**Georgia Food Safety & Defense   
Task Force Meeting**

**Nov. 12, 2019 Agenda**

***Location****:* Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority

**Wyckoff Water Treatment Plant,** Acworth GA 30101

**9:00-9:15 a.m. Welcome & Introductions (around the room)**

Jessica Badour began the meeting at 9:10 a.m. A sign in sheet was placed at the back of the room for all attendees, and everyone provided an introduction. An estimated 30 people attended.

**9:15-9:35 a.m. How does a drinking water plant operate?**

***William Blalack****, Assistant Division Manager*

*Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority*



William provided a presentation and overview of the water facility where the meeting was held; the facility is a conventional surface water treatment plant. William discussed the process from beginning, where they pull water at Allatoona Lake, through the complete plant’s intake and filtering process on-site, discussing how the water is cleaned to service millions of metro residents in Cobb County (& surrounding counties, as needed).

**9:35-9:55 a.m. Food Defense & Intentional Adulteration Implementation**

***Venessa Sims,*** *Dir. of Emergency Services, GA Dept. of Agriculture*

Venessa provided a presentation and overview about past, current & future food defense initiatives, briefing the audience on food/drug attacks and what we’ve learned. Since we were at the Wycoff plant, she mentioned that water is a critical infrastructure component (which mostly falls to DNR/EPD for regulatory oversight, [read more here](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/3021/text)). [Cargo theft](https://www.cargonet.com/) is becoming a big issue (est. $30 billion), with food & beverage being the most targeted threat, followed by electronics (see more from the [Southeastern Transportation Security Council](https://www.setsc.org/)). Atlanta is one of the primary locations where thefts occur and could lead to potential adulteration of products, black market foods, and food fraud.

She wrapped up covering FSMA’s IA rule and the training that is required to comply. There is Georgia “see something, say something” information (copies of the brochure can be mailed out, ask Jessica or [download a copy here](http://agr.georgia.gov/Data/Sites/1/media/ag_foodSafety/outreach/Food-Defense-Flyer.pdf)). There’s also a [smartphone app for Georgia](https://dps.georgia.gov/blog/2018-10-19/see-something-send-something-app-available-ga) to report suspicious activity (or send a tip in by phone at 1-800-597-TIPS). See more tips from [FDA’s mitigation strategies database](https://www.fda.gov/food/food-defense-tools-educational-materials/mitigation-strategies-database). Venessa also mentioned cyber security and encouraged members to look into the [Cyber + Infrastructure](https://www.cisa.gov/) section of DHS and, specifically, the [Nat’l Infrastructure Coordinating Center](https://www.dhs.gov/cisa/national-infrastructure-coordinating-center) for Food/Ag entities.

**9:55-10:15 a.m. A Mother’s Day Case Study: Crawfish & *Vibrio parahaemolyticus***

***Colby Brown,*** *GA Dept of Agriculture RRT Coordinator*

***Hope Dishman,*** *GA Dept of Public Health Epidemiologist*

Hope & Colby discussed an outbreak reported by a Georgia family after Mother’s Day Sunday, with a variety of foods on the menu that came from both restaurants (regulated by GaDPH) and retail grocery stores (regulated by GDA), and some items cooked at the home.



Hope covered the epi overview. All 29 family members completed an epi survey (21 had symptoms). A pathogen-specific culture was performed on all specimens received; 5 of 9 were positive for *Vibrio parahemolyticus* and 5 were highly related by whole genome sequencing. 100% of ill people had consumed crawfish (38% of well people also ate it), so it was the only statistically significant food item.



Colby covered the agriculture/food investigation overview. 2 of GDA’s regulated firms were involved in the scope of the incident and inspectors went to both facilities. GDA knew crawfish was the item for focus thanks to GaDPH; GaDPH requested GDA work with the seafood firm on getting them a seafood flow diagram for the crawfish from receiving up through serving the product to customers. GDA also worked on a traceback to the crawfish dealer (in Louisiana). During the investigation, GDA found that sanitation and food handling practices may have been the root cause of the problem.

**10:15-11:00 a.m. Stakeholder Updates & Wrap-Up Discussion**

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* ***GA Dept of Agriculture Food Safety*** *– Jessica Badour provided an update about the new retail regulations, which were updated in Oct. & now match the 2017 FDA Food Code. Updates will be shared as attachments to membership.* ***Partners with a Common Purpose*** *initiative met in early Nov. and anticipates a website to launch soon, along with a feature article published in an upcoming* [*Food Safety Magazine*](https://www.foodsafetymagazine.com/) *issue (hopefully December) – be on the lookout! PwCP had several meetings last year and review of the discussion shows the group aligns on several points from FDA’s “New Era of Smarter Food Safety.” That analysis will be used for content development of “phase II” in 2020, with presentations already planned at the upcoming Food Safety Summit (May), CASA AEC (May), AFDO AEC (June) & NEHA AEC (July).*
* ***Cobb & Douglas County Public Health*** *– Karen Gulley updated the group on the* [*regulator initiative for employee health achievement program*](http://www.cobbanddouglaspublichealth.com/environmental-health/food-services/new-employee-health-achievers/)*. On the CDCPH website, there’s a 10-question quiz and after a firm passes the quiz, they get a certificate and are named on the employee health achievers webpage.*
* ***GA Dept of Public Health Epidemiology*** *– Hope Dishman gave an update about larger outbreaks in GA from the past year, including Cyclospora over the summer and outbreaks tied to both chickens and turtles as well as E.coli O157 & O145.*
* ***UGA Center for Food Safety Programs*** *– Francisco Diez-Gonzales emailed notes about the CFS at UGA’s Griffin Campus, which had a productive 2019; they filled all 6 tenured or tenured-track faculty positions (and expanded affiliated faculty). They now have resident expertise in norovirus, antimicrobial resistance, Campylobacter, in addition to our bioinformatics, genomic epidemiology, parasitology, fresh produce safety and low-water activity foods. They continue outreach activities with government agencies as well as private sector partners and may be the site for a future GaFSTF meeting. Learn more:* [*https://cfs.caes.uga.edu/*](https://cfs.caes.uga.edu/)*.*
* ***FDA Retail Food Program*** *– Cameron Wiggins – Trainings coming up in 2020 – Managing Retail Food Safety Course Feb 4-6, and a Food Code Course Feb. 25-26 for inspectors, both to be held in Savannah. The* ***FDA SE Retail Food Safety Seminar*** *just concluded for 2019 and the next one will be in Orange Beach, AL, Oct. 27-30, 2020 (*[*learn more here*](https://www.fda.gov/food/retail-food-protection/voluntary-national-retail-food-regulatory-program-standards)*). This event is open to all those in the food protection retail industry sectors. FDA is also planning to have several job openings soon for retail specialists due to retirements (search online at* [*usajobs.gov*](https://www.usajobs.gov/)*).*
* ***Georgia Restaurant Association*** *– Karen Bremer –* [*GRA*](https://www.garestaurants.org/) *is the National Restaurant Assoc. affiliate non-profit agency with 18,000+ members, promoting advocacy & education. They work with GDA & GaDPH regularly and are available for research, data and communications. Karen has a new national study about what is changing in the next 10 years in the restaurant industry, discussing the ways in which people are getting their food (options have clearly changed dramatically) and many of the changes impact all of us in the industry, as well as us as consumers (email her for a copy:* [*karen@garestaurants.org*](mailto:karen@garestaurants.org)*).*
* ***Georgia Association for Food Protection*** *– Ynes Ortega – Please consider attending the GAFP Spring Meeting on April 29, 2020, at the Kroger Offices at North Lake. More information & registration will be shared on their website* [*here*](https://www.gafoodprotection.org/upcoming-events-gafp-meetings-professional-development-opportunities-and-more)*, or you may request being added to their mailing list by contacting* [*gafp.secretary@gmail.com*](mailto:gafp.secretary@gmail.com)*.*
* ***Additional Representative Updates*** *– Adam Buuck, Division Director for the GDA’s Animal Industry, wanted to introduce his team in attendance, many of whom are new to their positions. Kevin Gay is the new MIS Supervisor, who will plan to try and regularly participate in future GaFSTF meetings. Also attending from the Animal Industry Division were Timothy Lucksinger, Ramona Dow and Richard Fife.*

**11 a.m.-noon On-site facility tour of the drinking water plant (optional)**

*Anyone who is on the RSVP list is invited to participate!*

*Led by:* ***Sam Woodie****, Class I Operator &* ***William Blalack***