to the protection of our food, feed, drugs and medical devices, is uplifting to me both personally and professionally. It is a privilege to serve as the President of AFDOSS this year; an organization whose purpose is to assist individuals like you.

Vice-President Charlene Bruce coordinated an excellent program in keeping with that AFDOSS tradition of "education and fun do go together." Charlene re-introduced several informal round table discussions that were well received by our membership. This has always been and hopefully will continue to be a beloved organization whose members know how to work hard. It has been my experience that often those who work hard also play hard; and that too is very evident if you have been to one of our previous conferences. The networking and friendships developed here at these meetings are priceless. This fall in Gatlinburg our Live Auction generated... (You'll have to read Ms. Pittman's article in this newsletter for the grand total) for the Mary Logan Scholarship Fund. Our organization can also boast that it is comprised of many generous individuals that understand the importance of giving back to help prepare individuals in the public health protection arena. Thanks to the auctioneers and all that contributed and participated this year... a good time was had by all.

We are all striving toward the same common goal--protection of the public health. We are fortunate to be a part of such a worthy goal and it is our desire that your AFDOSS organization can facilitate you in your profession. For those who have been in food/drug protection for some time, you are aware that there have always been challenges and

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we always seem to rise to meet or overcome them. Today's time is no different except the obstacles may be more challenging and what happens in one area probably affects us all across the nation and in some instances may even have a global impact. Extreme financial burdens are being faced in every program and natural disasters and accidents take their unplanned toll. Entities that intentionally want to harm others can effectually reduce confidence in the safety of food, feed and drugs and is a daily concern for us. That being said, the people, right now, in this organization and in their positions where they work, are the ones that will find solutions to our problems, no matter what is thrown at us, because we work together, we share our successes, we encourage one another and we have learned to trust others outside our own agency or company. We trust that being a member of AFDOSS has helped you in your endeavors.

AFDOSS New Leadership

Congratulations to the following individuals and thank you for committing your time and efforts to maintaining a strong and productive organization:

Rita Johnson, President

FL Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services

Charlene Bruce, VP

MS State Department of Health

Mary Logan, Secretary /Treasurer/Alumni

TN Department of Agriculture

Pam Miles, Senior Board Member

VA Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services

Mark Reed, Junior Board Member

KY Department of Health

Malcolm Frazier, Ex-Officio (Advisory Comm. Chair)

FDA, SE Region

Joe Reardon, FDA Liaison

Ralph Stafko, USDA Liaison

Carol Selman, CDC Liaison

We are in exciting times! The reality of an integrated food safety system is just on the horizon! Our own AFDOSS members planted this seed over 10 years ago; we congratulate them on their insight, dedication and perseverance in not letting this worthwhile vision fade. As Winston Churchill once said, "Never, never, never give up." The current atmosphere and environment in all high levels of federal, state and local governments has never been better aligned than it is in this moment for this endeavor to succeed.

We look forward to our Spring Educational Conference in Point Clear, Alabama April 3-6, 2011. The local arrangement committee has worked hard on providing an ideal location for AFDOSS and has chosen the Grand Hotel Marriott, Point Clear Resort & Spa. The link to the hotel is: <http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/ptlal-grand-hotel-marriott-resort-golf-club-and-spa/>

Vice President Charlene Bruce will be planning our program; please contact her if you have any subject/topic that you would like on our agenda or if you'd like to contribute in some way. We look forward to a valuable learning experience and in keeping with our AFDOSS tradition ... a good time will be had by all.

Be safe in all you do and don't let the daily minutia deter us from our worthy goals.

Best Personal Regards,

Rita

AFDOSS 2010 Fall Conference

By: JoAnn Pittman, FDA Atlanta District

The Association of Food and Drug Officials of the Southern States' (AFDOSS) Annual Educational Conference was held September 12-15, 2010 at The Park Vista Hotel, a Doubletree Hotel, in Gatlinburg, TN. The conference attracted more than 100 participants representing regulatory officials, industry and academia from 11 states and Puerto Rico. Topics covered during the conference were wide-ranging including: The Deepwater Horizon Mess, Sweet Alabama Home of the Unified Command, Fresh from Florida - The FERN Lab Response, From Mighty Mississippi - The Mud and the Sludge and the Oil-Risk Assessment, The World is Your Gulf Oyster - Re-opening Criteria, Deepwater in the Heart of Texas, CDC - What's Going on In Environmental, Suppliers from Drugs and Devices - Abbott Labs, Pharmaceuticals cGMPs for the 21st Century, Integrated Food Safety System/50 State Meeting: Past, Present, & Future, Current USDA FSIS Initiatives, Update Pan Flu Guide for Consumers, Mississippi State University - World of Academia, FDA Southeast Region Update and FDA Southeast State Cooperative Programs, and FDA's Division of Federal/State Relations (DFSR).

AFDOSS's Communications Newsletter Committee staffed Food Safety Exhibits and provided information on Food Safety and Defense, Drug Safety, and the Reportable Food Registry.

Charlene Bruce, from Mississippi Department of Health, was named the recipient of The Eugene H. Holeman Award. This award was established by AFDOSS in 1977. To be eligible for the award, a nominee must have demonstrated that he/she has served the Association and made a valuable contribution to food, drug, cosmetic, and consumer products and administration and enforcement.

One of the highlights of the annual conference is The Mary Logan Scholarship Auction. The "live" Auction generates a fun and interactive way of bidding on products that are a must have. Established in 1999, the Scholarship is for students entering their junior or senior year. Scholarships are awarded to the selected person to attend a college or university that is studying in the area of food and/or drug. The total from the 2010 live auction is \$5,590! For more information about AFDOSS, please visit www.AFDOSS.org.

114th AFDO Education Conference

The Association of Food and Drug Officials' (AFDO) 114th Annual Education Conference was held in Norfolk, Virginia on June 19-23, 2010. The Program, "2010: The Decade for Integration" attracted more than 300 registrants for the Food Session and Drugs & Medical Devices Supplier Management Forum. The pre-conference workshop, sponsored by the International Food Protection Training Institute (IFPTI) on Sanitation, Sampling and Record-Keeping attracted 112 attendees.

2010 Award Winners

Harvey W. Wiley Award

The 2010 winner of the prestigious Wiley Award was **Ernie M. Julian**, Chief, Office of Food Protection, Rhode Island Department of Health. The Harvey W. Wiley Award is presented annually to an AFDO member who has demonstrated, through the performance of duties, outstanding service and devotion to the administration of food, drug, and consumer protection laws of our country.

AFDO Associate Membership Award

The Associate Member Award was presented to **Virginia Edleman**, Director, QRC, Hershey Foods Corporation. The AFDO Associate Award is awarded annually to an associate member based on long term active membership in the Association, active involvement in committee work, development of model codes, and promoting the objectives of AFDO.

AFDO Achievement Award

This year's Achievement Award was presented to **Peter Ney**, Sanitation and Safety Specialist with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, Office of Food and Meat Inspection. The Achievement Award is annually bestowed on an individual who has demonstrated exemplary performance within their field.

Save the Dates – AFDO 2011

AFDO's 115th Annual Educational Conference will be held at the Marriott Dallas/Plano at Legacy Town Center, Plano, TX from June 18-22, 2011. More information will be posted at <https://www.afdo.org/conferences.cfm> throughout the year.

2010 George M. Burditt/Betsy B. Woodward/Denise Rooney Scholarships

Laura Wiens of Inman, Kansas is currently working towards her Bachelor of Science in Food Science and Industry, as well as, Bakery Science & Management at Kansas State University. Laura has received numerous academic awards and honors and participates in a variety of extracurricular and civic activities. Laura works for the Analytical Lab at Kansas State University as a Lab Assistant. After college, Laura aspires to work in the field of Food Science in the specialty area of either bakery science or meat science.

Marcelina Perez of Pharr, Texas is currently working towards her Bachelor of Science in Nutritional Science at Texas A&M University. Marcelina works as a Lab Technician for the Institute for Obesity Research in College Station, Texas. After college, Marcelina plans to further her education at Colorado State University by participating in a combined program to attain a Master's degree in Public Health and completing a Dietetic Internship with an emphasis in community nutrition education. Her ultimate goal is to rid the world of obesity through nutrition education.

Kevin Johnson of Ludlow, Massachusetts is currently working towards his Bachelor of Science in Food Science and a minor in Biology at University of Massachusetts Amherst. Kevin has received numerous academic awards and honors and participates in a variety of extracurricular and civic activities. After college, Kevin plans to become a research professor at a university or pursue a career in the food industry.

North Carolina Department of Agriculture Commissioner Troxler hosts 6th Annual Food Safety Forum

By Chamus Burnside-Savazzini
Food & Workplace Safety Manager, Food Lion

On August 10th, 2010 NC Agriculture Commissioner, Steve Troxler hosted the 6th Annual Commissioner's Food Safety Forum in Raleigh NC. The Key Speakers were Dr. James Gorny, Office of Food Safety, FDA; Dr. Dan Engeljohn, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Policy and Program Development, FSIS, USDA and Dr. Robert Tauxe, Deputy Director, Division of Food borne, Waterborne and Environmental Diseases, CDC. There was also a cross representation of regulators and industry representatives that served on a panel discussion on "Integrated Food Safety Systems in North Carolina". Some topics discussed during the one day forum were, Produce Food Safety, Food borne Illness Outbreak investigations and Dr. Ben Chapman, Food Safety Specialist, Department of 4-H Youth, NCSU shared a presentation on "Effective Food Safety Messages"

As an attendee I felt that this was a successful event that brought regulators and industry together to discuss pertinent issues related to our NC food supply. The moderators fielded questions from the audience and there were multiple political figures in attendance as well. I had an opportunity to get feedback from Stephen Tracey, Food Safety Manager for Supply Chain with Food Lion Family, Delhaize America and industry representative on the panel discussion and he shared the following:

"I was asked to sit on the "Integrated Food Systems in North Carolina" panel at the Commissioners Food Safety Forum because our company is so connected with the food supply chain and retail sales of food in NC. With our Food Lion Corporate headquarters, 2 distribution centers, and 504 stores across the state, we have a vested interest in providing safe food and working along side those in government that help assure food safety in this state. Over the years, Food Lion has been invited to the discussion table with NCDA, NCDENR, and other state agencies to provide feedback on compliance issues, and share our standards in an effort to improve food safety and food defense in North Carolina. I felt privileged to sit along side government food safety and food defense leaders to share our position, and to help answer questions about the safety of the food in North Carolina."

*-Steve Tracey, Food Safety Manager,
Supply Chain Food Lion/ Delhaize
America*

I look forward to attending future forums.



FDA SOUTHEAST REGION FOOD PROTECTION TRAINING

By JoAnn Pittman, FDA Atlanta District

Initiative to deliver interactive workshops to retail and foodservice establishment owners, managers, and employees becomes a key strategy to enhance understanding and implementation of important food safety and defense principles.

American consumers have one of the safest food supplies in the world, but the world is changing, and we know it can be safer. New food sources, advances in production and distribution methods, and the growing volume of imports due to consumer demand call for a new approach to protecting our food from unintentional (food safety) and deliberate (food defense) contamination. FDA, state and local regulators, and industry operators must all keep pace with these changes to ensure the safety of the nation's food supply.

FDA has developed a comprehensive Food Protection Plan to address the changes in food sources, production, and consumption that we face in today's world. Building upon an already sound food safety protection capability, the Food Protection Plan presents a robust strategy to protect the nation's food supply from both unintentional contamination and deliberate contamination. FDA's Food Protection Plan builds in PREVENTION first, then INTERVENTION, and finally, RESPONSE. Instrumental to the PREVENTION element of the Food Protection Plan is the training of industry to better equip them with the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to properly identify and communicate food safety risks and methods for control.

4th Annual FDA SE Region Food Safety and Defense: BE ALERT Workshop

On September 28, 2010, the FDA Southeast Region held its 4th Annual Food Protection Training entitled, "Food Safety and Defense: BE ALERT Workshop, at the Hilton Atlanta Northeast in Norcross, Georgia. Over 70 people participated in the training



representing owners, managers, and employees of large chain and small, independent grocery stores, restaurants, and institutional foodservice establishments.

The training was designed to incorporate innovative food safety training techniques for oral culture learners. This fun, interactive workshop was created to help retail and foodservice employees and managers learn about: (1) The risks of not taking proactive steps to keep food safe and secure; (2) Behaviors and practices that lead to foodborne illness and how to prevent them; and (3) Precautions that should be taken to protect food from intentional contamination.



Normally, training provided to food employees is often heavily focused on how to comply with regulatory requirements. The format is usually one dimensional with the food employees observing a Power Point presentation, reading standard operating procedures or code requirements, and potentially viewing videos.

There is usually very little hands-on demonstration provided. Often times, there is little focus on the reasons “why” following the regulatory requirement is important relative to the consequences of what happens if you do not follow the requirements. For example, if a food employee reports to work ill, he/she can potentially contaminate the foods prepared and cause the customer who eats the food to become ill.

FDA’s Southeast Region Food Safety and Food Defense training workshop places emphasis on the consequences of not carrying out safe food handling practices. This is done as a precursor to helping participants understand the regulatory requirements to control the five foodborne illness risk factors.

The training was conducted by FDA Southeast Regional Retail Food Specialists, Southeast Region Public Affairs Specialist, Southeast Region Emergency Response Coordinator, Marler Clark LLP, Georgia Department of Agriculture, and Gwinnett and DeKalb County, Georgia Departments of Health. This was a bilingual (Spanish) presentation. All participants took a pre- and post-workshop assessment and received a certificate of completion, as well as food safety and food defense tools and equipment for use in their facilities.

First delivered in 2006, the Southeast Region Food Safety and Defense Workshop has been a collaborative effort between the FDA Southeast Region Retail Food Specialists, Atlanta District Office Public Affairs Specialist, Georgia Environmental Health Association,



Georgia Department of Agriculture, Metro Atlanta County Health Departments, and the FDA Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition's (CFSAN) Office of Food Defense, Communication and Emergency Response. The workshop is supported annually with grant funds from CFSAN.

The FDA Northeast Region Retail Food Specialists and Public Affairs Specialist delivered the first such workshop in the Northeast U.S. on September 28, 2010.

Click [here](#) for more information on the training format, audience, purpose, agenda, and workshop objectives.

For information about this project, please contact:

Alan M. Tart at Alan.Tart@fda.hhs.gov, 404-253-1267 or
JoAnn M. Pittman at JoAnn.Pittman@fda.hhs.gov, 404-253-1272.

Puerto Rico Collaborates with DEA's National Take Back Initiative

By Nilda E. Villegas, FDA San Juan District

On September 25, 2010, the Drug Enforcement Agency, with the collaboration of other federal and state government, community, public health and law enforcement partners, launched a nationwide prescription drug "Take-Back" initiative. The purpose of this initiative was to reach out to individuals to encourage them to rid their households of unused prescription drugs that pose a safety hazard and can contribute to prescription drug abuse. Over 11 collection sites in Puerto Rico were set up in major shopping centers and other localities across Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The service was free and anonymous, no questions asked. Several state and federal agencies joined the initiative, including the Puerto Rico Department of Consumer Affairs, the Puerto Rico Department of Health, PR Senate, Puerto Rico Department of Justice, Puerto Rico National Guard, and FDA among others. FDA-San Juan employees worked at 7 collection sites and handed out informational brochures including FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research publications in Spanish on the safe use of medications and a Consumer Update on how to dispose of medications properly. A total of 750 lbs. of prescriptions drugs were collected in Puerto Rico and 254 lbs. in the Virgin Islands.



Mississippi Seafood Safety

Excerpt from Mississippi Seafood Safety Newsletter

Commercial and recreational fishing are two vital components of life on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Ensuring the safety of the seafood-consuming public and maintaining the integrity of Gulf Coast seafood in the marketplace are two important priorities for state and federal agencies working on the response to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. Long before any oil reached Mississippi waters, the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR), the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) and the Mississippi State Chemical Laboratory (MSCL) were working with federal agencies including the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) along with the other Gulf States to achieve these goals.

Together these agencies developed a plan that would be applied consistently across the Gulf, in both State and Federal waters. The plan called for precautionary closures when oil was present or sometimes projected to be present in an area. This helped to ensure that no oil-contaminated seafood reached the market or was brought in by fishermen. While no tissue testing was required to close an area, a rigorous testing protocol was put in place for reopening an area.

Oil contamination presents two kinds of risks to the seafood-consuming public, and the reopening protocol was designed to address both. The first type of risk is the presence of petroleum-related taint or off flavor, which renders seafood unfit for human consumption. Some petrochemicals create objectionable taste and odor at very low concentrations. The second risk is due to health risks caused by the presence of chemical contaminants, primarily polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) in the edible portions of seafood. The safety of commercial seafood is generally determined by comparison of tissue contaminant concentrations to FDA levels of concern. Toxicologists from federal and state agencies established criteria for PAHs in fish and shellfish, using standard FDA and EPA risk assessment methods, which are protective of human health and would be applied consistently in each of the states and in federal waters. While the closure and reopening protocols were being developed, state and federal agencies were also out in the field actively collecting seafood samples for tissue analyses before, during and after the spill had reached our waters.

Together these agencies developed a plan that would be applied consistently across the Gulf, in both State and Federal waters

Fishery Closures

Precautionary fishery closures were implemented in an area when significant visible oil was observed on the surface. These closure areas included the immediate vicinity of the observed oil as well as a designated buffer zone. Light sheen and tar balls were not considered significant oil according to the protocols due to the low risk of bioaccumulation from these weathered materials. No tissue or water analyses were required to close an area.

The first closure was issued on June 1, 2010, as winds pushed oil into the eastern part of the Mississippi Sound. Based on boat and plane surveillance, additional areas were closed as oil spread across Mississippi waters, and by July 1, 2010, most of Mississippi territorial waters, including the Mississippi Sound and the adjoining Gulf of Mexico waters out to the territorial limit were closed to commercial and recreational fishing.



Reopening Sampling

Reopening criteria, which were agreed upon by the federal agencies (EPA, NOAA, FDA) and all the affected Gulf States, included the following steps: 1. There must be no significant oil detected in the area by visual observation, aerial reconnaissance or water testing for a minimum of three days; 2. There must be a low threat of oil moving back into the area. (These two conditions had to be met before samples were sent to the lab for testing); 3. Samples were first screened for tainting or off flavor using sensory (smell and taste) assessment of seafood by NOAA/FDA-trained experts; and 4. If samples passed the sensory testing, they were submitted to an FDA Laboratory for chemical analysis. This analysis must have demonstrated that the levels of PAHs in the tissues were well below the levels of concern before an area could be reopened to fishing. Reopening tissue

samples were sensory tested by NOAA's Pascagoula, Mississippi, Laboratory and were chemically tested by an FDA Laboratory in Maryland.

Federal Sampling

In addition to the tissue sampling conducted by the states, FDA and NOAA conducted extensive sampling in both closed and open areas of the Gulf, in both federal and state waters. As of August 28, 2010, the NOAA Seafood Inspection Lab at Pascagoula had processed 4,018 samples from federal waters and 731 samples from state waters.

Fishery Reopening

On July 30, 2010, based on the results of the reopening samples, which showed no impairment due to taste and odor or chemical contamination, Mississippi officials, with the concurrence of NOAA and FDA, opened the waters north of the barrier islands to commercial and recreational shrimping and fishing. MDMR continued to systematically sample using the reopening protocols, and on August 6, 2010 all Mississippi territorial waters were opened for shrimp and finfish. By August 21, 2010, all Mississippi waters were opened for blue crab fishing, and on August 25, 2010, FDA granted concurrence for the opening of oyster harvest. MDMR typically opens oyster season in late September or October.

The reopening results mirror the results from the other state and federal monitoring efforts, showing very little or no presence of PAHs in seafood tissues. This sampling includes hundreds of samples from state waters and thousands of samples from federal waters.

Seafood Safety and Dispersants

Sampling in Mississippi state waters continues to show no evidence of dispersants. Scientific data indicate that the dispersants used to combat the oil spill break down rapidly and become highly dispersed in Gulf waters.

MONITORING AND INSPECTIONS OF SEAFOOD FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS

As a response to the Deep Water Horizon oil spill, an increase in the frequency of monitoring and inspections of seafood processing facilities and courtesy inspections of seafood markets in the three coastal counties was immediately implemented. From May to July 2010, seafood officers conducted 99 courtesy visits and provided technical assistance in 20 counties throughout the state. Continued regulatory quarterly inspections, courtesy visits and organoleptic (taste, color, odor and texture) inspections are being conducted by the MDMR Seafood Technology Bureau as well as certifying new seafood dealers.

Puerto Rico Observes National Food Safety Education Month

By Nilda E. Villegas, FDA San Juan District

The Puerto Rico Food Safety Education Consortium conducted a series of events this year observing the National Food Safety Education Month. On September 1, 2010, the Governor of Puerto Rico signed a Proclamation declaring September as National Food Safety Education Month which was presented by the Secretary of the P.R. Department of Health to the FDA District Director and members of the Consortium during a small ceremony held at the DOH.

With FDA funding, the Consortium developed and printed several food safety publications in Spanish, including a teacher's guide and a student activities' book featuring Fight BAC. The goal is to increase awareness of the importance of clean hands and to create awareness on how serious this step is in Fight BAC's campaign to reduce the risk of illness. The publications were developed for children in preschool through 3rd grade. The Puerto Rico Department of Education will be the agency assuring the materials reach the schools.

On September 3 and 9, 2010, FDA San Juan District and the Puerto Rico Food Safety Education Consortium offered a food safety and food defense workshop to 80 food service providers, volunteers, and administrators of community based organizations. This workshop, conducted in Spanish, was sponsored by FDA with a grant awarded by the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition. Funds were provided to train community based organizations (CBOs), whose clients are high-risk and susceptible of food borne illnesses, such as the homeless, HIV/AIDS patients, the elderly, and others. The workshop consisted of twelve lessons, including: Food Defense, importance of food safety, food borne illnesses, health and hygiene, HACCP, purchasing and receiving food, storage, preparation and food service, sanitation, pest control, state and federal regulations etc. The grant allowed the course to be given to CBO's without a cost. Participants had to complete satisfactorily the course and pass a test in order to receive certification. The organizations were extremely appreciative of the initiative.



Seafood HACCP Alliance Meets to Discuss Transition to Future

From AFDO's eNews 9-23-2010

Hosted by U.S. Foodservice, the Seafood HACCP Alliance Steering Committee held its annual meeting in Chicago, IL, on September 20-21, 2010. The primary purpose of this meeting was to discuss the organization's transition to the future and its response to new training needs and opportunities. AFDO and its affiliates (AFDOSS, CASA, MCA, NEFDOA, and WAFDO) were well represented at this meeting.

Following updates from FDA, NMFS, and AFDO, the Alliance discussed projected dates for producing and making available the new training materials for the Basic Seafood HACCP training course. Although the new FDA Hazards Guide has not been released yet, the new training manual will contain materials that reflect the new Hazards Guide. Following some minor editing, it is the goal of the Alliance to make the new training manual available in February or March of 2011. At that time, the Alliance will no longer distribute the old training manual. This will require all trainers to receive updating on the new information included in the new training manual. The Alliance will handle this through a national webinar to be held sometime around April 2011. Individuals who attended any of the three Train-the-Trainer courses held earlier this year in Battle Creek, MI, San Francisco, CA, and Miami, FL, will not need to participate in the updating since they were provided training using the new manual.

Expansion into the international arena was also discussed. The Alliance and AFDO will meet with Chinese food safety officials to discuss conducting Trainer and Basic HACCP courses in China. This meeting will be held in New York City on October 8, 2010.

The Alliance will also pursue a more formal relationship with IFPTI and is expected to develop a Partnership or Cooperative Agreement between these two training groups.

A huge amount of training is planned in the next year, and it is anticipated that AFDO will be providing certificates for these trainings.

Other matters discussed include, revisions to the Protocol and the Internet course, planning another Train-the-Trainer Course, and updating of the Alliance and AFDO websites.

FDA's Oral Culture Project Represents Innovation in Food Safety Education and Training

By Alan M. Tart, Consumer Safety/Training Officer, US FDA

Have you ever wondered whether your food safety training program is effective in changing the behavior and practices of employees? Have you ever been frustrated because despite your best efforts to train them, employees sometimes fail to implement proper food safety practices on a continual basis? Unfortunately, just because an employee is *trained* on the proper food safety practice or procedure does not necessarily mean that the employee will always *implement* it.

So, how can you change your training program to make it more effective at changing behavior? Initiated in 2008, the Oral Culture Learner Project underway by FDA's National Retail Food Team and Public Affairs Specialists hopes to answer this question.

Research by Donna Beegle, Ed.D. (2004) (Available at <http://www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/FoodSafety/RetailFoodProtection/FoodborneIllnessandRiskFactorReduction/RetailFoodRiskFactorStudies/ucm119616.pdf>) suggests that food employees are predominately "oral culture learners," whereas health inspectors and industry quality assurance personnel are "print culture learners." The concept of print versus oral culture learning styles has to do with the way we receive and process information. Although most people utilize both communication styles, we tend to prefer one style over the other depending on our background, education, and other factors.

So what are the differences between oral and print culture learners? Oral culture learners seek out new information from people they know and with whom they have a relationship. They place emphasis on emotion and being able to personally relate to the information being presented. In contrast, print culture learners do not require a personal connection with the information being presented. They are motivated by facts and usually seek out new information by looking for written material (a book or article, for instance) on the subject.

Oral culture learners are able to process many ideas at once; however, they like to focus on the big picture, not the gory details. In contrast, print culture learners like to focus on one concept at a time and categorize concepts in a very orderly fashion (e.g., first this, then that; step 1, then step 2; etc.).

This is important to food safety training since the requirements of the *Food Code* are written to be prescriptive and detailed. It is important to provide the public health rationale of the Code requirements in a way that relates to the life experiences of the

employees (i.e., give the “big picture”) before (or with) the discussion of the desired behavior required by the Code.

Print culture learners are comfortable learning a concept and applying it to various settings and circumstances. For example, if a food employee is a print culture learner, he or she could receive training in a classroom setting or on a computer and apply the concepts learned in the kitchen. In contrast, if the food employee is an oral culture learner, he or she would learn better if taught in the kitchen where the concepts will be applied.

The majority of food safety training materials and instructional methods commonly in use today are designed by and for print culture learners. If an oral culture learner is taught through print communication like pamphlets, standard operating procedures, posters with a lot of words, on-line computer courses, the “message” being delivered can be misunderstood or unconvincing. To ensure control of the foodborne illness risk factors (poor personal hygiene, improper holding temperatures/cooling, inadequate cooking temperatures, contaminated equipment/cross-contamination, and food from unsafe sources), the desired food safety practices or procedures must be taught in a way that can be easily understood and is compelling enough to bring about behavior change.

It is also essential that food safety training focus on how to perform the correct food safety practice, but equally important is that it needs to focus on the reasons why it is important to carry out the behavior on a consistent basis. The materials and instructional methods designed as part of FDA’s oral culture learner project are specifically designed to help food employees understand the reasons why following proper food safety and practices is important to prevent illnesses, deaths, and loss of income and reputation resulting from outbreaks.

In contrast, materials typically in use today generally do a good job of describing how to perform important food safety practices required by the Code but often lack in their ability to communicate, in a compelling manner, the reasons why the practices are important. Consequently, FDA’s oral culture learner project materials are meant to enhance, not replace, existing training materials and methods.

Examples of the materials the group has developed (and, in some cases, collected from other sources) include:

- Storyboards that describe foodborne illness outbreaks from the perspective of the food employees who caused the outbreaks. Telling the story from the first person perspective allows the food employee to share his or her feelings and the consequences of the mistake and showing the consequences of the mistake helps “put a face” on food safety.
- Cause and effect posters that show good and bad practices and the outcome of each.
- Videos showing the consequences of not carrying out the proper food safety practice followed by a discussion of the desired behavior

- Audio testimonials of victims of foodborne illness
- Demonstrations and activities that actively involve the food employee in the learning

Preliminary results of the project suggest that using stories, sayings, and pictures with few words and vivid examples allow food employees to “feel” the impact of their behavior and better understand “why” following proper behaviors and practices is important to preventing foodborne illness. Using interactive demonstrations, allowing for two-way communication during trainings, and conducting the training in a format similar to focus groups may assist in lowering the power dynamic between the trainer and food employees and facilitate learning.

FDA is developing additional materials with feedback obtained from food employees during interactive workshops and from a stakeholder group composed of over 60 representatives from the state and local regulatory community, industry, academia, and trade and professional organizations. The Agency is also planning to test the effectiveness of the materials at changing the long term behavior of food employees.

FDA has posted materials addressing employee health and hygiene materials on their website at <http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/RetailFoodProtection/IndustryandRegulatoryAssistanceandTrainingResources/ucm212661.htm>. The materials will soon be available in eight other languages including Spanish, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian, Korean, Hindi, and Arabic. Materials related to other foodborne illness risk factors are currently being revised and will soon be available. These materials are not copyrighted and may be used freely by industry and regulators alike.

If you have any questions or comments about the project, please contact: Alan M. Tart, Consumer Safety/Training Officer, FDA, DHRD, State Training Team via e-mail: Alan.Tart@fda.hhs.gov or phone: 404-253-1267.

Why It's Important to Keep **Hot Foods Hot...**



Protect People Everywhere.
Always Maintain Hot Food at 135°F or Above.

AFDOSS Member Updates

By **Dan Sowards**

Currently I'm working for the International Food Protection Training Institute (IFPTI) in Battle Creek, Michigan, developing and presenting for a Fellowship training program. This program has 12 students from across the nation and will last an entire year. In addition to approximately three weeks of training during the year, each student will be choosing a topic to work on during the year. The poster presentations will be judged at AFDO next year in Plano, Texas, with the "winner" giving an oral presentation during the Conference in addition to other prizes.

I'm also working with IFPTI on a Curriculum Workgroup, which is examining the entire spectrum of what training food inspectors need. This includes an examination of all of the currently available training nationwide, and determining where the training gaps lie.

I am thoroughly enjoying retirement, if you can call it that! I'm spending much more time for IFPTI than I had planned, but it's very enjoyable to be able to keep busy in the area of food safety.

I do miss staff at the Texas Department of State Health Services, and I miss being intimately involved in the inner workings of AFDO, but it's time for younger folks to take over!!

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Overview of the FDA Food Safety and Defense Workshop

Background

The FDA Southeast Food Safety and Defense Workshop is a collaborative effort between the FDA Southeast Region Retail Food Specialists, Atlanta District Office Public Affairs Specialist JoAnn M. Pittman, Georgia Environmental Health Association, Georgia Department of Agriculture, Metro Atlanta county health departments, and FDA Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition's Office of Food Defense, Communication and Emergency Response.

The first FDA SER Food Safety and Defense Workshop was delivered in 2006. The workshop has been repeated each year since then. There are plans to deliver the fourth annual workshop in Sept 2010. Thus far, the SER has delivered the workshops exclusively in the Atlanta area. Although delivery of the workshop on an annual basis has enhanced FDA's outreach to the retail food industry community, our ability to expand the workshop regionally has been hampered by lack of funding. If funding allows, we plan to expand the workshop to other states in the region during FY '11.

Using funding obtained from CFSAN's Office of Food Defense, Communication and Emergency Response, supplemented by regional funds, the FDA Northeast Region Retail Food Specialists and Public Affairs Specialist Mary Yebba delivered the first such workshop in the Northeast U.S. on September 28, 2010.

Workshop Audience, Purpose, and Objectives

The principle audience for the workshop has been owners, managers, and food employees of small independent retail and foodservice establishments. This group was chosen as the target audience because they represent the large majority of retail and foodservice establishments. Also, large chain operations generally have quality assurance programs in place to address food safety and defense concerns; small, independent operations do not. In order to reduce the occurrence of foodborne illness risk factors and ensure that food served or sold in these operations is safe from intentional contamination, it is important that the Agency convey food safety and defense principles in terms that can be easily understood and applied daily in these operations.

The objectives of the workshop are as follows:

- To enhance the food safety and defense knowledge of owners, managers, and food employees of small independent retail and foodservice establishments in an interactive, non-threatening, easy-to-understand format.
- To provide owners, managers, and food employees with tools to help them apply the concepts learned in the workshop to the operation of their businesses on a daily basis.

The training provided to food employees is often heavily focused on how to comply with regulatory requirements. The format of this training is usually one dimensional with the food employees observing a Power Point presentation, reading standard operating procedures or code requirements, and maybe viewing videos. There is usually very little hands-on demonstration provided, and there is little focus on the reasons why following the regulatory requirement is important and consequences for not.

The FDA Food Safety and Defense Workshop covers in detail the consequences of not carrying out safe food handling practices to control the five foodborne illness risk factors as a precursor to helping participants understand the regulatory requirements.

Measuring Knowledge Pre and Post Workshop

At the beginning of the workshop, participants will complete an anonymous questionnaire relative to the status of the current status of the management systems in place to address food safety and defense concerns. Following the completion of the workshop, participants will complete the same questionnaire. Pooled data from the pre- and post-workshop questionnaires will be used to gauge the overall change in understanding of food safety and defense before and after the workshop. Example questions on the questionnaire include: "Do you conduct background checks on your employees? Do you take temperatures of cooked food? The actual assessment form used is available from FDA.

Workshop Agenda

The workshop agenda is as follows:

8:30	Registration
9:00	Welcome
9:10	Pre-Workshop Assessment
9:20	The Headline You Don't Want to Make (Food Liability/Protecting Your Business)
10:00	Break
10:15	Controlling Foodborne Illness Risk Factors in Your Establishment
12:00	Lunch (provided)
12:45	Controlling Foodborne Illness Risk Factors in Your Establishment (cont'd)
1:15	BE ALERT: Defending Your Food Against Intentional Contamination
1:35	Break
1:50	Protecting Your Food Against Intentional Contamination
2:40	Post-Workshop Assessment/Workshop Evaluation
3:00	Adjourn

Workshop – Room Set Up and Format

The workshop is usually held in a large ballroom. We usually set the maximum number of attendees to 60 to allow for a more interactive environment. The size of the workshop has also been contained by resources.

There is a main session, set up classroom, theatre, or herringbone style (depending on the space), with enough chairs for the total number of participants. You will need a screen, LCD projector, and computer. Depending on the room, this can be set up in the middle.

Around the periphery of the room (or if funding permits, in separate rooms altogether), there needs to be five breakout sessions, set up theatre style or U-shape (depending on space) with a table for displaying learning aids in the front of the group of participants. Each station corresponds to the control of the five foodborne illness risk factors as follows:

- Station 1 - Cooling/Holding Temperatures
- Station 2 - Cooking
- Station 3 - Prevention of Cross-Contamination
- Station 4 - Employee Health and Hygiene
- Station 5 - Approved Sources (you may opt to set up approved sources as a display only and not have an active breakout session. This permits more time for covering the other risk factors.)

An FDA Regional Food Specialist or other facilitator/instructor is assigned to each station.

The welcome and pre-workshop assessments are done as a large group in the main session. Before the “Headline You Don’t Want to Make” presentation usually done by Patti Waller of Marler Clark, which is also done as a large group in the main session, play the C. bot testimonial from the FDA oral culture project (available from FDA). Following the audio, explain to the participants that this is why following safe handling practices is important. People can get hurt and lose function for the rest of their lives - can even die - for a simple mistake. Likewise, businesses can be closed and lose their reputation for causing an illness. This affects their ability to make a living. This provides the lead-in to the “Headline You Don’t Want to Make” presentation.

Following the “Headline You Don’t Want to Make” presentation and break, explain to the participants that they will be divided into five groups for the next part of the workshop. Have the participants sound off 1 to 5 (or 1 to 4, depending on whether you cover approved sources as a breakout session) so they know which station to go to first. Explain that the purpose of this part of the workshop is to learn about the five risk foodborne illness risk factors – what they are, how to control them, and why controlling them is important.

The participants then report to their respective station. Each station is 15 minutes (if there are 5 stations) or 18 minutes (if there are 4 stations). It is important for one of the facilitators to “keep time.” Once the participants are seated in the station, facilitators

follow the lesson plan for their respective station. **The lesson plans for each station are available from FDA.** You will note that the lesson plans call for the use of props, demonstrations, and in some cases, materials from the FDA oral culture project.

At the end of the session, the groups go to the next station (have them rotate clockwise or tell them that “1 goes to 2,” “2 goes to 3,” etc.). This is repeated until all the groups have attended each station (until about 1:15 with a lunch break in the middle).

After the breakout sessions, the next part of the workshop is done as a large group in the main session and focuses on food defense. FDA Public Affairs Specialist presents an overview of ALERT. This is followed by a break and a “rubber meets the road” presentation on food defense.

The participants then take the post-workshop assessment and complete their workshop evaluations. When they turn these in, give them their certificate and thank them for coming.















