

Fruit and Vegetable Safety and Quality PDG

Attendees: Gretchen Wall (Chair), Alda Pires, Alison Lacombe, Angela Shaw, Angela Valadez, Anna Starobin, Annalisa Hultberg, Anne-Marie Perchec-Merien, Audrey Kreske, Betsy Bihn, Blanca Ruiz, Bledar Bisha, Brad Taylor, Brian Himelbloom, Cameron Bardsley, Caroline Smith DeWaal, Caroline Wang, Channah Rock, Christina Wilson, Connie Fisk, David Buckley, Don Stoeckel, Elisabetta Lambertini, Elizabeth Williams, Emily Griep, Faith Critzer, Gireesh Rajashekara, Humberto Maldonado, Jeffrey Nauseda, Jennifer McEntire, Jill Hollingsworth, Jim Brennan, Jitu Patel, Joe Holt, Joshua Gurtler, Jovana Kovacevic, Kaiping Deng, Karen Killinger, Karuna Kharel, Kevin Edwards, Kolawole Banwo, Kristin Esch, Kristin Woods, Kurt Nolte, Kyle Monahan, Larry R. Beuchat, Les Bourquin, Li Maria Ma, Lori Kora, Luis Rodriguez, Lynette Johnston, Manoj Shah, Manreet Bhullar, Marti Hua, Mary Anne Amalaradjou, Mary Tortorello, Melinda Moss, Michael Wood, Morgan Wallace, Peter Kennedy, Prachi Pahariya, Robert Bernard Gravani, Samir Assar, Sarah Murphy, Sharan Lanini, Shauna Henley, Sonia Almeria, Tami Cloyd, Tommy Saunders, Toni Hofer, and Xuetong Fan.

Board/Staff Present: Michelle D. Danyluk, Emilio Esteban, Didi Loynachan, and Dina Siedenbueg.

Number of Attendees: 75.

Meeting Called to Order: 2:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Thursday, October 1, 2020.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Gretchen Wall.

Old Business: Minutes from the 2019 meeting were adopted without changes. PDG members were reminded that IAFF Connect is the primary mechanism for communication and collaboration and that on Oct. 2, 2020, registration rates for the 2020 Annual Meeting will increase.

New Business: Outgoing Chair, Humberto Maldonado, thanked the PDG for the opportunity to serve as Chair and welcomed Gretchen Wall as incoming Chair and Kristin Esch as incoming Vice Chair. Emilio Esteban provided the IAFF Executive Board Report.

Historically, the FVSQ PDG provides a series of presentations and updates to the members, which are outlined below.

Produce Safety Consequences of COVID – Dr. Jennifer McEntire, Senior Vice President Food Safety & Technology, United Fresh Produce Association

Through a survey sent prior to the meeting, PDG members indicated interest in learning more about how the pandemic has impacted the produce industry and how they might contribute to efforts to assist the produce industry as a whole. Dr. McEntire discussed a wide array of impacts to the produce industry, including consumer confidence and misperceptions, farm labor challenges, produce safety implications, research needs, unintended consequences of the pandemic (such as a shift to more home food delivery and home cooking), and future regulatory influence. Her informative presentation led to an open discussion amongst PDG members. Topics brought forth by members included traceability initiatives, e-commerce, and reaction to pathogen detection on food products and packaging.

FDA Updates – Dr. Samir Assar, Dr. Kurt Noelte, and Dr. Karen Killinger

Dr. Assar opened the presentation by discussing the 2020 Leafy Greens STEC Action Plan which was issued last March. He highlighted three outbreaks in romaine (2018 – Yuma, Santa Maria; 2019 – Salinas) and discussed FDA key focus areas on prevention, response, and addressing knowledge gaps after these outbreaks. Prevention efforts have focused on agricultural water safety, enhanced inspection, auditing, and certification programs, microbial surveys and STEC detection, increased awareness to address concerns around adjacent land use, and strengthening communication and outreach. FDA also has responded by publishing the Salinas outbreak investigation report and is conducting follow up surveillance during the fall 2020 growing and harvest season. More broadly, FDA is pursuing activities to promote technology, enhanced traceability, utilization of data, advanced root cause analysis, and outbreak/recall communications. Knowledge gaps are being filled by conducting longitudinal studies, data mining on previous outbreaks, and compost sampling assignments in California. Dr. Kurt Noelte and Dr. Karen Killinger discussed FDA's activities surrounding adjacent and nearby land use issues which have been implicated in historical observations from on-farm investigations going back to 2009. PDG members were encouraged to

reach out to Dr. Killinger and Dr. Noelte if there is information to share or opportunities to discuss related to adjacent land use. Contact information was provided during the presentation (see 1:09:53 of the meeting recording), go to <https://transcripts.gotomeeting.com/#/s/db564778399a42ab-3c29a85b0743326ba459e1da7a9c3014ad0491ff25cfa5f5>.

Sprout Safety Alliance, Dr. Kaiping Deng, IFSH/IL Institute of Technology

Dr. Kaiping Deng, IFSH/IL Institute of Technology, provided the update. Her presentation started by reporting on Sprout Safety Alliance go to <https://www.ifsh.iit.edu/ssa> training activities. 104 sprout operations have attended the training, including 158 individuals. In addition, 61 federal regulators (federal, state, and international), and 3 supermarket chain managers have attended the training. The SSA has approved 34 trainers across the U.S. 11 are from universities, 8 are state regulators, 10 are consultants (domestic and international), and 5 are sprout growers. Trainers are available to conduct trainings in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Korean. New this year is the SSA Virtual Training due to the pandemic. This training is now broken in to 2 four-hour sessions delivered on Zoom with group exercises and knowledge checks. Pre- and post-training assessments were discussed. Other outreach activities included 2 webinars (*Listeria* concerns and testing requirements). SSA is also developing a video series, though progress has halted due to the pandemic. SSA continues to provide updates via their newsletters and technical support through the SSA TAN.

Produce Safety Alliance, Dr. Betsy Bihn, Cornell University

Dr. Betsy Bihn provided the update for the Produce Safety Alliance and began by discussing COVID-19 priorities and impacts. This included keeping the PSA Grower Training accessible through online and remote courses, supporting trainers by offering extra office hours and mentoring for remote trainings, and sharing COVID-19 facts through industry office hours, FAQs, and guidance documents. Dr. Bihn noted for attendees that course terminology is important as each of the course types are very different (in-person, remote, or online). The PSA is hosting a series of refresher webinars for PSA Trainers starting on Oct. 1 through the end of November. Each session is one hour long and hosted on Thursdays at 12 p.m. ET. More information about the series can be found on the PSA website go to, <https://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/training/trainer-updates/>. The first pilot remote Train-the-Trainer Course was hosted on Sept. 21-24, 2020 and the Spanish pilot remote course will be hosted on Oct. 5-8, 2020. The PSA plans to evaluate these programs and release additional dates for PSA Train-the-Trainer Courses in the near future. The PSA collaborated with the FSMA Southern Center to deliver two Advanced PSA Trainer Workshops in 2019 and 2020. They are moving forward in revising content, but the pandemic has prevented the scheduling of future courses due to the hands-on nature of activities built into the course. Dr. Bihn shared training metrics, go to <https://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/training/training-reports/> and highlighted that some changes may be made in the next reporting cycle. There was also a reminder to trainers to update their contact <https://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/content/update-my-entry-trainers-only/> information. The PSA continues to move forward with international outreach activities, development of new education and extension materials, and supporting diverse learning opportunities (i.e., translations, adaptations of the curriculum).

Overview of Foodborne Outbreaks since last IAFF meeting – Dr. Tami Cloyd, Team Lead FDA CORE Outbreak Evaluation Team

Dr. Tami Cloyd provided an update of produce related outbreaks from July 2019 – present day. Dr. Cloyd reviewed the goals and activities of CORE team including surveillance, response, communications, and outbreak evaluation. In the presentation, Dr. Cloyd highlighted that CORE has responded to 33 outbreaks since the last meeting, 24 of which were produce related (19 currently closed). 6 had vehicles confirmed, 13 had vehicles suspect. The majority of outbreaks were associated with Romaine lettuce (5); other outbreaks involved blackberries, a combination of raspberries and blackberries, strawberries, herbs, mushrooms, mango, cut fruit, diced tomatoes, and sprouts. The produce originated from both domestic and international sources. Produce-related outbreak pathogens included *Listeria monocytogenes*, *E. coli*, *Salmonella*, *Cyclospora*, and Hepatitis A. Three outbreaks were still in response during the last annual meeting including melons, vegetable trays, and papayas – all which were caused by *Salmonella*. One outbreak of interest associated with enoki mushrooms was reviewed. FDA is also actively investigating another multi-state outbreak associated with *Salmonella* infections and wood ear mushrooms. Additional outbreaks currently in response include pre-packaged salad mix (*Cyclospora*), red onions (*Salmonella* Newport), and peaches (*Salmonella* Enteritidis).

Student PDG Updates – Dr. Cameron Bardsley

Dr. Cameron Bardsley provided the update on behalf of the IAFP Student PDG. There is a 3-minute thesis competition that is happening – including two rounds. Finalists will be selected to present in a webinar held in November (date TBD). Submissions will be accepted until Oct. 4, 2020. If PDG members have any opportunities for students, feel free to reach out to the Student PDG leadership. Dr. Bardsley also acknowledged the upcoming symposia and roundtables organized by the Student PDG, and encourages all PDG members to attend the 2020 sessions or work towards co-sponsorship of sessions for 2021. There also are changes in leadership that have occurred. The new Chair is Minh Duong, Vice Chair is Erika Estrada. Dr. Bardsley encourages all PDG members to become active in the Mentor/Mentee program. Last year, there were 36 mentoring matches between student and professional members.

PDG Updates – 2020 Meeting & Planning for 2021

The FVSQ PDG session schedule for the 2020 Annual Meeting was shared with meeting attendees. The PDG sponsored 2 roundtables and 10 symposia for the 2020 meeting. Proposals for 2021 are due on Nov. 10, 2020. There is a discussion post set up on IAFP Connect for FVSQ PDG members to discuss and collaborate on potential proposals. Please contact the FVSQ Chairs no later than October 30, 2020 for review and approval prior to your submission. There is also opportunity to host webinars and additional educational opportunities in 2021. If you have ideas, please share them with Gretchen or Kristin.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Recommend to the Board that Kristin Esch, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, be approved as Vice Chair of the PDG.
2. Continue to offer free webinars sponsored by the IAFP Foundation to increase PDG accessibility to learning opportunities.

Next Meeting Date: July 18-21, 2021, Phoenix, Arizona.

Meeting Adjourned: 4:10 p.m. Eastern Time.

Chairperson: Gretchen Wall.