

Seafood Safety and Quality PDG

Attendees: Kevin Edwards (Chair), Brian Himelbloom, Doug Marshall, Evelyn Watts, Hope Eeseose, Jackie Woods, James O'Donnell, Katheryn Parraga, Ken Boyer, Lisa Weddig, Lorraine McIntyre, Naim Montazeri, Patricia Rabideau, Peter Hibbard, Rocelle Clavero, Salina Parveen, Siman Liu, Tori Stivers, and Tricia Rabideau.

Staff Present: Didi Loynachan and Dina Siedenburgh.

Number of Attendees: 21.

Meeting Called to Order: 3:30 p.m. Eastern Time, Wednesday, September 16, 2020.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Katheryn Parraga.

Welcome and introduction was made by Kevin Edwards. Katheryn Parraga provided an update regarding the Student PDG needs and announcements. The Rules of Order & Anti-trust Guidelines were read by Kevin Edwards and Katheryn Parraga.

Old Business: A motion was made by Lisa Weddig to approve the 2019 Minutes, seconded by Rocelle Clavero and passed by majority vote. Thereafter, we reviewed the Seafood Symposia and Roundtable to be presented at the 2020 Meeting.

New Business:

Members of the Seafood PDG must present and submit all ideas for the 2021 Annual Meeting Symposia Submissions by November 10, 2020.

Kevin Edwards discussed how to communicate in a better way with the PDG. Also, he announced that "After the September PDG meeting, the IAFP will not be sending additional announcements by email. Members should set their IAFP Connect notification preferences to at least weekly digests." Rocelle expressed that IAFP Connect is a very good tool because it is very informative and useful for announcements. However, she recommended to better schedule calls, this would benefit members that are outside of USA. Selena agreed with Rocelle. Tori recommended to have a virtual meeting with sub-committees to arrange other topics.

2021 Topic Nominations:

Seafood processors reacting to the Pandemic: what are they doing and how to provide them information? Format: Roundtable. Proposed by: Tori Stivers. Contributor: Evelyn Watts.

Reviewing food safety concerns with food fraud and traceability. Short Symposium.

Proposed by: Doug Marshall. Potential Contributor: Food Fraud PDG. COVID-19 Transmission to seafood: Interruptions due to detections of SARS-CoV-2 virus on seafood and packages surrounding seafood. Format: Roundtable. Proposed by: Lisa Weddig and Doug Marshall.

Consumption of seafood affected by COVID-19? Proposed by: Tori Stivers.

How consumers are changing their eating behaviors during the pandemic, eating more seafood? Proposed by: Tori Stivers.

Preventive control and Seafood HACCP (no named organizer).

Food Safety Culture in the Seafood Processing sector, proposed by Kevin Edwards, could be combined with the International Food Safety PDG.

Guest Speakers:

Lisa Weddig, National Fisheries Institute, "CoVid-19 and the Seafood Sector." Is COVID-19 linked to seafood? At the beginning of January, the NFI started getting news about the virus. The media stories stated that many of the infected patients were vendors or dealers at a seafood market, or were linked to animal markets. People started to avoid eating seafood. The first question from an NFI member was "Does the FDA or any other agency have a concern about incoming seafood or any food product coming from China due to coronavirus? The NFI provided perspective on what was happening, and that coronavirus was not related to seafood or at least that no evidence for this had been reported. The NFI created a portal, go to (<https://seafoodsafetycovid19.wordpress.com/>) to offer the latest research and facts, provided by scientists and public health professionals from the U.S. and around the world.

Thereafter, the NFI developed a daily facts report, and webinars based on content relevant to its industry members, including training and guidance for hygienic practices (posters) for their facilities.

Lisa provided two case studies: One study described a newspaper story "In Alaska town, calls to shut down fishing season amid coronavirus fears." Mitigation strategies were put in place: quarantine for 14 days in a hotel without leave, and private transportation to the company installations. Using these strategies no one was exposed. This case revealed that it was possible to minimize the exposure; though it was very expensive to implement.

Lisa closed out the presentation with the assessment of whether SARS-CoV-2 was transmitted via seafood. Beginning with a new outbreak of COVID-19, some cases were traced back to seafood markets in which the virus was present in cutting boards (salmon). In another report from China, in 1000 packages of Ecuadorian shrimp, the Chinese labs found 5 positives for the virus. Questions arose: can it be transmitted from a food package? Several studies were cited. However, the scientific experts and regulators at the USDA and FDA said there was no evidence that the virus was transmitted by seafood. Frank Yiannas said, "True then. True still today. There was no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with the transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19."

Katheryn Parraga and Hope Eeseose, Louisiana State University Students, presented their "Students' voice on CoVid-19."

Katheryn explained how the pandemic had affected LSU students' management of their research projects. Working with seafood was difficult because of the seasonality of some products. When the pandemic started, she and her lab mates were forced to stop the crawfish study. By the time the university reopened, the season for crawfish was about to be over, forcing them to change the seafood product for the study. In addition, there were many challenges with sensory studies due to concerns for work in crowded spaces or contact with surfaces that were touched by someone else. Sensory studies (200 panelists) used to be done in one day and now could take from three to five days to conduct the study. At last, graduate students are getting used to this new modality and trying their best to obtain results for their projects.

Hope shared his experience before and after COVID-19. When the pandemic started, professors had only two weeks to find a new means to teach. The classes that he was taking had laboratory practices, yet the lab work was done by someone else who just uploaded the videos for them to learn. This limited the students from having the hands-on experience. Ironically, the simple task of asking questions was complicated. In some instances, they "just asked Google!". Fortunately, he now has access to the professors and can learn and practice during the laboratory sections.

Meeting adjourned thereafter.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Recommend the Board approve Jessica Jones as Vice Chair of the PDG.

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

Meeting Adjourned: 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

Chairperson: Kevin Edwards.