

Fruit and Vegetable Safety and Quality PDG

Members Present: David Gombas, Brandi Baros, Kanika Bhargava, Larry Beuchat, Elizabeth Bihn, Robert Brackett, Annemarie Buchholz, Alejandro Castillo, Michelle Danyluk, Pascal Delaquis, Francisco Diez, Marilyn Erickson, Mario Estrada, Jr., Jeff Farber, Tong-Jen Fu, Robert Gravani, John Guzewich, Linda Harris, Craig Henry, Montserrat Hernandez Iturriaga, Sanja Ilic, Keith Ito, Sun Kim, Kalmia Kniel, Alvin Lee, Yaguang Luo, Li Ma, Mayra Marquez Gonzalez, Sherri McGarry, John Meschke, Sudarsan Mukhopadhyay, Melissa Mundo, M. Nazarowec-White, Xiangwu Nou, Ynes Ortega, Jitu Patel, Julia Perez-Montano, Terry Peters, Robert Sanderson, Manan Sharma, Amarat Simonne, Caroline Smith DeWaal, Michelle Smith, Stacy Stoltenberg and Mary Lou Tortorello.

Board/Staff Members Present: Lee-Ann Jaykus and Alejandro Mazzotta.

New Members: Michael Wood, Harold Ewell, Kenneth Shenge, John Allan, Laura Tobilla, Cangliang Shen, Kanika Bhargava, Gretchen Wall, Robert Buchanan, Otto “Chip” Simmons III, Lynette Johnston, Karen Killinger, Michael Casteel, Modesto Olanya, Atallah Baroudi, Angela Valadez, Rong Murphy, Navneet Gill, Susan Pheasant, Amir Anvarian, Gloria Swick-Brown, Eva Borjas, David Ingram, Juan Ponce de Leon, Eden Lara, Angelone Stoltzfus, Jeff Tazelaar, Shannon Coleman, Xuetong Fan, Zeynal Topalcengiz, David Melka, Tony Jin, Lisa Plemons, Rachel McEgan and Evelyn Gutierrez.

Visitors/Guests: Samir Assar, Tim Jenkins, Eric Moore, Yaguang Luo, Fernando Perez-Rodriguez, Arlette Shazen, Zerlinde Johnson, Joel Radford, Barbara Sanderson, Emilie Turgeon, Gosia Kozak, Sophie Pierre and Inge VanderLinden.

Meeting Called to Order: 1:04 p.m., July 22, 2012.

Recording Secretary of Minutes: Sherri McGarry.

Recognized outgoing PDG Chair Jack Guzewich.
Request for changes to Agenda – None requested.
Self-introductions of attendees.

Old Business: Meeting minutes adopted with no changes.

Update from Executive Board:

- Google groups – IAFP is offering opportunity to form Google groups and if this PDG is interested, contact David Tharp. It offers a way to maintain engagement and facilitate informal discussion communication forum. PDG will continue to use E-mail for more formal communications. Chair asked for input on whether this PDG wants a Google group. Discussion – Good idea to get people involved; suggest we pilot and see if we like it. We have a volunteer.
- Informed PDG on the IAFP App; Announced WIFI on 5th floor.

- Board working on Strategic Plan and provided at this meeting.
- Administrative updates provided on items including the Foundation.
- Alejandro Mazzotta is Board Liaison.

New Business:

Outbreak Update: Sherri McGarry provided an update of produce related outbreaks from 7/2011 to present. They included *Salmonella* outbreaks associated (or suspected) with papaya, cantaloupe, tomatoes, and pine nuts and several suspected to be produce that investigators were unable to narrow to a single food item, *E. coli* O:157 outbreaks associated (or suspected) with leafy greens and sprouts, and a *Listeria monocytogenes* linked to cantaloupe. Notably were continuing outbreaks involving leafy greens, tomatoes, sprouts and tree nuts. More info on the *Listeria* outbreak linked to whole cantaloupe will be in a separate IAFP session. Significant challenges remain with tracebacks and pin pointing the contaminated ingredient in complex foods.

Produce Regulatory Process: Michelle Smith provided the FDA regulatory update. Before update, Dr. Smith let the PDG know about FDA efforts on sprout safety. Currently, FDA is working on proposed rule for produce safety consistent with FSMA mandate. FDA is in the deliberative mode getting input from various stakeholders. Draft proposed rule worked its way through FDA and now with OMB. OMB is part of the checks and balances. Uncertain when the rule will issue. There's a process of notice and comment from all interested parties when the proposed rule is issued. FDA urges everyone with an interest to get engaged in the notice and comment period. There will be a public meeting for stakeholder input. Samir Assar, FDA CFSAN, mentioned that FDA is interested in developing two guidance documents – one associated with the rule itself and second guidance possibly an update to the FDA GAPs Guide. FDA will be interested in input from other government and stakeholder input.

Food Safety Preventive Control Alliance: Though the FSMA mandated Preventive Control Rule hasn't issued, the Alliance continues forward in preparation. There are several working groups developing training materials modeled after Seafood HACCP.

Produce Safety Alliance: Betsy Bihn provided an update on PSA. Primary goal is to help growers prepare for FSMA related production. Even though the rule delayed, they are moving forward. Emphasis to work with small growers to ensure they are informed but working with all. Focused on building collaboration and networks and developing a standard curriculum. Ten working committees were convened and their work has been completed – challenges and risks associated from growing to learning approaches. All info from committees is available on Web site. PSA conducted eight focus group with 20+ growers on each group and a publication to be released. Some key points from focus groups: even small farms ship cross county so not exempt; how to reach small growers; frustration from some growers need to know what can we stop doing that doesn't work. Currently working on goals and learning objectives for the curriculum.

Sprout Safety Task Force and Alliance: Sprout Safety Task Force formed and enables a platform for FDA to work with industry. Task Force was formed in 2009 and includes sprouters and seed suppliers. The goal of the Task Force is to determine how industry can work to implement FDA guidance and to facilitate research to update the Guidance. Two committees formed: Audit checklist – translates best practices into a self checklist; and Safety Committee formed in response to seed safety. Best practices for seed safety in development. Audit checklist has been completed and under review by an expert panel. Efforts are underway to examine application of audit checklist nationally. SSA was formed as a way to educate industry on upcoming produce safety rule. SSA formed in February 2012; Web site established this June. Purpose is to develop a curriculum and training program for industry both for requirements and best practices. Workgroups formed for developing training materials and execution. New workgroup on outreach is seeking members.

Framework Research Protocols: Samir Assar and Linda Harris (Western Center for Food Safety/UC Davis) discussed protocol for determining high priority research needs and implementation. FDA is funding research for high priority needs. Challenge to develop policy when the research varies on the parameters and hard to draw conclusions. There's a need to standardize research approaches. Also, FDA built in flexibility in proposed standards but recognizes practices and conditions as effective as in proposed rule and offers petition for variances of what rule will require. Implementation of research strategy includes research needs for use of manure and water for production. Linda Harris informed the PDG on framework documents for developing research protocols. Protocol outlines variables to conduct the research for the high priority research needs – manure and water use. Committees worked on developing the framework documents and reviewed by others; JFP approached to publish document and supported. JFP looking into open source documents. WCFS plans to link the framework documents to their website.

Research Update: Chair provided an opportunity to share current research activities by PDG members. Several members provided an overview of their current research.

New Business: Nominations for Vice Chair. Kali Kniel from University of Delaware and Melissa Mundu (Duda Farms). A vote was taken and Kali Kniel was nominated.

PDG Activities: Two webinars were held and topics included water and the role of product testing in food safety. A third webinar was scheduled for the Proposed Food Safety Rule but this was postponed. These are outcomes from the survey of the PDG and now open to additional topics for webinars.

Request by Chair for ideas for webinars by PDG: Ideas – Crossing the bridge of farmers and research community; bridging gaps between students and professionals (govt, academia, industry) on careers in produce safety; benchmarking on GFSI and how applies to regulatory agencies and industry.

Deadline for IAFP symposium and workshops is Oct 16, 2012. Chair suggested members start working on these and can supply the protocol. Encouraged co-sponsor with other PDGs.

Last year's recommendation outcomes:

1. Google Groups presented as idea today.
2. Due to cost, not able to provide more phone lines for webinars.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Recommend approval of Kali Kniel as Vice Chair.

Next Meeting Date: July 28, 2013.

Meeting Adjourned: 3:05 p.m.

Chairperson: David Gombas.