### Produce Safety Consequences of COVID – Dr. Jennifer McEntire, Senior Vice President Food Safety & Technology, United Fresh Produce Association

Through a survey sent prior to the meeting, PDG members indicated interest in learning more about how the pandemic has impacted the produce industry and how they might contribute to efforts to assist the produce industry as a whole. Dr. McEntire discussed a wide array of impacts to the produce industry, including consumer confidence and misperceptions, farm labor challenges, produce safety implications, research needs, unintended consequences of the pandemic (such as a shift to more home food delivery and home cooking), and future regulatory influence. Her informative presentation led to an open discussion amongst PDG members. Emilio Esteban provided the IAFP Executive Board Report.

Historically, the FVSQ PDG provides a series of presentations and updates to the members, which are outlined below.

**Produce Safety Consequences of COVID**

- Dr. Jennifer McEntire
- United Fresh Produce Association

#### Overview of Foodborne Outbreaks since last IAFP meeting – Dr. Tami Cloyd, Team Lead FDA CORE Outbreak Evaluation Team

Dr. Tami Cloyd provided an update on produce related outbreaks from July 2019 – present day. Dr. Cloyd reviewed the goals and activities of CORE team including surveillance, response, communications, and outbreak evaluation. In the presentation, Dr. Cloyd highlighted that CORE responded to 33 outbreaks since the last meeting, 24 of which were produce related (19 currently closed), 6 had vehicles confirmed, 13 had vehicles suspect. The majority of outbreaks were associated with Romaine lettuce (5); other outbreaks involved blackberries, a combination of raspberries and blackberries, strawberries, herbs, mushrooms, mango, cut fruit, diced tomatoes, and sprouts. The produce originated from both domestic and international sources. Produce-related outbreak pathogens included *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Escherichia coli*, *Salmonella*, *Cyclospora*, and *Shiga toxin-producing E. coli*.

Three outbreaks were still in response during the last annual meeting including melons, vegetable trays, and papayas – all which were caused by *Salmonella*. One outbreak of interest associated with enoki mushrooms was reviewed. FDA is also actively investigating another domestic and international, and 5 are sprout growers. Trainees are available to conduct trainings in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Korean. New this year is the SSA Virtual Training due to the pandemic. This training is now broken in to 2 four-hour sessions delivered on Zoom with group exercises and knowledge checks. Pre- and post-training assessments were discussed.

Outreach activities included 2 webinars (Listeria concerns and testing requirements). SSA is also developing a video series, though progress has halted due to the pandemic. SSA continues to provide updates via their newsletters and technical support through the SSA TAN.

**Produce Safety Alliance, Dr. Betsy Bihn, Cornell University**

Dr. Betsy Bihn provided the update for the Produce Safety Alliance and began by discussing COVID-19 priorities and impacts. This included keeping the PSA Grower Training accessible through online and remote courses, supporting trainers by offering extra office hours and mentoring for remote trainings, and sharing COVID-19 facts through industry office hours, FAQs, and guidance documents. Dr. Bihn noted for attendees that course terminology is important as each of the course types are very different (in-person, remote, or online). The PSA is hosting a series of refresher webinars for PSA Trainer Certification on Oct. 1 through the end of November. Each session is one hour long and hosted on Thursdays at 12 p.m. ET. More information about the series can be found on the PSA website go to https://producSafeAlliance.cornell.edu/training/trainer-updates/. The first pilot remote Train-the-Trainer Course was hosted on Sept. 21-24, 2020 and the Spanish pilot remote course will be hosted on Oct. 5-8, 2020. The PSA plans to evaluate these programs and release additional dates for PSA Train-the-Trainer Courses in the near future. The PSA collaborated with the FSMA Southern Center to deliver two Advanced PSA Trainer Workshops in 2019 and 2020. They are moving forward in revising content, but the pandemic has prevented the scheduling of future courses due to the hands-on nature of activities built into the course. Dr. Bihn shared training metrics, go to https://producSafeAlliance.cornell.edu/training/training-reports/ and highlighted that some changes may be made in the next reporting cycle. There was also a reminder to trainers to update their contact https://producSafeAlliance.cornell.edu/training-containers/ and email trainers@enrolMultichannel.com. The PSA continues to move forward with international outreach activities, development of new education and extension materials, and supporting diverse learning opportunities (i.e., translations, adaptations of the curriculum).

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Student PDG Updates – Dr. Cameron Bardsley

Dr. Cameron Bardsley provided the update on behalf of the IAFP Student PDG. There is a 3-minute thesis competition that is happening – including two rounds. Finalists will be selected to present in a webinar held in November (date TBD). Submissions will be accepted until Oct. 4, 2020. If PDG members have any opportunities for students, feel free to reach out to the Student PDG leadership. Dr. Bardsley also acknowledged the upcoming symposia and roundtables organized by the Student PDG, and encourages all PDG members to attend the 2020 sessions or work towards co-sponsorship of sessions for 2021. There also are changes in leadership that have occurred. The new Chair is Minh Duong, Vice Chair is Erika Estrada. Dr. Bardsley encourages all PDG members to become active in the Mentor/Mentee program. Last year, there were 36 mentoring matches between student and professional members.

PDG Updates – 2020 Meeting & Planning for 2021

The FVSQ PDG session schedule for the 2020 Annual Meeting was shared with meeting attendees. The PDG sponsored 2 roundtables and 10 symposia for the 2020 meeting. Proposals for 2021 are due on Nov. 10, 2020. There is a discussion post set up on IAFP Connect for FVSQ PDG members to discuss and collaborate on potential proposals. Please contact the FVSQ Chairs no later than October 30, 2020 for review and approval prior to your submission. There is also opportunity to host webinars and additional educational opportunities in 2021. If you have ideas, please share them with Gretchen or Kristin.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Recommend to the Board that Kristin Esch, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, be approved as Vice Chair of the PDG.
2. Continue to offer free webinars sponsored by the IAFP Foundation to increase PDG accessibility to learning opportunities.

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

Meeting Adjourned: 4:10 p.m. Eastern Time.

Chairperson: Gretchen Wall.