

MN FOOD SAFETY AND DEFENSE TASK FORCE
Meeting Minutes
May 19, 2020

Today's meeting was held via WebEx

The meeting was called to order at 1:34 PM.

Members present included: Ruth Petran, Courtney Bidney, Benjamin Warren, Chris Gindorff, Lorrene (Lolly) Occhino, Annalisa Hultberg, Jaime Kirpatrick, Patrice Bailey, Angie Cyr, Jamie Pfuhl and Brent Kobielush.

Visitors present included: Joe Jurusik, Carrie Rigdon, Karly Ackerman, Heidi DeBeck, Jennifer van de Ligt, David Largey, Dionne Meeham, Joseph Scimeca, Jan Lillemo, Jeff Luedeman, Jan Kelly, Mathew Gerths, Alida Sorenson, Jane Jewett, Jill Ball, Lisa Wetzell, David Read, Ben Miller, Katherine Simon, Valerie Gamble, Lillian Otieno, Natasha Hedin, Michelle Strand, Purnendu Vasavada, Sadie Paschke, Susan Bishop, Tom Weber, Morraine Omolo, and Allision Behling.

1. Dates and links

The next Food Safety and Defense Task Force (FSDTF) Meeting will be Tuesday, July 21, 2020 via WebEx.

- The Minnesota Department of Agriculture set up a COVID-19 email inbox for questions: mdaresponds@state.mn.us
- Minnesota Department of Agriculture Legislative updates related to food and feed safety:
 - [HF4285](#)- Policy Bill
 - [HF4490](#)- Finance Bill
- Agriculture Utilization Research Institute (AURI) [Food Product Shelf-Life Guide for Scaling Businesses](#)
- AURI webinar Wednesday: [A Landscape view of the Minnesota market for Halal and Kosher Meat](#)
- Webinar: [COVID-19 and the Food Industry: the Key Principles of GMPs, Sanitation and the COVID-19 'Equation'](#)
- Webinar: [COVID-19 Cleaning and Disinfecting Practices for Dairy Companies](#)
- Webinar: [Coronavirus: What is the story on testing](#)
- [Preventive controls for human food 3-day lead instructor training course](#) scheduled for October 6 -8th in Bloomington.

2. The minutes from the May 2020 meeting were approved.

3. Member and Visitor Updates:

Patrice Bailey (Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA)): Patrice is the Assistant Commissioner for the MDA. Would like to thank the FSDT for their work on the weekly meetings with the Commissioner's office. Will probably dial back a bit moving forward as places being to open. Would

like to share that most of our meat processors are up and running at least a half capacity or more. Jennie-O and potato plants are doing a phased re-opening. We've seen more COVID-19 cases in food manufacturing recently. We'll be asking the Governor's office to extend two executive orders that are set to expire on 5/24. Continue to receive questions about livestock and horse shows being cancelled. As of now, we're aware of twenty or so county fairs that have canceled and expect to see more follow suit.

Jan Lillemo (Lillemo & Associates, LLC): Things have been quiet lately as folks aren't looking to update their food safety plans currently. Spent some time learning about GS1 and barcode assignments.

Susan Bishop (Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)): Susan has been re-assigned to work on COVID-19 response. Working on guidance for food manufactures including seasonal workers, foreign workers and migrant labor. Lots of gaps in needs have been identified.

Jane Jewett (Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA)): Been working a lot with the Minnesota Farmers' Market Association (MFMA) and the University of Minnesota on developing guidance documents for Farmers' Markets. Farmers' Markets are exempt from Executive Order 20.04 if they don't allow any onsite consumption of food. Many markets are working on COVID-19 safety measures including extra handwashing stations, sanitation schedules for tables, and social distancing.

Brent Kobielush (Cargill): Brent was recently was on a National Confectioners Association (NCA) call and there were discussions around Commissioner Hahn's update that the Federal Government is still holding off on inspections unless there is a critical need. Cargill has seen a smattering of inspections from different states. They have had state inspections in Pennsylvania, testing in the marketplace in Montana, and inspections in Ohio and Missouri. He also shared new information regarding mycotoxins. As you look at the global supply chain some regions of the world have more stringent standards than others. Aflatoxins, vomitoxin, and fumonisin are the top three that regions regulate. Ochratoxin A and zearalenone are considered "second tier". However, just last week the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) released an updated opinion on ochratoxin A, concluding that and they think it is a genotoxic carcinogen. This is the most potent of carcinogens that interact with and combine to DNA. This is something that has picked up steam in the scientific and food safety community and most likely will get more attention. More commonly see with coffee beans and cocoa beans.

Ruth Petran (Ecolab): Ruth has been working on COVID-19 since the last task force meeting. Working to help customers with the right responses to COVID-19 from a cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting perspective. Working with all kinds of different surfaces including people's hands, kitchen counter tops, hotel hard surfaces, heavy industry, food manufacturing. They are receiving questions about soft surfaces such as upholstered furniture, linens and surfaces/items you may see in a hotel or hospital. Working hard on a lot of re-opening guidance and leveraging learnings from China to the rest of the world. Everyone wants to get back on track and attract customers back.

Lillian Otieno (MDA): Lillian is the outreach coordinator for the Produce Safety Program within the MDA Food and Feed Safety Division (FFSD). She mentioned she is leading a project that is translating a lot of FFSD's COVID-19 guidance documents. Translating into Spanish, Hmong and Somali languages across multiple MDA divisions and programs. Hope to have on our webpage next week.

Wanting to make sure we stay accessible and provide these resources to those communities that need them. Also want to thank Heidi DeBeck from FDA as they've agreed to translated some of their materials as well. PSP is continuing to provide outreach to Amish and Hmong growers. Want to make sure we're intentional and provide them the resources they need to operate in this climate.

Michelle Strand, Log House Foods: This is Michelle's first time attending a Task Force meeting. Attending in listen only mode.

Lolly Occhino (Agriculture Utilization Research Institute (AURI)) – Lolly is a Food Scientist with AURI. She mentioned that their physical facilities and labs are currently closed but they are carrying on with their work from home. Have a Food Product Shelf Life Guide for Scaling Business on their website. New program called AURI connects with the purpose of actively engaging the value chain on topics related to value-added agricultural opportunities and challenges. The program will be sponsoring Webinar Wednesdays every second Wednesday of the month.

Joe Jurusik (Hennepin County Public Health): Joe mentioned that their staff is still out working under proper COVID-19 social distancing guidelines as restaurants remain open. Focusing on high-risk facilities. They have noticed that some businesses are changing their products such as adding meal kits to their menus. Have new employees that they are onboarding and working with the challenges of doing that virtually.

Courtney Bidney (General Mills): Courtney mentioned that COVID-19 continues to be taking lots of their time. Food safety and employee safety continues to remain top priorities. They have put lots of preventive measures in place at their facilities. Post COVID-19 they are starting to think about what inspections may look like once federal inspections are back and more states start to inspect again. Trying to prepare for that backlog and imagining what it might look like.

Chris Gindorff (Lund Food Holdings, Inc): Chris is a Senior Quality and Assurance Food Production Manager. Preparing grocery stores for event and how to best protect employees and customers keeping the food supply as close to normal as they can. Fortunate with employees and have been able to maintain a healthy staff. Working on COVID preventative measures.

Jeff Luedeman (MDA): Jeff is the Retail Food Program Manager within the FFSD within MDA. Jeff mentioned executive order 20.56 Stay Safe Minnesota which directs MDH, the Department of Labor and Industry and the Department of Employment and Economic Development that has reach into grocery and convenience stores. Jeff reviewed a draft last week and provided input on it. We will look to take that guidance and adapt it to Farmers' Markets as well as we move forward.

Alison Behling (Ecolab): Spending lots of time on COVID related work. Getting lots of creative uses of institutional products. Working hard to on hand sanitizers and trying to get alternate suppliers and formulas approved for use and sale.

Karly Ackerman (Minnesota Grocers Association (MGA)): Karly mentioned that they've been working hard with the MDA for farmers that have lost their market due to COVID-19. Continuing to get those connections made and continuing to get feedback on immediate need. Also working with Minnesota Farmers' Market Association (MFMA) to help bridge a gap and be that resource and share messaging from grocery stores into the Farmers' Market.

Heidi DeBeck (United States Food and Drug Association (FDA)): Heidi mentioned that all foreign inspections are on hold. Evaluating consumer complaints on a case by case basis and other inspections to high-risk to adverse consequences for safety and health. If they need to visit a facility they are operating with modified procedures. May call ahead to confirm they are operational and coordinate precautions. For every inspection they are doing they are taking extra precautions to protect the health and safety of their employees and the employees of the facilities they are visiting. At this point in time they haven't had any mission critical inspections arise within our district. Using the time to clean up their firm inventory nationwide. There is a lot of guidance on their website for food firms and industry.

Joe Scimeca (International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA)): Started with IDFA in March (was previously with Cargill). IDFA has several COVID-19 resources on their website and have hosted a few webinars (see dates and links section above). One of note is on coronavirus testing and the other is on sanitation and cleaning of facilities and starting a plant back up after shutting down. Have had the opportunity to work with the Food and Beverage Issue Alliance and create multiple resource documents available on their [FeedingUS](#) website.

Alida Sorenson (the MDA): Alida is the Response and Outreach Supervisor within the FFSD within the MDA. Focus for the unit has been on COVID-19. Are working on a recall of basil for Cyclospora in partnership with FDA counterparts. Haven't been getting very many foodborne illness notification outbreaks or recalls with everything else going on. Carrie Rigdon will be providing an additional update later in the meeting regarding a current response outreach project.

Tom Webber (Buddy's Kitchen): Both Burnsville and Lakeville plants are still in operation. Lakeville is down about 40% due to the airlines coming to a screeching halt. Focus has been on mitigation strategies and constantly implementing new ones.

Jamie Pfuhl (Minnesota Grocers Association): Working 100% COVID all the time. Been working with the media regarding the safety of food. Reminding them of the simplicity of best practices such as washing of produce and proper cooking. Have a lot of resources available on their website. Working daily with the Governor's office and the MDA. Ensuring they are doing everything with all the recommended guidance. Working with meat processing and trying to secure funding to help smaller retailers to help secure PPE. Continually evolving and being a resource for their members and industry.

Lisa Wetzel (MDA): Trying to ramp up getting plants under E2 inspection for meat processing. Increasing the number of inspection days for plants already under licensure. Hoping increased inspection will help with the backlog of hogs that are flooding the marketplace. Conducted webinar on 5/8 to talk about options for meat processors within Minnesota. Also, there are lots of outreach documents available on our website.

Annalisa Hultberg (University of Minnesota Extension): Annalisa works with fruit and vegetable growers primarily. Receiving lots of questions and providing guidance to farmers about reducing/mitigating coronavirus outbreaks on their farm and proper precautions when delivering and selling produce. Has conducted several webinars with MFMA open forums for connecting farmers with each other. Creating videos in Hmong, Spanish and English for specific COVID topics.

Julia Selleys (Hennepin County): Took a sharp turn from inspection to doing more outreach. Have contacted all restaurants and retail facilities they regulate and now preparing for helping those facilities reopen. Will have a temporary assignment to help with COVID response.

Sadie Paschke (Land O'Lakes Venture37): Sadie is the Program Director for the Farmer-to-Farmer Program focused on food safety at Land O'Lakes Venture37.

Benjamin Warren (Land O'Lakes): Working on COVID prevention and control. Would add that they are starting to look at virtual options to start progressing on food safety work both inside and outside the US. Mixed results so far but are looking into technology to assist in this new space.

Jennifer van de Ligt (Food Protection and Defense Institute (FPDI)): FPDI is hosting an online food defense training the mornings of June 2,3,4. Details can be found on their [website](#), and the MNFSDTF has sent info out to the distribution list. Please reach out if you have any questions.

Purnendu Vasavada (University of Wisconsin – River Falls): Purnendu gave an update on the Food Safety Preventive Control Alliance. As many know the FDA grant expired last August. New executive board now that includes Katherine Simon from MDA, FFSD. Gearing up to do a lot of training. Preventive controls for human food 3-day lead instructor training course scheduled for October 6 - 8th in Bloomington.

David Largey (Synoptic Quality and Food Safety): Developing risk mitigation strategic for COVID working to make sure to keep factories open and running. Called in to learn and listen and see if there is anything else that they could be doing.

4. Food and Feed Safety Division (FFSD) Updates

Legislative Updates

Katherine Simon is the Division Director for the FFSD within the MDA. She provided a brief legislative update and mentioned two bills that were successfully passed related to agriculture. One provision was passed related to item brought up in a previous Food Innovation Team (FIT) subcommittee meeting. This is a modification to Minnesota State Chapter 31.171 related to water, plumbing, and sewage. Clarification that water, plumbing, and sewage is not required for the MDA to be able to issue a food handler license as part of MDA's assessment as to if they are fit for business. The second bill that was passed included rule adoption of the model rules developed by the Association of American Feed Control Officials related to pet food regulation.

FFSD Inspection Updates

Katherine provided a general update about inspections under COVID-19 for the FFSD. It is a priority to maintain food safety system oversight, however, the division has had to make some modifications. Have put focus on flexibility and making sure we are responding appropriately for the public health concern. Each program manager will provide updates regarding their specific program.

Jan Kelly (the MDA): Jan is the Manufactured Food Program Manager within the FFSD of the MDA. She shared that in order to maximize the safety of their staff and minimize disruptions to regulatory responsibility we have modified how we're doing our work. Without FDA contract inspection work we've pulled back and are focusing on outreach contact calls and providing resources to facilities.

Also working on developing alternate inspection procedures that may include two stage inspection with virtual and on-site components.

Mathew Gerths (the MDA): Matt is the Program Manager for the Commercial Feed Program (CFP) within the FFSD of the MDA. Matt mentioned that they have created a COVID-19 CFP Incident Action Plan to assist with how the program approaches the situation. They have taken similar approaches as Jan Kelly mentioned with the Manufactured Food Program within FFSD. FDA contract inspection work has also stopped for the CFP with no specific end date identified.

Val Gamble (the MDA): Val is the Program Manager for the Produce Safety Program within the FFSD of the MDA. She mentioned that they are in a similar situation as the CFP as they are also in a stop work order under FDA contract inspections. Given seasonality of produce industry in Minnesota it has allowed them to consider and develop a virtual inspection draft policy. They are not conducting inspections right now, but that's not unusual for this time of year. Looking to potentially do virtual inspections this summer.

Jeff Luedeman (the MDA): Jeff is the Program Manager for the Retail Food Program (RFP) within the FFSD at the MDA. Jeff provided a graph summary of RFP inspection activities since January of 2020 showing that the trend line is down under COVID-19. They have been working on targeted outreach from a food safety and COVID standpoint. Worked collaboratively with the MDH and industry to develop outreach guidance documents.

Carrie Rigdon (the MDA): Carrie is the interim Assistant Division Director for the FFSD at the MDA. The MDA is working with MDH, DEED, DLI, and local Public Health to connect businesses with resources on how to prevent spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

- Food manufacturing-specific guidance has been created similar to the Meatpacking Industry guidance and is being finalized soon
- Outreach is being planned to take place in three formats:
 - Audience- or Industry-specific webinars
 - Preventative one-on-one outreach with facilities from MDA inspectors
 - Consulting calls with businesses once a cluster (3 or more illnesses) have been reported to MDH
- Ask for the TF: Would like help from the Task Force on the need and types of audiences and whether the TF would be willing to “sponsor” a call (help with getting the word out, logistics, etc.)

5. Food Pools and Lodging Services Updates

Legislative Updates

Angie Cyr is the acting Manager for the Food Pools and Lodging Services section within the MDH. She provided a brief legislative update. Most of the bills they were watching did not get passed, however, some agency bills were rolled into an omnibus bill.

COVID-19 Response

- The agency has been heavily involved in COVID-19 response and staff have been pulled from all agencies to assist with response.
- The certified food protection manager CEU deadline has been extended due to COVID-19 as part of a commissioner of health waiver.

- Working with others on reopening guidance for restaurants and bars, youth summer programs, public swimming pools, campgrounds/resorts, processing facilities, personal care services, and gyms/fitness centers.
- Have been involved in the operator follow-up when any employee of a regulated facility has tested positive.
- Currently performing school inspections at those schools that are still providing meal service.

5. Food Innovation Team (FIT) Subcommittee Update

Jane Jewett, Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA) and co-chair of the FIT subcommittee provided a brief report on the case reviewed earlier this morning by the FIT subcommittee. The case crossed over multiple agencies at the MDA. Discussed training and outreach opportunities for shared use kitchens, and grocery store owners.

6. FSDTF Membership Update

Natasha Hedin, Outreach Coordinator for the FFSD within MDA gave an update regarding upcoming task force membership expiration and the process for notification of vacancies and applications. See the slides attached for more detailed information. Another update will be provided at the May meeting.

10. Agenda Items for Next Time

1. COVID-19 reflections
2. Task Force Memberships
3. Placeholder for special legislative session updates – if there are

May Minnesota Food Safety and Defense Task Force Meeting

May 19, 2020



Housekeeping Items:

- Use mute when not speaking
- Utilize the chat box for general questions
- WebEx questions other issues email alida.sorenson@state.mn.us

AGENDA
Food Safety and Defense Task Force
May 19, 2020
1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
WebEx

1:30 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.	Welcome, Introductions, Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approval of the minutes• Announcements• Around the room	Ruth Petran, Ecolab
2:15 p.m. – 2:35 p.m.	MDA, Food and Feed Safety Division Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legislative Updates• Inspection activities through COVID – program specific	Katherine Simon, MDA and Program Managers
2:35 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	MDH, Food, Pools & Lodging Services Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legislative• COVID activities	Angie Cyr, MDH
3:00 p.m. – 3:10 p.m.	Food Innovation Team <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update of case reviewed at morning meeting	Jane Jewett, MISA
3:10 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.	Task Force Membership Update <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Membership expiring June 30, 2020	Natasha Hedin, MDA
3:20 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Agenda Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Solicit Topics for next Task Force meeting	Courtney Bidney, General Mills

Announcements and Around the Room

- Approval of March Meeting Minutes
- Around the Room
 - Please type your name into the meeting chat box
 - Individuals will be called on to share updates

Food and Feed Safety Overview

- **Legislative Updates**
- **Priority to maintain food safety system oversight**
 - Modify for facility notifications
 - Flexibility for information review to reduce in-person inspection time
 - Balance need for routine oversight and additional targeted monitoring over the evolving situation

Manufactured Food Inspections in the COVID19 Era

Program Manager -
Jan.L.Kelly@state.mn.us

Current work priority - Industry Outreach
Contacts

COVID-19 Business Preparedness
information and resources

Alternate inspection procedures

- Two stage inspection; a 'virtual' and an
on-site components

MDA Commercial Feed Program Update

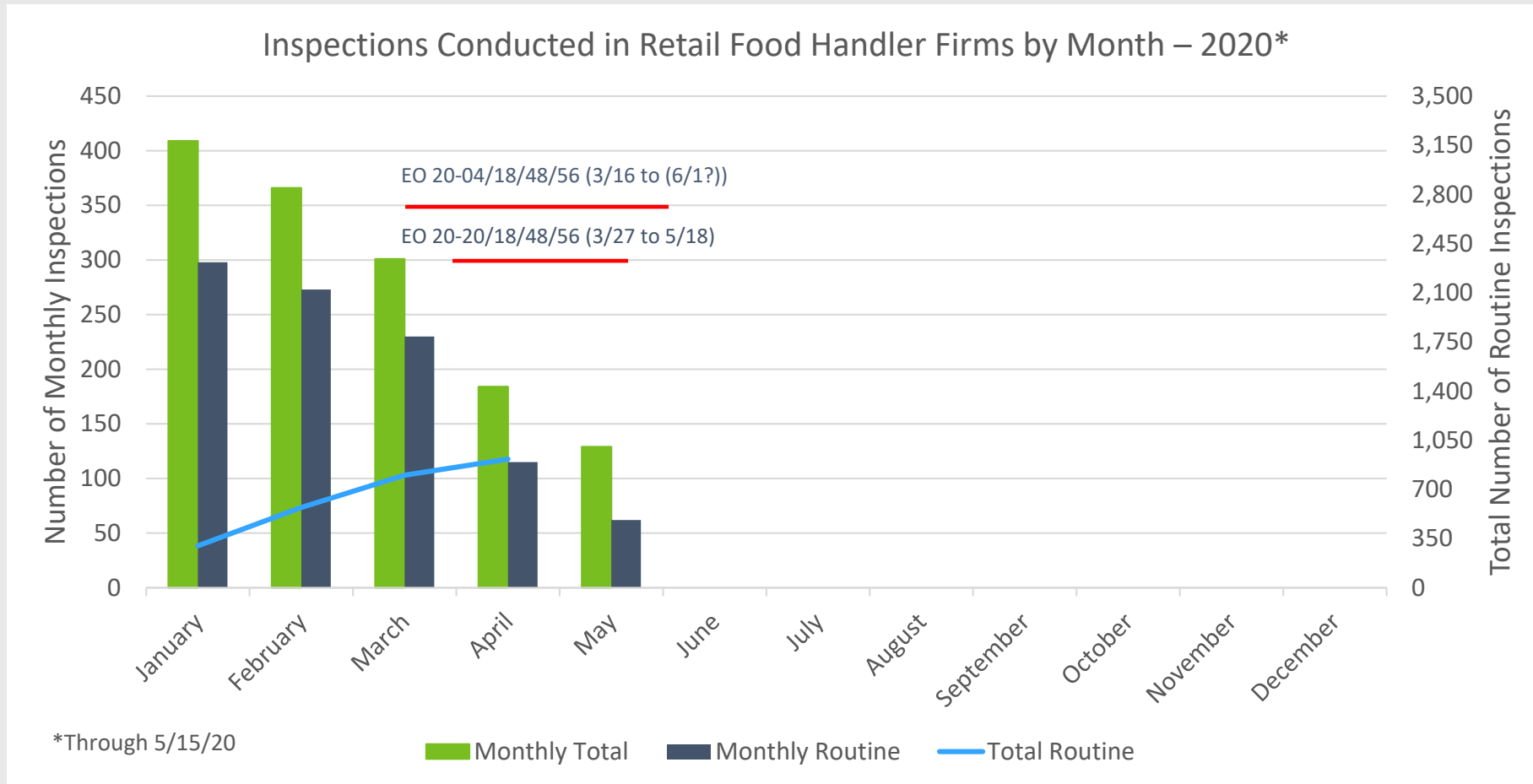
- **Response to Covid-19**

- Creation of the Covid-19 CFP Incident Action Plan
 - Objectives, Responsibilities and Work that Continues
 - Safety Plan
 - Communication Plan
 - Covid-19 Mitigation Strategies
 - Outreach/Resources for Industry
 - Resources, Training and Supplies

Produce Safety Program

- Modified CAP agreement limits face-to-face work during COVID19 pandemic
 - No specified end date
- Draft virtual inspection procedure developed
- Modifying project work to continue program development
 - Virtual meetings
 - Inventory development without site visits
 - Virtual trainings and presentations

Inspections Conducted in Retail Food Handler Firms, by Month - 2020



COVID-19 Response Summary

- Since 3/16/20:
- Developed six COVID-19 guidance documents emailed on 3/26/20 to Retail Food Handlers
- 3,243 high and medium-risk firms assessed by Retail Food staff
 - History of on-site food consumption
 - Consumer self-service
 - Multiple food processing areas / departments
 - Change in food handling / processing practices that may increase risk to food safety
 - Compliance history
- 316 firms reached by phone (prioritized, includes complaints)
- 148 firms assessed for possible on-site inspection

COVID-19 Response Summary (cont.)

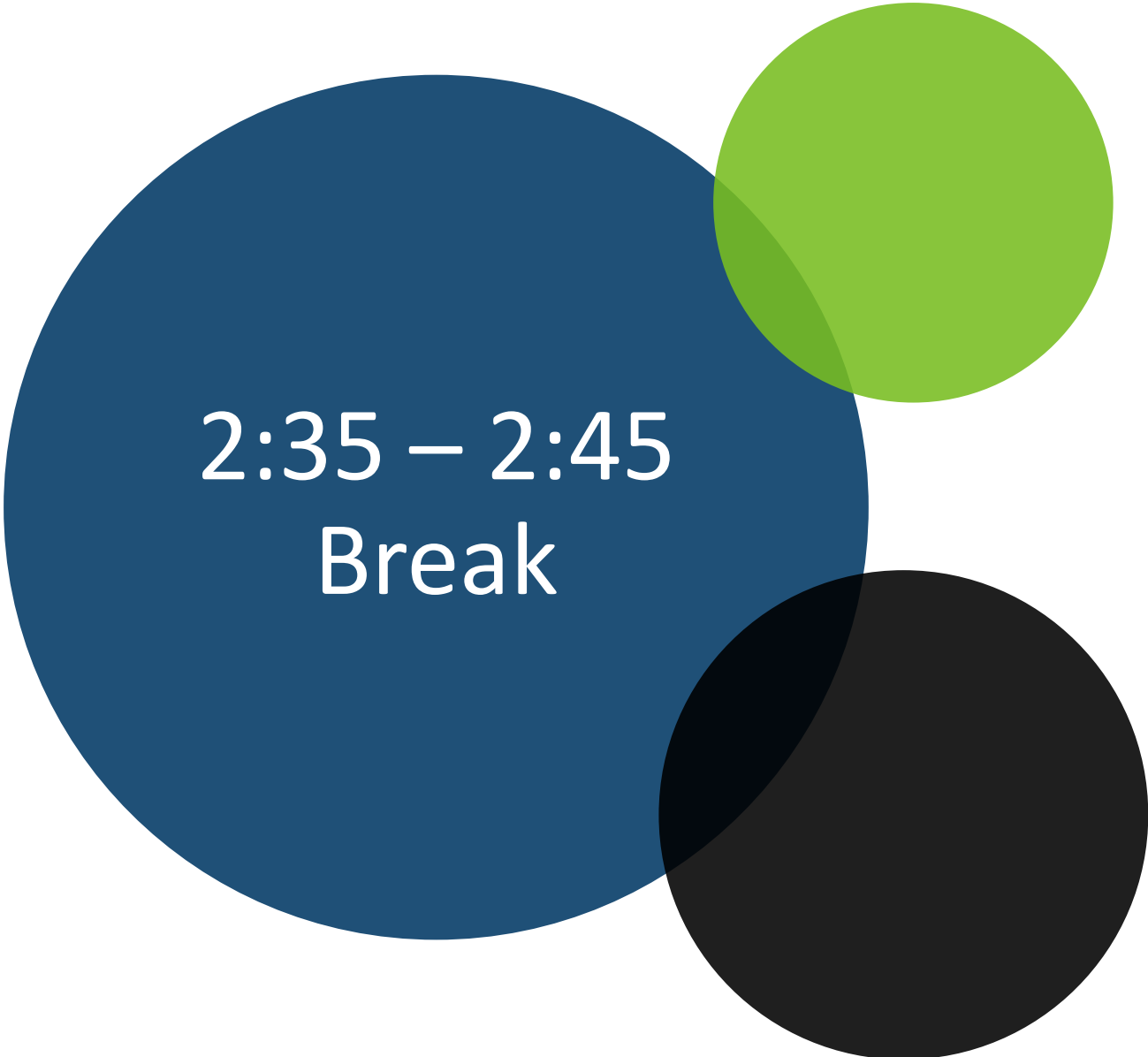
- Inspections from 3/16/20 to 5/15/20:
- 457 total RFH inspections:
 - 272 (60%) routine (151 high-risk, 75 medium-risk, 46 low-risk)
 - 96 out of business
 - 27 follow-up / re-inspection
 - 25 licensing
 - 15 plan review
 - 15 consultation
 - 7 complaint
- 25 total RMFH inspections
 - 0 Routine

Questions?

Jeff Luedeman

Jeff.luedeman@state.mn.us

651-331-9151



2:35 – 2:45
Break



Food, Pools & Lodging Services Updates

Angie Cyr, Acting Program Manager

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF ALL MINNESOTANS

- Regular session has ended
- Agency bills rolled into SF 13 HHS Omnibus bill
- Nothing at this time to impact food establishments
- Special session will happen though

- Agency heavily involved in response
 - Staff pulled from all levels
 - Will be long-term response
- Commissioner of Health waiver
 - Certified Food Protection Manager renewal CEU extension
 - Trained pool operator credential
 - Lifeguard certification renewal

- Working with others on reopening guidance:
 - Restaurants and bars
 - Youth summer programming
 - Public swimming pools
 - Processing facilities (including worker housing)
 - Campgrounds, resorts
 - Personal care services (hair salons, barber shops, tattoo, etc.)
 - Fitness centers and gyms

- Operator follow-up when an employee is positive
- Responding to complaints
- Planning operations for the next 12 months
 - Assume only 50% staff available
- Currently doing school inspections
- High risk and seasonal June 1st

Questions?

Angie Cyr

angie.cyr@state.mn.us

651-201-5634

Food Innovation Team Update – Jane Jewett, MISA

- Summary of case reviewed this morning

FSDTF Memberships Update

- Nine Memberships Expiring June 30, 2020
 - Brent Kobielush
 - Benjamin Warren
 - Jim Van De Pol
 - Christopher Gindorff
 - Ruth Petran
 - Susan Palchick
 - Courtney Bidney
 - Cecilia Coulter
 - Caldoun Abuhakel

- Vacancies have been published on the Secretary of State Website at:
<https://commissionsandappointments.sos.state.mn.us/>
- These postings remain 'live' until a seat is filled
- First application review period set for 5/22/2020

Open Positions - Statute Requirements

- nine members appointed by the governor who are interested in food and food safety, of whom: statute
- (i) two persons are health or food professionals;
- (ii) one person represents a statewide general farm organization;
- (iii) one person represents a local food inspection agency;
- (iv) one person represents a food-oriented consumer group; and
- (v) one person represents a Minnesota-based manufacturer of microbial detection equipment and remediation products.
- (b) Members shall serve without compensation. Members appointed by the governor shall serve four-year terms.

Applications

- Each individual who wishes to be considered for a position must complete the online application process
- Search the [Open Positions](#) page and click the green APPLY button
- Ability to attach a Cover Letter, Resume, and any supporting documents that may be beneficial for review by the Appointing Authority (WORD or PDF only)
- If you encounter issues with attachment process please send an e-mail, with the attachments, to: open.appointments@state.mn.us.

Appointments

- After appointment, the Notice of Intent to Appoint will be completed & submitted to the Office of the Secretary of State.
- All appointments are recorded as Official Documents of the State. Appointments are also recorded in the [Member Appointments](#) database.
- An Oath of Office will also be completed and recorded as well (this also applies to re-appointments).

Re-Appointment

- No limit on number of terms members can serve
- Members who wish to be considered for re-appointment must submit the online application after the publication date so that their name is in the applicant list.

New Membership Tasks

- Appoint new chair and vice chair
- Set schedule for upcoming year and approve updated Terms of Reference
- Identify current areas of focus/interest of task force and training needs

Thank you!



Potential Agenda Items for July Meeting

- New membership tasks
- COVID-19 reflection/lessons learned