

MN FOOD SAFETY AND DEFENSE TASK FORCE
Meeting Minutes
July 20, 2020

Today's meeting was held via WebEx

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

Members present included: Courtney Bidney, Chris Gindorff, Lorrene (Lolly) Occhino, Annalisa Hultberg, Jaime Kirkpatrick, Patrice Bailey, Angie Cyr, Jamie Pfuhl, Caldoun Abuhakel, Michelle Rossman, Steven Foster, Julia Selleys, Sarah Anderson, John Hilgren, and Brent Kobielush.

Visitors present included: Ruth Petran, Benjamin Warren, Joe Jurusik, Carrie Rigdon, Karly Ackerman, Carolyn Warren, Jennifer van de Ligt, Dionne Meeham, Bill Mezera, Cassie Bunklman, Heidi Varberg, Shaun Kennedy, Meghan Germick, Rima Kapadia, Cheryl Eia, Jason Culotta, Kumar Mallikarjunan , Vanessa Kindred-Burandt, Joseph Scimeca, Jeff Luedeman, Jan Kelly, Mathew Gerths, Alida Sorenson, Jane Jewett, Jennifer Stepes, Kathy Zeman, Katherine Simon, Natasha Hedin, Purnendu Vasavada, Susan Bishop, and Julie Wagendorf.

1. Dates and links

The next Food Safety and Defense Task Force (FSDTF) Meeting will be Tuesday, September 15, 2020 via WebEx.

- The Minnesota Department of Agriculture [Emerging Farmers Working Group](#)
- AURI webinar Wednesday: [Local Sourcing for Food Manufacturing in Minnesota](#)
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update: [FDA prepares for resumption of domestic inspections with new risk assessment system](#)
- [Webinar: COVID-19 Preparedness Plans - Workplace Safety](#)
- [Webinar: COVID-19 Preparedness Plans – Serving Food and On-site Consumption](#)

2. The minutes from the May 2020 meeting were accepted with no comments.

3. Member and Visitor Updates:

Kathy Zeman (Minnesota Farmers' Market Association): Kathy is the executive director of the Minnesota Farmers' Market Association (MFMA) and the co-chair of the Food Innovation Team (FIT), a subcommittee of the Task Force. MFMA was conducting weekly calls which have now been switched to the first and third Monday of the month. They have also decided to conduct their annual conference virtually for the first week in December. So far market managers are weighing in with good reports as far as compliance at local markets with social distancing rules.

Patrice Bailey (Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA)): Patrice is the Assistant Commissioner for the MDA. Patrice mentioned that the MDA conducted a series of listening sessions around the state focused on barriers regarding BIPOC, women, and veterans getting started in agriculture in Minnesota. Results from these sessions were presented to legislature and a working group was established in May. For more information visit the Emerging Farmers webpage (provided above) on the MDA website. Patrice also mentioned working with a lot of business on East Lake Street and West Broadway areas post George Floyd and that it's good to see a lot of re-building and progress since Cub Food's pledge to re-build.

Brent Kobielush (Cargill): Brent shared that they are starting to see more inspection activity from states and that things are picking up with FDA's announcement they will begin more routine inspections towards the end of this month. They have not seen any activity as far as rescheduling international inspections that had been planned.

Ruth Petran (Ecolab): Ecolab continues to offer a lot of support for their customers who are re-opening in the food service, hospitality and lodging spaces. They have developed lots of procedures to help folks know and understand when disinfection might be necessary, while working closely with their regulatory groups to make sure they are using the right products. They also continually answer lots of questions around managing risks. They also continue to support those customers that never closed, such as grocery stores/food retail, and food manufactures and have similar procedures for those types of facilities that they are happy to share if needed.

Lolly Occhino (Agriculture Utilization Research Institute (AURI)) – Lolly is a Food Scientist with AURI. She mentioned a 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. The upcoming webinar on August 12, 2020 is on Local Sourcing for Food Manufactures in Minnesota. AURI also partnered with AgriGrowth, College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS) at the University of Minnesota, GreenSeam, and the MDA to put together a survey on the impacts of COVID-19 on Minnesota Food and Agriculture business which is open until end of the month.

Joe Jurusik (Hennepin County Public Health): Joe mentioned that their staff has been busy working on COVID-19 complaint response. They have been performing their risk-based inspections.

Courtney Bidney (General Mills): Courtney mentioned that through their trade association, Consumer Brands Association (CBA) they have been in contact with the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO), which Courtney also serves on as an industry advisor on the AFDO Board of Directors. AFDO has been working on a virtual audit framework to harmonize the approach towards virtual audits. AFDO has been engaging CBA and working together to identify best practices around virtual audits.

Jeff Luedeman (MDA): Jeff is the Retail Food Program Manager within the FFSD within MDA. Jeff shared that they partnered with the Department of Labor and Industry (DLI), MFMA, and U of MN Extension to develop and deliver two webinars on COVID-19 preparedness plans both for workplace safety and serving food – onsite consumption. Recordings are available on the MDA website (linked above).

Susan Bishop (Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)): Susan has been re-assigned to work on COVID-19 response. Working on migrant worker issues and coordinating with the Department of Employment and Economic Development and the DLI around guidance for migrant workers.

Jan Kelly (MDA): Jan is the Manufactured Food Program (MFP) Manager within the FFSD within MDA. Jan shared that the MFP kept staff busy with outreach calls to facilities and contacted nearly 700 processors and warehouses, checking in on their operating status and providing critical resources. Staff are now back in the field and have resumed contract inspections the first part of July. All inspections are now announced and inspectors self-screen their own health before going into the field. Each inspection still has an on-site component; however, they are offering at least part of the inspection to have a virtual component. Also currently not asking firms to sign-inspection report as another added safety measure. If anyone has any questions, feel to reach out to Jan.

John Hilgren (Ecolab): John mentioned the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) List N of disinfectants for use against SARS and CoV-2 and that the list is based on a policy of emerging viral pathogen hierarchy, which essentially means if a product is shown to be effective against a virus that's presumed to be harder to kill than that virus, it makes the list. These types of lists are supposed to go away when the virus becomes available for testing; and there are products now on the market that can be tested. Presently, there are products that have been tested against the actual virus and they are starting to appear on the list, however, but due to the current situation it's their understanding that the EPA isn't going to eliminate all the other products from the list. Sharing in case there are others wondering what's going to happen with List N.

Carolyn Warren (United States Food and Drug Association (FDA)): Carolyn will be sharing a presentation on the newly released Smarter Food Safety Blueprint. As was already mentioned, they are preparing to resume domestic inspections and would refer everyone to the Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Stephen M. Hahn's M.D. statement on July 10th as it contains the most up to date information on the resumption of domestic inspections and the new risk assessment. Would also emphasize that they are continuing to pre-announce inspections.

Joe Scimeca (International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA)): Joe mentioned the upcoming Regulatory Round-up starting on 7/21/20 which has lots of interesting relevant topics on the agenda.

Alida Sorenson (the MDA): Alida is the Response and Outreach Supervisor within the FFSD within the MDA. Alida shared that the MDAs' COVID-19. Incident Management Team has been stood down for the time being. She also shared that the MDA Rapid Response Team has been working with MDA licensed facilities throughout the state that have had COVID-19 outbreaks among employees. These are non-regulatory, touch-base calls around preventing COVID -19, making suggestions, and providing resources. The MDA is assisting the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) with these as they are currently overwhelmed with contact tracing. If anyone has any questions reach out to Alida.

Annalisa Hultberg (University of Minnesota Extension): Annalisa has been working with producers around the state; earlier parts were helping people understand the science of COVID-19 transmission around the farm and steps to mitigate it. They also put together a preparedness plan template before the requirement came out and are now helping folks understand that this is now a

requirement. Also helping u-pick farms understand that if they are allowing products to be consumed on-site, they need to operate under the restaurant and bar guidance.

Julia Selleys (Hennepin County): Julia shared that like others, they have been overwhelmed with COVID-19 response. Lots of staff have received reassignments to help with response including cluster calls, outreach, keeping up with executive orders, etc..

Rima Kapadia (UNFI): Rima shared that they are taking extra precautions related to safety regarding COVID-19 and providing related training for employees.

Jennifer Stephe (MDA): Jennifer is a Meat Inspection Supervisor with the Dairy and Meat Inspection Division (DMID) within the MDA. Meat inspection has been very busy throughout the pandemic, especially due to the need to continue to have meat and poultry in the stores and ensuring producers have a method for processing their animals at licensed facilities. They have seen about a 20-30% increase in slaughter, some of that is due to new facilities that came on and the creation of a fast track process for slaughter where currently licensed firms were able to add inspection slaughter via an expedited process. Overall there has been a general increase in plant participation with added slaughter dates and increasing to max capacity. They were also really busy with a rapid response mini grant communicating with firms as far as how to apply and eligibility. Inspection staff continue to do daily self COVID screening before going out in the field.

Shaun Kennedy (Food Systems Institute/U of M): Shaun shared that they recently received a grant from USDA to develop a curriculum for food system health. They will be reaching out for participation in a short survey regarding what knowledge and skills would an individual need to have that would be relevant/beneficial. Also planning to make a broader update at the next meeting regarding new book on food fraud, global threat, public health and economic consequences. Please be on the lookout for any requests for information on curriculum development for food system health.

Jennifer van de Ligt (Food Protection and Defense Institute (FPDI)): FPDI offered their food defense training and piloted online Intentional Adulteration Vulnerability Assessment (IAVA) Food Safety Preventive Controls Alliance (FSPCA) training in June. Stay tuned for future offerings. Working with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on national security impact of food supply chain disruption due to COVID-19.

Heidi Varberg (MDA): Heidi is an Outreach Coordinator with the DMID within the MDA. Regulations around wild game processing are moving from falling under FFSD's Retail Food Program and MN Food Code to DMID. They've been busy working on an outreach strategy and communications in preparation for the change.

Kumar Mallikarjunan (Professor, Food Science & Nutrition Department, University of Minnesota): Kumar is also the Process Authority for State of Minnesota. Kumar shared that depending upon the interest, they are planning to have the next Acidified (better process control) course in the Fall. We are in the process getting approval from FDA to offer the course in an online platform (due to COVID19 restrictions).

4. Welcome and Introduction of New Membership

Ruth Petran, Ecolab welcomed new members of the task force and all members provided brief introductions. New and re-appointed members will serve four-year terms expiring June 30, 2024.

Current Membership:

Position	Name
Member at Large	Chris Gindorff, Senior Quality Assurance / Food Safety Manager, Lund’s and Byerly’s
Member at Large	Steven Foster, Vice President Food Safety, Quality, Wholesale Produce Supply, LLC
Member at Large	Michelle Rossman, Co-owner, Rossman Farms, Oronoco, MN
Health/Food Professional	Courtney Bidney, Director – Global Scientific and Regulatory Affairs, General Mills
Health/Food Professional	Brent Kobielush, Director – U.S. Regulatory Affairs, Food Safety, Quality, and Regulatory, Cargill Inc
Local Food Inspection Agency Rep	Julia Selleys, Supervisor, Hennepin County Environmental Health
Statewide Farm Organization Rep	Sarah Anderson, Executive Director, Minnesota Turkey Growers Association
Food Oriented Consumer Group	Caldoun Abuhakel, Chief Executive Officer, Done Right Foods
MN Based Manufacturer of Microbial Detection Equipment	John Hilgren, Director, Regulatory Sciences and Registration, Ecolab
Commissioner of Agriculture or Commissioner’s Designee	Patrice Bailey, Assistant Commissioner, MDA
Commissioner of Health or the Commissioner’s Designee	Angie Cyr, Acting Program Manager, Food, Pools and Lodging Services, MDH
Representative from U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)	Michael Dutcher DVM, District Director Minneapolis, Office of Human and Animal Foods - Division I West (MN, ND, SD and WI) U.S. Food and Drug Administration
Representative from United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)	Jaime Kirkpatrick DVM, Frontline Supervisor – Woodbury Circuit, Office of Field Operations, Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA
Representative from the Minnesota Grocers Association (MGA)	Jamie Pfuhl, President, Minnesota Grocers Association
Representative from the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute (AURI)	Lolly Occhino, Scientist of Food and Nutrition, AURI
Representative from the University of Minnesota Knowledgeable in Food and Food Safety Issues	Annalisa Hultberg, University of Minnesota Extension

5. Chair and Vice-Chair Vote

Nominations were received for chair and vice-chair positions. Courtney Bidney was nominated for chair and Chris Gindorff for vice-chair. No other nominations were received. Members voted in favor of Courtney Bidney for chair, and Chris Gindorff for vice-chair.

5. New Era for Smarter Food Safety

Carolyn Warren, Compliance Officer, Office of Human and Animal Foods, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Minneapolis District provided a high-level overview presentation of the recently released New Era for Smarter Food Safety.

6. Terms of Reference Vote

The Terms of Reference were approved as updated, reflecting new dates for 2020 – 2021 operating year.

7. Training Discussion – Grant Year 3

Natasha Hedin, Outreach Coordinator for the FFSD within MDA provided background on the Flexible Funding Model Grant objectives and deliverables to tee up discussion about training options for grant year 3 and considerations regarding what can be accomplished under current circumstances. Topics discussed included key components and best practices of traceability, teaming up with Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom to discuss food safety and defense considering the impacts COVID-19 has had on food and children, and a deeper dive into food safety culture. Natasha will do some follow-up with the grant team as far as what's in scope/out of scope for grant funding and then meet with Courtney and Chris. The group will provide more information at the next meeting in September.

8. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

1. COVID-19 reflections/lessons learned
2. Virtual Audit Framework
3. Food Safety Culture – implementation within operations
4. AURI – report on pandemic impacts survey