

## Food Safety Assessment, Audit and Inspection PDG

**Attendees:** Andrew Clarke (Chair), Tracie Sheehan (Vice Chair), Adeniyi Odugbemi, Erica Sheward, Hannah Bolinger, Kim Onett, Loralyn Ledenbach, Marie-Claude Quentin, Martin Fowell, Thomas Spoden, William Huntley, Yige Bima, and Yvonne Masters.

**Staff Present:** Didi Loynachan and Dina Siedenburg.

**Number of Attendees:** 15.

**Meeting Called to Order:** 10:30 a.m. Eastern Time, Monday, September 14, 2020.

**Minutes Recording Secretary:** Tracie Sheehan.

**Old Business:** Approved the 2019 meeting minutes without dissent. Andrew Clarke was approved by the Board to take over as Chair of the Food Safety Assessment, Auditing and Inspection PDG.

**New Business:** Andrew Clarke opened the meeting, shared the mission and provided the Anti-Trust Guidelines to the attendees. Tracie Sheehan was nominated to take over as Vice Chair for the PDG pending Board approval and requested to take meeting minutes.

Andrew Clarke invited two guest speakers from GFSI (Global Food Safety Initiative), Erica Sheward (GFSI Director) and Marie-Claude Quentin (GFSI Senior Technical Manager). They provided an introduction to GFSI, the current position on remote auditing, and the strategy for Race to the Top and key features. GFSI has been part of the Consumer Goods Forum for 20 years as a not-for-profit organization with a mission of safe food to consumers everywhere. The GFSI position on remote auditing supports the use of information and communication technologies (ICT), believes parts of the audit need to be onsite, continuously reviews this position and is seeking data and evidence of efficacy. They have a project working with academia to conduct literature reviews and review independent data on the efficacy of remote auditing. They believe ICT can be used for auditor qualification and other activities. The Race to the Top strategy started after the Board challenged GFSI that the quality of the audit outputs, the independence, and the lack of quality oversight may be failing. The Board stated that there is discrepancy between GFSI audits and company's internal audits of suppliers. The Race to the Top has the following features:

Feature 1 – GFSI benchmarking requirements for food safety, auditor training, and Certification Program Owner (CPO) key performance indicators (KPIs). There is a need to professionalize the auditor training similar to a financial auditor. GFSI should set the requirements on CPOs to monitor technical competence.

Feature 2 – CPOs need to be responsible for continuous self-monitoring and improvement of standards with GFSI monitoring CPO performance.

Feature 3 – Certification Body (CB) collaborative management platform – there is oversight of CBs by the CPOs, the ABs (Accreditation Bodies) and GFSI.

Feature 4 – GFSI recognized certificate repository for certifications from all CPOs through an electronic transfer so that CBs don't have to load directly to GFSI. This will create one source of GFSI Certificates for companies to check their suppliers.

Stakeholder groups can be involved in the process. A question was asked about the CPOs issuing new fully remote audits and GFSI stated that fully remote audits are not considered benchmarked. They agreed that it needs to be very clear to customers if the certificate is GFSI benchmarked or not. The CPO contract with GFSI is clear that communication of the differences to customers is required. A question was asked about timelines for the plan and GFSI stated that Feature 1 will be Q1 2021, Feature 2 will be end of 2020 for KPIs for CPOs, Feature 3 is working with the IAF task force by end of Jan. 2021, and Feature 4 the database should be live in 2021. GFSI will be engaging at the annual IAFP conference 2020 with a virtual booth. A question was asked if ASQ certification should be a requirement for auditors. They acknowledged this was a good training program but is not available or known globally. Andrew shared that he had posted the Race to the Top on the Audit PDG site and perhaps our PDG could share the GFSI training proposal with the student PDG group for feedback.

Andrew thanked GFSI for sharing the presentation and they left the meeting.

Andrew shared the following three proposals with brief summaries: 1) Symposia – Raising the Food Safety Bar in Auditing: Leveraging Best Practices between Internal Audits, GFSI Audits and Customer Audits; 2) Roundtable – GFSI Audits Chain of Custody – removing confusion and regaining confidence, and 3) Symposia – Law and Order Versus Criminal Minds.

Other possible sessions were proposed on either auditor fatigue or celebrating auditor successes. Andrew suggested reviewing the 2019 minutes for topics. A suggestion was made for a workshop prior to the 2021 IAFP on auditor training with GFSI. It was noted that the attendance on this call was low and should we reach out to the auditing community to bring more auditors and regulatory inspectors to the committee. Andrew will set up a follow up call to discuss the proposals submitted after the submission deadline of November 10. He also suggested that some IAFP sponsored auditing webinars might generate more interest in the committee and to aid progressing the mission of the group.

### Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Recommend the Board approve Tracie Sheehan as incoming Vice Chair for the Food Safety Assessment, Auditing and Inspection PDG.

**Next Meeting Date:** July 18-21, 2021, Phoenix, Arizona.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 12:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

**Chairperson:** Andrew Clarke.