

Beverages and Acid/Acidified Foods Professional Development Group

The Beverages and Acid/Acidified Foods Professional Development Group's mission is to provide a forum to discuss and develop symposia on issues facing the beverages and acid/acidified foods industry. This PDG reaches diverse segments of the industry from manufacturers of juices and beverages to those processing pickles, salad dressings, and sauce products. The PDG currently comprises of 209 members from across the globe who see tremendous value in sharing ideas, experiences, and best practices focused on improving public health in the retail and foodservice industry.

We are very proud to see that this PDG has grown in size over the years and in-person meetings have been very well-attended every year at the annual IAFP Conference where members openly exchange ideas on educational symposia, roundtables, and webinars for the following year's conference. Programs sponsored by the PDG in recent years include:

- Recent Advancements in Beverage Processing: Considerations and Outcomes
- To be Acid or to be Acidified, That is the Question
- Not All Acids are Created Equal
- Clean-Label Antimicrobial Innovations and Applications
- Life at the Extreme: Fungal Spoilage in Low-Water Activity, High Acid, and Thermally Processed Foods and Beverages
- Acidified Foods: Addressing Challenges in Product Classification Beyond Food Safety. What Role Do Water, Syrups, and Other Low-Water Activity Ingredients Play?

IAFP 2021 was a memorable year for getting back on the world stage with its biggest event after missing a year (in-person meeting) because of the pandemic. IAFP 2021 marked its first ever hybrid meeting, with an in-person conference at the Phoenix Convention Center and virtually online open to anyone in the world. That year, the PDG kicked off with a very well-attended symposium titled, "The Forgotten Option: Formulation-Based Preventive Controls for Human Foods" developed in conjunction with the Microbial Modelling and

Risk Analysis (MMRA) and HACCP Utilization and Food Safety Systems PDGs. This session opened up the discussion around the current guidance for formulation-based preventive controls as well as an industry perspective on validating these controls and an academic approach to validation using different options such as microbiological modeling. The objective was to address the establishment of formulation-based preventive controls for microbiological safety, including those for foods historically believed to be safe but lacking in scientifically valid controls that are also feasible for manufacturing. Believe it or not, the same topic continues to be a hot topic and it led to several subtopics that have been proposed for the subsequent IAFP Conferences!

In this year's PDG meetings, the members eagerly brought back some interesting topics. The highlight of the meeting was during the idea-sharing session where representatives from industry, academia, and regulatory shared session ideas and identified potential areas of collaboration from within the group as well as with other PDGs. Some of the proposed topics for the upcoming IAFP conference include: acidified foods regulations: Where are we now, validation on non-thermal technologies, understanding the complexities and challenges of cold brew coffee, safe harbors for processing of foods with pH 4.5 and below, fit for use of surrogate vs. process, the importance of proper hydration in thermal processing of aseptic and ESL refrigerated beverages, and the role of heat-resistant molds as a key spoiler in shelf-stable juices/juice drinks and industry initiatives to solve this dynamic problem.

As we reflected in our mission statement, we are always excited to welcome new members to our PDG. No matter if you are interested in networking, sharing, learning, collaborating, or simply listening, you are welcome to join us at any time!

May Yeow, Chairperson
April Bishop, Vice Chairperson