

## Food Safety Culture

**Attendees:** Laura Nelson (Chair), Melody Ge (Vice Chair), Alexis Hamilton, Alison Cousins, Ana Lozano, Austin Welch, Bertrand Emond, Brittany Saunier, Cameron Prince, Carmen Cano Roca, Chris Boyles, Ellen Evans, Emma Samuel, Jeff Chilton, Laurie Post, Lone Jespersen, Margaret Kirchner, Megan Jensen, Michael Johnston, Michael Roberson, Molly Mills, Neil Coole, Rick Stokes, Ryan Maus, Sharon, Sophie Tongyu Wu, Tatiana Lorca, Tom Ford, and Yvonne Masters.

**Number of Attendees:** 32.

**Board/ Staff Present:** Ruth Petran, Didi Loynachan, and Dina Siedenburg.

**Meeting Called to Order:** 11:00 a.m. Eastern Time, Wednesday, June 16, 2021; 11:03 a.m. Eastern Time, Thursday, June 17, 2021.

**Minutes Recording Secretary:** Carmen Cano Roca.

**Old Business:** Lone Jespersen, outgoing PDG chair, welcomed all members, and introduced Laura Nelson as the incoming chair for the PDG. This was the virtual hand over of the gavel.

Laura Nelson welcomed all attendees, acknowledged the great work from Lone Jespersen and Alexis Hamilton, and introduced the agenda.

Laura emphasized the purpose of the PDG, which is to provide a global networking platform and resources to aid in PDG member professional development. This mission was accomplished last year by facilitating seven webinars, with 19 speakers and over 7000 signups.

Ruth Petran, IAFP President-Elect, gave an update to PDG members from the IAFP Executive Board. Ruth applauded the great work of the Food Safety Culture PDG, thanks to Lone's leadership and the volunteering effort of members. Ruth recognized the fascinating and engaging webinar series organized by the PDG over the last two years. Lastly, Ruth updated members about the creation of a new diversity and inclusion council, which is in the final stages of finalizing its mission statement and commitment. In a couple of weeks, there will be a call for members who are interested in participating in this council.

Laura Nelson introduced Melody Ge, newly elected PDG vice-chair, mentioning her extensive career background on several areas of food safety. Laura also recognized the other seven candidates who participated in elections. Laura highlighted the proposals from the PDG that were accepted for the 2021 Annual Meeting and encouraged members to attend these symposia. Melody Ge greeted all members and expressed her pleasure and commitment to working with Laura and all of the members of the PDG.

**New Business:** Alexis Hamilton presented the Food Safety Culture Resource Repository. The Resource Repository is finalized and is available on the Library section of the Food Safety Culture PDG community page on IAFP Connect (<https://connect.foodprotection.org/home>). This resource includes three tiers of reference book and articles around food safety culture. The tiers include beginner, intermediate and experienced based on your business operation or your personal experience. Alexis thanked Wendy Henderson for her work in developing this repository. Alexis is available to answer questions and comments. Lone asked whether maintenance of this repository will be carried over to the new student liaison and suggested to add this maintenance as a set responsibility for all future student liaisons. Laura Nelson approved the suggestion. Lone suggested contacting Dina Siedenburg to make the repository available on the main website of the PDG, to increase its visibility and availability to the general members of IAFP.

Cameron Prince gave a presentation on "Update—Codex with Food Safety Culture Content." Cameron's presentation included an overview of newly added elements in Codex and a brief introduction of the role of Codex in the food safety industry. One of the new elements is senior management commitment,

which is associated with the establishment of a food safety culture. Cameron mentioned the requirements apply for all personnel within a business, which will raise challenges during implementation. Cameron noted he is looking forward to any regulatory updates on how to audit and inspect food safety culture.

Lone Jespersen presented about food safety culture research activities. There are knowledge gaps related to adaptability and risk perception. Lone encouraged all researchers to explore these areas in collaboration with industry. Additionally, Lone called for volunteers for articles to include in *Food Protection Trends*, as part of a series focused on Food Safety Culture.

Jeff Chilton gave an update on Audit Standards and Food Safety Culture Requirements. He gave a brief overview of how Food Safety Culture is included in audits by GFSI, BRCGS, SQF Code Edition 9, IFS and FSSC 22000. GFSI emphasizes senior management commitment and lists minimum elements of food safety culture. BRCGS Issue 8 includes food safety culture in audit requirements, from commitment from senior management to a written action plan for food safety culture activities that are defined, enacted, measure and reviewed. SQF Code Edition 9 is in place since May 24 2021. It is aligned with GFSI and emphasizes employee engagement at all levels. IFS requires a corporate policy on food safety culture and a management system that is reviewed annually. Finally, FSSC 22000 provides a food safety culture guidance document. Jeff presented considerations for the implementation of these requirements, including common gaps and recommended actions. Common gaps include lack of understanding, lack of management support, improperly defined food safety objectives and lack of actionable data and results. These gaps can be bridged by preparing a written procedure/ guidance for food safety culture within the organization and by completing routine assessments to drive continuous improvement. A PDG member asked if these types of assessments are commercially available. Jeff mentioned a couple of commercial assessments, including SGS, BRCGS, Campden, Cultivate and Alchemy Intertek. Rick Stokes commented that Ecolab also has one of these assessments available. Lone said that a comparison of these options would be helpful for practitioners and companies who are deciding on an assessment. Laura decided to take this on as an action item.

Bertrand Emond gave an update on the Global Training Survey and Food Safety Culture Insights. The 2020 Global Training Survey included 5000 companies worldwide. A webinar about this survey was held on August 17, 2020. Food Safety Culture knowledge is on the rise and cascading down the supply chain, but some improvements are still required. More mature organizations need to keep up with evaluation and documentation. Bertrand shared that the next Global Training Survey will happen in 2022 and asked for help from PDG members to disseminate the survey once it is available. Additionally, Bertrand presented about the culture of excellence survey carried out by Campden BRI. He focused on the dimensions of culture that have the lowest scores across companies of all sizes. These dimensions are reward, training and communications. He suggested these are three areas where the PDG can focus as a group and have an impact on companies. Laura and Lone supported this idea. Neil Coole provided an update on the PAS 320—A Culture of Food Safety. This document has been developed with industry stakeholders as a practical how to guide for any organization looking to build their food safety culture. This is the first PAS guide focused on behavior. A steering group has prepared and reviewed the first draft. The next step is making the draft available for public consultation and comments. Neil encouraged members to sign up to provide feedback on the guide and to forward this information to all colleagues. Members can email Sophie Hamza at [sophie.hamza@bsigroup.com](mailto:sophie.hamza@bsigroup.com) to be included in the review panel.

Lone called for volunteers for an article series on *Food Protection Trends* about Food Safety Culture over the next year. PAS 320 is a series of 5 important questions and could be an interesting article topic. Bertrand volunteered to be part of the article series.

Melody Ge led the discussion of ideas for PDG activities for next year (2021–2022). Melody

presented the five focuses that rose from public discussion: (1) Regulatory requirements and standards, (2) Audits and inspections, (3) Training, (4) Best practices and tips, and (5) Soft skills. Meg Kirchner proposed a symposium on “New Era of Food Safety calls for Food Safety Culture for Consumers.” Ellen Evans supported this idea and wished to expand the discussion to vulnerable groups, such

as those in health care settings. Tatiana Lorca suggested exploring the integration of food safety culture across vendors and suppliers. Alison Cousins proposed a symposia or webinar about trust within organizations and psychological personal safety. Laura Nelson suggested an activity around change management skills. Lone Jespersen proposed a workshop to share tools for Culture Champions to apply to their organizations. Austin Welch supports the inclusion of soft skills in the PDG activities.

Rick Stokes proposed to develop small reminder materials, such as slides or infographics, focused on food safety culture that can be available for Food Safety Week activities. Melody Ge would like to share challenges and pitfalls in implementation of food safety culture activities and reward systems. Lone and Rick supported this idea for a symposium or a roundtable. Austin Welch can contribute information about intrinsic/extrinsic motivators from frontline to management. Michael Roberson volunteered to represent the retail sector. Finally, Austin Welch proposed a webinar for people who are starting out on their implementation of Food Safety Culture, to leverage resources and provide support. Lone considered this topic could be a pre-meeting workshop for the 2022 Annual Meeting, in collaboration with the Developing Food Safety Professionals PDG. Melody Ge closed the discussion by asking for continued submission of ideas to her email. Laura also called for participation and volunteers for the FSC task force, webinars, articles and symposium proposals and encouraged everyone to reach out. Laura closed the meeting by thanking all members for their attendance.

**Recommendations to the Executive Board:**

1. Recommend approval of Melody Ge as Vice Chair of the Food Safety Culture PDG.

**Next Meeting Date:** July 31–August 3, 2022, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 12:04 p.m. Eastern Time, June 16, 2021; 12:02 p.m. Eastern Time, June 17, 2021.

**Chairperson:** Laura Nelson.