

Applied Laboratory Methods PDG

Members Present: Leslie Thompson, Patrice Arbault, Nathan Bauer, Christine Aleski, Reginald Bennett, Tyler Berg, Preetha Biswas, Michael Brodsky, Melissa Calicchia, Alessandra Chiareli, J. Philip Coombs, Vanessa Cranford, William Cray, Hari Dwivedi, Hesham Elgaali, Elena Enache, Peyman Fatemi, Sally Foong-Cunningham, Gary Gensler, Christina Harzman, Robin Kalinowski, Sun Kim, Jeff Kornacki, Keith Lampel, Jennifer Lee, Fritz Lembke, Xin Li, Joe Meyer, Molly Mills, Omar Oyarzabal, Amy Smith, Christopher Snabes, Pat Rule, Thierry Sofia, Mary Lou Tortorello, Erdal Tuncan, P.C. Vasavada, George Wilson, Charles Young, Guopeng Zhang and Hari Dwivedi.

Board/Staff Members Present: Don Schaffner.

New Members: Donna Williams-Hill, Ravinder Reddy, Ben Tall, Brandi Baros, Elaine Black, Gregory Devulder, Kristin Butler, Vijay Juneja, Gustavo Gonzalez, Patrick Krakar, Ian Jenson, Laretta Johnson, Kathleen Rajkowski, Carrie Ferstl, Anjana Agarawal and Panita Manalili.

Visitors/Guests: Ram Rao, A. Crispin Philpott, Stan Bailey, Pancita Manalili, Ray Collins and Craig Scolah.

Meeting Called to Order: 9:03 a.m., Sunday, July 31, 2011.

Recording Secretary of Minutes: J. Philip Coombs.

Old Business: Review of symposia and round tables accepted for the 2011 meeting.

S2 – Global Food Safety. George Wilson reported that four speakers were on the final program and all were present at the meeting.

S10 – Campylobacter. Patrice Arbault reported that there would be three speakers followed by a panel discussion.

S24 – Novel Approaches / Foodborne Pathogens. Patrice Arbault reported that there would be six speakers.

RT8 – Failure to Communicate / Method Equivalency. The Round Table would be moderated by Mark Carter and include several panel members. Michael Brodsky said that the intention was to submit a review article on proceedings to Food Protection Trends.

S38 – Egg Safety. Amy Smith said that the symposium would provide an overview of current practices and focus on the impact of Salmonella Enteritidis.

S5 – Norovirus. Vanessa Cranford said that the symposium would provide a foundation for the Roundtable discussion to be held later the same day (RT1), which was a program developed jointly with the Produce PDG.

RT2 – Testing Tales. Julian Cox said that a report of this Roundtable might not warrant a white paper, but a summary of the discussion would be submitted to Food Protection Trends.

100 Year Instrument Exhibit: The idea for this exhibit of old items reflecting the Association's 100 year anniversary was originally suggested by Vanessa Cranford. Lou Tortorello reported that the exhibit was currently being set up in a section of the Exhibit Hall (next to the Silent Auction.) The items on show were not intended to be comprehensive record since much depended on the items that were loaned. Leslie Thompson thanked all those who had loaned items for the exhibit.

Request For Information: Non-O157 STEC Test Kits and Reagents: Vanessa Cranford reported that the review was scheduled for compilation in September–October 2011 for publication of white paper in Food Protection Trends. If there are those that still would like to submit information, it will be accepted.

Patrice Arbault reported that he had been able to put on a “Late-breaking Session” on the topic of the E. coli O104 outbreak in Europe, which was very timely. It is the usual practice for late-breaking sessions to be organized by the Executive Board of the Association. That one individual was able to do so because of the timeliness of the issue was greatly appreciated by the PDG and members (led by Vanessa) expressed their appreciation to Patrice.

New Business:

Articles for *Food Protection Trends*.

Planned development of white paper from this year's Norovirus symposium and roundtable.

A report on the Testing Tales roundtable would not form the basis for a white paper but would be submitted as an item of general interest.

Symposia / Roundtables for 2012: The submission date for proposals is October 17, 2011.

Micro Methods for Implementation of Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA): P. C. Vasavada, Michael Brodsky and George Wilson.

This still needs some development. Jeff Kornacki offered the opinion that an update on the role of indicator organisms should be included. Julian Cox suggested that "food defense" – the wrong organism in the wrong place should also be addressed.

Chuck Young said that two symposia proposals were being considered by the Food Defense PDG and a joint symposium could be considered. P. C. Vasavada was in favor of that. Several other suggestions were made for integrating different aspects of compliance with FSMA, including the role of FERN (Food Emergency Response Network) and collaboration on an international level.

Leslie mentioned that Alvin Lee had suggested symposium collaboration with the Fruit and Vegetable PDG and Virus PDG for "Harmonization of Methods to Evaluate and Validate Preventative Controls" which will be critical for FSMA.

An idea that emerged was the possibility of a day of symposia with the theme of FSMA as a common thread with individual symposium focusing on specific areas. This is an ambitious proposal, but could be attempted if a member(s) of the PDG was willing to coordinate the program.

Food Safety within China: Vanessa Cranford. The proposed program would address similarities and differences between practices in the USA and those in China, with a focus on sharing information and opening communications. Omar Oyarzabal offered to help develop the program as he had worked with contacts in China. Christine Aleski proposed Peter Slade as a possible speaker as he had worked in China for about 18 months. She also suggested that 3M might be able to provide a speaker with relevant experience.

Subsequent discussion raised the issue of food safety in other countries, e.g., Bangladesh, and through agencies such as FAO. The outcome of the discussion was that two symposia should be considered: the one on China originally envisioned by Vanessa Cranford; and a second on issues relating to food safety in developing where there may or may not be a trade relationship with the USA and where there might be more focus on providing aid and emergency relief. Ben Tall and Ramkishan Rao offered to take the lead on developing this second theme. Reggie Bennett suggested approaching Isabel Walls for ideas for potential speakers.

Software Use for Data Management: Phil Coombs. A symposium proposal for the 2011 meeting had been proposed but not accepted and it had been suggested during subsequent PDG teleconferences and other discussions that a roundtable might be a better format through which to introduce the topic to the membership. Discussion of the topic reflected that this area is an emerging area of interest with a number of potential avenues to be pursued. So much so that Michael Brodsky reminded the group that it would be important to maintain focus and not allow the topic to become too diverse. Based on the speakers that were previously invited and other interested parties, Phil said he was willing to develop a roundtable program.

What microorganisms are emerging, re-emerging, and soon to be emerging? P. C. Vasavada, Hari Prakash Dwivedi and George Wilson. Patrice Arbault may also be involved in developing the program. Reggie Bennett suggested that the topic should address the issue of emerging toxins; and Michael Brodsky spoke to the need to "cast a wider net" by addressing the detection of markers and plasmids. By taking on board these suggestions, this might increase the chances of acceptance for the final program as the theme was a recurring one for the Program Committee to consider.

Proactive Food Safety: Jeff Kornacki et al. Jeff had developed a symposium proposal in conjunction with colleagues from the Hygiene PDG focusing on taking a proactive approach to food safety. He gave a detailed outline of the proposal which met with interest from the group and with a suggestion from Patrice Arbault that the issue of education of operational staff should be included and suggesting Todd Brashears (Texas Tech Univ.) as a speaker.

Use of Novel Data Sources: Chuck Young. Chuck wanted to explore ways in which data analysis of internet searches might help highlight or locate outbreaks of foodborne disease. Use of social media might also be helpful. Vanessa Cranford offered to help develop a proposed program.

Michael Brodsky asked whether this was related to the issue of data handling discussed earlier and although the focus of this proposal is different, there is indeed a broad common theme of improved data analysis to either track down or prevent foodborne illness.

New media and methods for non-O157 STEC: Patrice Arbault. There have been so many new media, chromogenic agars and other detection methods introduced on the market in recent months that Patrice felt that it would be helpful to hold a workshop reviewing what was available. It would also provide follow-up after the review article written by Vanessa Cranford.

This was met with much support and Vanessa, Jeff Kornacki, Leslie Thompson and Pat Rule all offered to help develop the program.

Toxoplasma: Nathan Bauer. After attending the Parasites & Viruses PDG, Nathan suggested a joint symposium with the Applied Lab Methods PDG to address the issue of *Toxoplasma* as an agent of foodborne illness. He was encouraged to put together a program proposal.

Educational Webinars: Historically, these have been offered on topics such as *Campylobacter*, and allergens. Possible topics for future webinars included detection of toxins. Christine Aleski said it would be helpful to have a list of previous topics and Leslie Thompson agreed to provide this. She also said that some of the more recent ones are available on the Association Web site.

There were no immediate suggestions from the group for webinar topics, but Phil Coombs encouraged members to submit ideas in the future.

The matter of whether webinars should be offered at no charge (Applied Lab Methods PDG members only) or available for a fee to all of the Association membership was discussed briefly without any clear resolution as the best path to follow.

Software Sub-Group: The rationale for forming such a group was discussed during the proposal for a roundtable. Phil Coombs was not sure of the best time to form such a group, but it would follow exactly the same model as that of the Sample Preparation sub-group that had been formed a few years previously. At this point, Phil wanted to inform the PDG of his suggestion with a view to soliciting feedback for the idea.

Any Other Business: P. C. Vasavada is giving a presentation at the bioMérieux booth during the course of the meeting.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Approve Phil Coombs as the incoming Vice-Chair of the Applied Lab Methods PDG.
2. Consider shuffling the meeting times for various PDGs to allow attendance of other PDG meetings that occur concurrently.

Next Meeting Date: Teleconference on Friday, September 9th. Time to be determined.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:47 a.m.

Chairperson: Leslie K. Thompson.