

The AFDOSS Biannual Newsletter

Fall Edition 2009

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia

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AFDOSS President's Message



Our mission for all of us continues to be the protection of public health; new initiatives for this end have begun in Washington, DC. This is the establishment of a fully integrated national food safety system that would enhance state safety programs. This draft program emphasized the importance of standardized inspections and laboratory procedures, training and joint rapid response to food incidents with information sharing between states, local and federal partners. The draft provided sustainment through multi-year funding for state and local regulatory and health partners. AFDOSS sent a letter of support to Mike Taylor, Senior Advisor to FDA's

Commissioner following the Fall Conference to see this program through. We need to support and follow the continued progress of this bill for its fulfillment will benefit us all.

Speaking of the Fall Conference, we set several records this year. First, we had a record number of attendees, totaling 110 people. Secondly, our live auction raised \$4,205 for the Scholarship Fund. We had a tremendous program with presenters from our partners in industry, local, state, academia, and federal. Ron Klein traveled all the way from Alaska to provide the AFDO update. Our own Joe Reardon in his new role of Deputy Director of Federal-State Relations attended and provided the DFSR update.

I would like to say thank you to all of AFDOSS for allowing me to serve as President even after I retired from the state of North Carolina in June, 2009. It took me 35 years to get to this point of being president. Thank you for your vote of confidence. Now I would encourage and challenge each of you to bring or send a new member to our next AFDOSS meeting. The new members are our future both in our organization and to our overall mission of protecting public health.

In closing, I would like to say on the behalf of AFDOSS, thank you Mary Logan for all that you do for our organization. I hope to see each one of you along with some new members at our next conference being held in conjunction with AFDO and CASA in Norfolk, VA June 19-23, 2010.

Sincerely,

Larry D. Gabriel

Articles for the Spring Edition are due to the AFDOSS Media Committee by February 2, 2010. Please send articles to matthew.agle@ncagr.gov

Association Objectives

To promote and foster the enactment of improved laws and the effective enforcement of all laws for the protection of the public health and prevention of fraud and deception in the production, manufacture, distribution and sale of foods, drugs, cosmetics, therapeutic devices and consumer products.

To encourage the adoption of uniform administrative procedures.

To encourage cooperation with respect to the enforcement of federal, state, district, county, and municipals laws and regulations.

South Carolina conducts Food Defense Survey

In 2006-2007, with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in a joint collaborative project between SC Department of Health and Environmental Control and the University of South Carolina, and with input from the restaurant industry in South Carolina, we developed a food defense survey using state of art survey development methodology. The resulting survey was mailed to a 50% random sample of restaurants in South Carolina. The survey elicited information on the current status of restaurant vulnerability in 12 functional aspects, distributed in three major areas of restaurant management: a) Employee management and training; b) Vendors and deliveries-related; c) Physical facilities and operational security. A total of 926 completed surveys were received (response rate=15%). The goal of the survey was to assess statewide preparedness in South Carolina's restaurants to preempt malicious food contamination and bioterrorist acts. Funding from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2008, through the Innovative Food Defense grant, further helped us in analyzing the data. Results of the survey are being published shortly in a peer reviewed journal, Journal of Public Health Management and Practice. We are also in the process of producing a short film to highlight the issues involved in Food Defense for restaurants. The DVD will be distributed to restaurants in South Carolina and will be shared with other local, state and federal officials.

For more information on the project please contact C.P.Kanwat: kanwatcp@dhec.sc.gov

More News from South Carolina:

SC Dept. of Health (DHEC) is pleased to announce that they have enrolled in both the FDA Retail and Manufactured Food Voluntary standards.

More News from South Carolina:

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC), in conjunction with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), is hosting the 2009 FDA Southeast Regional Food Safety Seminar. This year's seminar will be held in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina on November 3 -5 at the Hilton Myrtle Beach Resort & Royal Palms.

The FDA Southeast Regional Food Safety seminar is comprised of public health and industry representatives from 10 southern states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virgin Islands. Members from all of these states attend this educational conference. We look forward to seeing you there!

For further information please contact: Rebecca Causey @ causeyrj@dhec.sc.gov or 803.896.0641.

AFDOSS Board Members

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 Email: lqabe5219@bellsouth.net

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Supply Chain Food Safety – Food Lion Helps Drive the Global Food Safety Initiative

In May of 2000, a group of International CEOs identified the need to enhance food safety, ensure consumer protection and to strengthen consumer confidence. They proposed a program which would set requirements for food safety schemes and improve cost efficiency throughout the food supply chain. Following their lead, CIES – The Food Business Forum (now called the Consumer Goods Forum) developed its food safety programs to help food safety stakeholders work together towards:

- Decreasing food safety scares and risks
- Providing better quality products for consumers
- Enhancing transparency between all the links in the food chain

This program is known as the Global Food Safety Initiative or GFSI.

The GFSI vision of ‘once certified, accepted everywhere’ has now become a reality. Wal-Mart, Delhaize (Food Lion, LLC) Carrefour, Tesco, Metro, Migros, and Ahold, have agreed to reduce duplication in the supply chain through the common acceptance of any of the four GFSI benchmarked schemes. The four food safety schemes recognized and accepted by the GFSI are: Dutch HACCP, BRC, IFS, and SQF 2000.

Retailers accept certificates based on standards in order to be able to make an assessment of their suppliers of private-label products and fresh products and meat, to ensure that production is carried out in a safe manner. Delhaize Group has representatives helping with GFSI working groups and committees to enhance the GFSI program worldwide.

Since 2008, all suppliers to Food Lion, LLC banners have been encouraged to become certified by a GFSI auditing scheme. Food Lion and other Delhaize US banners have set a deadline of December 31, 2010 for all our vendors/suppliers to be operating under a GFSI benchmarked program.

Steve Tracey
Food Safety Manager - Supply Chain
Food Lion, LLC
704-223-0320

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Nilda E. Villegas
Food and Drug Administration
Puerto Rico

C. Stewart Watson
Food and Drug Administration
Florida

The AFDOSS Media and Public Affairs meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 10:00 a.m. EST. Dial-in information: 1-866-756-1317 Passcode: 2899174

North Carolina Fresh Produce Safety Task Force Hosts FDA/USDA Listening Session

The NC Fresh Produce Safety Task Force hosted officials from the FDA and USDA at a listening session held September 28th in Raleigh, NC. Representatives of the agencies met at the North Carolina State Fairgrounds to listen to input from farmers on the impact that future food safety regulations may have on small- and medium-sized farms.

The meeting was attended by farm owners from across the state, representatives of commodity and agriculture leadership groups, academia, and concerned consumers. After the conclusion of the public listening session, the officials were taken on a farm tour of two local small farms. The federal team is planning to tour other states over the next two years. The session and farm tours received media coverage on TV and in newspapers across North Carolina.

The Fresh Produce Safety Task Force includes representatives from NC State University, NC A & T University, NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, Farm Bureau, commodity associations, and farmers.

The following are some photos of the farm tour (and the snake we encountered!). For more information visit: <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/chatham/ag/SustAg/FDAvisit.html>.



Farmer Alex Hitt (Center, in cap) talks about postharvest handling at the Peregrine Farm packing shed.



Alex describes their mobile high tunnel system and discusses the crucial role of cover crops on the farm.

Alumni Updates

Curtis Edwards works part time for Amresco Laboratories (San Francisco, California). Curtis is preparing support information and documentation for ISO 17025 accreditation and works as a regulatory, management, and quality liaison. For retirement fun he enjoys saltwater. Curtis's wife continues to teach, but they are planning a trip to Costa Rica to try to catch the elusive Roosterfish.

Bob Gordon is doing some pharmacy consulting as well as helping look after grandchildren. Bob and his wife enjoy good health and their involvement with family in the beautiful foothills of Yadkin County, North Carolina.

Raymond Eads is enjoying his retirement visiting his son in California, staying physically fit, involving himself with his Masonic Lodge and making as many University of Tennessee football games as he can. He hopes to join his AFDOS friends at next year's Fall Conference in Gatlinburg.

Cooperative Programs Helps Keep Food Safe

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is responsible for ensuring that the food we eat is safe. Whether it's cereal on the grocery store shelf, salad served in a restaurant, milk sold in a school cafeteria, or oysters offered on a raw bar, the American public expects that food will be safe and not cause illness.

FDA regulates about 80 percent of the country's food supply—everything except certain meats, poultry, and egg products, which are regulated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. But FDA can't be in every grocery store, restaurant, school cafeteria, milk plant, or shellfish plant. So the job of protecting the nation's food supply is a cooperative effort between FDA and more than 3,000 state, local, tribal, and territorial health and regulatory organizations throughout the United States.

The Programs

FDA and state/local regulatory agencies work together to protect consumers from foodborne illness through three cooperative programs authorized by the U.S. Public Health Service Act:

- retail food
- milk
- shellfish

"Each of the three programs is unique in how it handles the different food commodities," says Larry Stringer, director of state programs in FDA's Central Region. "Although they each have their own strategies, the programs are administered in a similar way to ensure that three major industries have the food safety standards in place to protect public health."

The responsibility and authority for regulating retail and foodservice establishments, milk plants and dairy farms, and shellfish plants and growing waters lie primarily with state and local governments. Officials at these government levels inspect these food facilities, license establishments, issue permits, and enforce the laws and regulations.

"Through the cooperative programs, FDA assists the state and local programs," says Kevin Smith, director of FDA's retail food and cooperative programs coordination staff. "We help the state and local programs do their job better by providing guidance, training, certification, and other technical assistance."

"The cooperative programs work very well," says Charlene Bruce, director of food protection for the Mississippi State Department of Health. "They help us to leverage our resources, and our interaction with FDA helps us keep abreast of current food protection issues and new requirements through guidance, standards, and the food code."

The Experts

About 55 FDA experts known as regional retail food, milk, and shellfish specialists work in the cooperative programs on varied tasks, such as:

- working with state and local officials to improve their supermarket and restaurant inspections
- auditing state dairy personnel as they inspect dairy plants to ensure that they are citing the required sanitation standards
- patrolling waters with state authorities for illegal shellfish harvesting
- training and certifying state officials on the use of FDA model codes and ordinances, sets of recommendations to help guide food regulatory agencies in establishing uniform standards and regulations for food safety in their own states
- appearing before local government councils to promote the adoption of the latest version of FDA's model codes and ordinances

Alumni Updates

Bill Brooks is staying busy with community service through the Rotary Club and his church. His wife is also keeping active in the community in retirement. They plan as many trips as possible to the Boston area where their three children and seven grandchildren live. Bill still keeps informed on food safety issues by sitting in on the South Carolina Interagency Food Safety Council meetings and keeping up with old associates.

Heinz Wilms is now retired from FDA, doing some consulting for USDA, hosting foreign visitors from many countries touring the country and learning about US agriculture, food processing and regulatory programs. Heinz has also consulted with the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition helping Central American officials in regulating dairy processing. Beginning in 1996, Heinz and his wife, Sue Ann, began breeding Alpacas. They also have a retail store on their farm where they feature alpaca products. Heinz experienced heart problems in 2005 and 2006 which led to heart surgery in 2008. Heinz and his wife are slowly getting out of the Alpaca business, but still enjoy spending time with family and friends.

FDA regional specialists work within the agency's five geographic regions (Northeast, Southeast, Central, Southwest, and Pacific), with each specialist responsible for a cluster of states in that region.

"Just like those at the state and local levels, our people are incredibly dedicated," says Richard Barnes, director of FDA's Division of Federal-State Relations. "They are called specialists for a reason. They understand the cooperative programs from a national scope down to the local level, and how FDA's model codes and ordinances apply to local laws."

About 25,000 state and local officials conduct more than two million inspections of food facilities each year across the country. "The specialists have to address questions from all of these people in the different jurisdictions," says Barnes. "They are educators, they are trainers, they are people who understand enforcement and program development—they wear a lot of hats."

One hat is that of an environmental health specialist. Aside from their day-to-day work, FDA regional specialists may be deployed to devastated areas in the aftermath of hurricanes, floods, and other disasters to help start up safe food production. "Today I'm a milk specialist," says FDA's Tim Roddy, "and tomorrow I may be a milk specialist. But if I go to a flooded area, I become an environmental health specialist, which means I can inspect a restaurant, run a solid waste site, check the wells, or be part of a team that would oversee the public water supply start-up."

In addition to the regional specialists, the cooperative programs rely on numerous FDA food safety experts to develop and implement policies and programs. These experts contribute to the cooperative programs through tasks such as

- developing and interpreting the model codes, ordinances, and other guidance documents that address the prevention and control of foodborne illness
- identifying research needs to address emerging food safety concerns
- training and standardizing FDA regional specialists who, in turn, train and certify state and local personnel in sanitation and other food safety issues
- maintaining national listings of firms that meet program requirements

Beyond their customary work in the cooperative programs, FDA food safety experts and regional specialists may also be called upon to ensure the safety of food served at events of national significance, such as:

- national political conventions
- presidential inauguration activities
- U.S.-based Olympic games
- U.S.-hosted summits of world leaders

The Conferences

A national conference for each cooperative program brings together representatives from all levels of government, the food industry, the academic community, and consumer organizations to address emerging food safety problems. The conferences work toward developing science-based procedures and best practices for food regulatory agencies and industry to follow. The national conferences are

Conference for Food Protection
National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments
Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference

"The conferences represent the formal agreement between FDA and the state and local regulatory entities," says Richard Barnes, director of FDA's Division of Federal-State Relations. The model codes, ordinances, and related documents that guide the cooperative programs emerge from these conferences, he adds. "So not only are the programs cooperatively run, but the guidance is cooperatively developed."

Alumni Updates

Mary Logan states that besides doing AFDOSS work, she enjoys woodworking, antiques, and volunteering for various church projects. She and her husband, Bubba, have completely remodeled their home in Brentwood, TN. Since retirement from the TN Department of Agriculture, she has traveled to Australia, New Zealand, Alaska, Canada, Italy and Egypt. She had a trip planned to Israel and Jordan in November but had to cancel because of a hip replacement operation.

John Turner, FDA, alumni and Hayward Mayfield (the chief) meet once a month for lunch. They both live in Georgia close to their grandchildren.

Irving and Joyce Bell spend around 6 months each year at their home in Bonita Springs Florida. Last year, they celebrated their 50th Anniversary. Both enjoy playing golf.

Mississippi's Environmental Services Knows their ABC's

"Yeah, can you tell me the difference between an 'A' and a 'C'?"

"Well, in high school, it determined whether or not I got the car on Saturday night."

"I hear ya! No, I'm talking about on restaurant grades."

"I kind of figured that. Well, there are three possible grades: the 'A' and 'C' you mentioned, and incredibly in between those, a 'B'."

"The government do like to keep their letters in order, don't they?"

"Absolutely. Anyway, The 'A' signifies there were no critical violations found at the time of inspection. 'B' means one or more critical violations were found, but they were corrected on the spot and weren't repeat violations. 'C' means that one or more critical violations were found that either weren't corrected onsite or were also noted on a previous inspection. It also means we're going to be doing a follow-up inspection to make sure the problems have been corrected."

"Y'all don't give 'F's?"

"Not really. If a place has imminent or chronic health hazards, they can be closed. I guess you could consider that an 'F' if you really wanted, but if they're closed, there's not going to be any customer to see the grade anyway."

"I guess you got a point there. Well, listen – the other day I ate at (*name withheld primarily because I'm making this up as I go along*) and I saw a 'B' hanging up on the wall, but I really couldn't make out all the fine print. How do I find out what was wrong?"

"First of all, thanks for noticing the grade. Do you have internet access?"

"I sure do. Don't tell anybody, but I like to do all those quizzes on Facebook. Plus, my granddaughter is setting me up to sell my pickled kudzu on eBay." (Note to self: before hanging up, ask about that pickled kudzu!)

"O.K. great. You can go to www.healthmys.com and see the inspection reports for any restaurant in the state."

"What was that website again?"

"That's www.healthmys.com."
(shameless plug to make sure you noticed the website. Hey, it works in commercials!)

"I'll have to check that out. Thanks!"

"You're welcome, sir. Is there anything else I can help you with?"

"Nope. I think that pretty much covers it."

"Great. Now, while I have you on the phone, about that pickled kudzu..."

Submitted by:
John Luke, Food Program Specialist/Trainer
Mississippi State Department of Health
570 E. Woodrow Wilson
Jackson, MS 39215
601-576-7689

Alumni Updates

Edsel and Cathryn Moore

keep the road hot from their home in Kentucky to Naples, Florida. Edsel has served as the Shrine Potentate and was President of the Southeastern Shrine Association that comprises nine states, Mexico and Panama. They enjoy gardening and have been blessed with good health.

Sandy Baxter writes for "The Tennessean-Brentwood Journal" about the towns of Triune and Arrington, TN and her last article stated "Hugs, smiles still the best gift"- for Christmas.

Robert Reeves retired from the Institute of Edible Oils (Washington) and moved to Jackson TN. Robert is doing consulting work and he and Susan enjoy world travel.

John and Martha

McGlamery, NC, recently stopped by the Gatlinburg Conference.

Puerto Rico Partners with State Combating Health Fraud

On August 28, 2009, FDA San Juan District Office (SJN-DO) held a statewide conference entitled "Health Fraud and Its Implications". The event was the result of a partnership between FDA and the Puerto Rico Department of Consumer Affairs (DACO). Approximately 100 state officials, including inspectors and health educators, from the Department of Consumer Affairs, Department of Health, Department of Aging and the University of Puerto Rico attended the event held in Bayamon, PR. Gary Coody, National Health Fraud Coordinator, was guest speaker. He provided a national perspective on how FDA is protecting the public of health fraud products. DACO Secretary and FDA San Juan District Director offered welcoming remarks. SJN-DO Public Affairs Specialist defined health fraud and spoke on how to recognize it. The agenda included a panel entitled "Regulatory Systems and Legal Implications. Panel speakers included: SJN-DO Compliance Branch Director, DACO attorney, FDA-OCI Special Agent in Charge and a USDA investigator. A presentation on drug and dietary supplements interactions was presented by an FDA SJN-DO Science Advisor who is also professor of the School of Pharmacy at the University of Puerto Rico. The event received extremely positive evaluations.

Nilda E. Villegas
Food and Drug Administration
Public Affairs Specialist
San Juan District
Email: nilda.villegas@fda.hhs.gov

Puerto Rico Conducts State Partnership Alliance Meeting

On August 20, 2009 FDA, San Juan District hosted a state partnership alliance meeting. Twelve officials from the Puerto Rico Department of Health, Department of Agriculture, Department of Consumer Affairs and the University of Puerto Rico, School of Pharmacy attended the meeting. This networking meeting provided an outstanding opportunity to exchange information on new initiatives and issues that needed to be addressed. The agenda included presentations from all FDA San Juan District branches, the District Director's office and every guest Agency. Laurie Farmer, Director of State Cooperative Programs gave a presentation to the group via conference call. The meeting was extremely positive. FDA and state officials discussed in detail future leveraging opportunities.

Nilda E. Villegas
Food and Drug Administration
Public Affairs Specialist
San Juan District
Email: nilda.villegas@fda.hhs.gov

Puerto Rico Conducts Joint FDA/USDA Meeting to Close Gap and Build Bridges

Grocer Committed to Quality and Safety

BI-LO is committed to offering safe, wholesome, high quality foods in a clean, modern and attractive environment. BI-LO actively promotes safe food handling by continually reinforcing established policies and procedures through teammate training and education programs. 178 BI-LO teammates have completed the Essentials Class of Food Safety, a 2 day food safety class, in 2009.

BI-LO's September newsletter focus is on National Food Safety Education Month. Teammates are reminded to "do our part to educate consumers on safe food handling practices". BI-LO has provided sanitized wipes for customers to use on buggies as they enter our stores as well as in the markets for use after handling raw meat. Sanitized hand wipes and hand sanitizer were added early this year and placed throughout our stores for additional protection. September's newsletter also focuses on the basics: keeping cold foods below 41F reheat leftovers to 165F and always keep it clean!

The USDA/Food Safety and Inspection Service and FDA San Juan District hosted a meeting on November 18, 2009, entitled "Closing the Gap and Building Bridges Among Federal and State Partners", the meeting was an Inter-Departmental and Agency Liaison meeting for food safety and defense within Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. Participants were from the Puerto Rico Department of Health/ Environmental Office and Epidemiological Office, USDA/ Food Nutrition Service, USDA / Food Safety Inspection Service, USDA / Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA / Plant Protection Quarantine, Department of Homeland Security/ Customs and Border Patrol, Puerto Rico Department of Agriculture, the Dept of Justice/Federal Bureau of Investigations , and NOAA.

Every organization had an opportunity to provide an update on their organizational structure, critical mission and food safety and food defense efforts. Numerous questions on jurisdictional issues were addressed. Emergency response activities and partnering opportunities within the Caribbean were also discussed. The group agreed to schedule more informative meetings and create a directory of names , phones and e-mail addresses to coordinate efforts on safety alerts and prevention of foods either domestically and imported to PR and USVI. The group overall was positive. The group also agreed to develop a strong network to continue collaborating on food safety and defense. FDA San Juan District Public Affairs Specialist Nilda E. Villegas received a recognition from USDA/FSIS San Juan Office Investigator signed by USDA's Southeast Regional Director for her efforts in supporting federal initiatives in food safety and food defense education.



USDA/FSIS San Juan Office Investigator William Tirado presents FDA/San Juan District Public Affairs Specialist Nilda E. Villegas a certificate of recognition for her efforts in supporting federal initiatives on food safety and food defense education.

Group of USDA/FDA and state officials that attended the meeting.

