

Food Safety Assessment, Audit, and Inspection

Names of Attendees: Jose Guerrero (Chair), Taryn Horr (Vice Chair), Adejare Adegbuyi, Seth Adesope, Douglas Adjei Afrane, Leili Afsah-Hejri, Shahram Ajamian, Lauane Araujo, Vera Arthur, Aaron Beczkiewicz, Richa Bedi Navik, Richelle Beverly, Deanna Brown, Jessica Burke, Marivi Carrera, Jelf Celestin, Ashley Collins, Ada Cowan, Kayla Crouch, Martin Cutler, Angela Delk, Nicola Dermer, Prantho Malakar Dipta, John Figgins, Elise Forward, Sean Foster, Fabiana Guglielmone, Virginia Hamilton, Alex Hanley, James Hosford, Farnaz Izadi, Mitchel Jackson, Veeramani Karuppuchamy, Sharlanda Khosravi, Julie Kuruc, Jason Lafontaine, Mark Lebednick, Yuqian Lou, Aishwarya Marathe, Sophia Markus, Ixnorisilda Matthews, Rachel McEgan, Steven Mesia, Yoshinori Mizoguchi, James Nasella, Tracy Nowaczyk, Adeniyi Odugbemi, Gabriela Oliva Coba, Rocio Ortega, Clay Quassa, Ruby Ragland, Dheeraj Reddy, Allison Riley, Karina Rodriguez, Victoria Romano, Mark Salter, Buddhi Sapkota, Roger Schaller, Jason Scheffler, Arlette Shazer, Julie Simcox, Clint Stevenson, Greta Swanson, Alexander Todd, Michael Wernigk, Yang Zhai

Total Number of Attendees: 65

Meeting Called to Order: Sunday, July 26, 2026, 8:30 AM

Minutes Recording Secretary: Ruby Ragland

Old Business:

Meeting discussions established leadership appointments, refined proposal submission strategies, and initiated collaborative brainstorming for future projects. The group transitioned leadership, appointed new officers, and confirmed a mission statement focusing on global food safety. Members established a foundation for organized professional development. The meeting facilitated member connections via networking activities and utilized brainstorming sessions to gather topics for future webinars and initiatives, and this collaborative input will guide upcoming organizational planning. The Anti-trust guidelines were read and reviewed, and there were no questions from the group. The Food Safety Assessment, Audit, and Inspection PDG 2025 Meeting Minutes were approved. The Chair shared the list of IAFP 2026 session ideas that were approved, including the Roundtable Discussion RT7, "Full Strength, Fully Understood: Bridging Language Gaps Without Cutting Content," primarily sponsored by the Food Safety Education PDG and secondarily by the Food Safety Culture PDG, held Monday, July 27, 2026 (8:45–10:15 AM) in Room 210, with Jose Guerrero serving as Roundtable Moderator; the Symposium S10, "FSVP at the Border: Rising FDA Detention and How to Prepare," primarily sponsored by the Food Law PDG and secondarily by the Food Safety Assessment, Audit and Inspection PDG, held Monday, July 27, 2026 (1:30–3:00 PM) in Room 217-219, with Taryn Horr serving as Primary Author, Organizer, and Speaker; and the Roundtable Discussion RT13, "Internal Assessment: Closing the Gap Between Audits and Food Safety Performance," primarily sponsored by the Food Safety Assessment, Audit and Inspection PDG and secondarily by the Food Safety Culture PDG, held Monday, July 27, 2026 (3:45–5:15 PM) in Room 203-205, with Taryn Horr serving as Roundtable Moderator and Primary Author, Organizer, and Speaker, and Sharam Ajamian serving as Primary Author, Panelist, and Speaker.

New Business:

Taryn Horr was appointed to a two-year term as Vice Chair of the PDG, and Ruby Ragland was appointed to a two-year term as Secretary of the PDG (see Numbered List of Recommendations to the Executive Board, below). IAFP Student PDG Liaisons were introduced: Vera Arthur of the University of Arkansas and Veeramani Karuppuchany of The

Ohio State University. The group then broke into groups of five to six members to generate ideas for improving the PDG and for IAFP 2027 proposals.

In the first breakout session, on how to improve the Food Safety Audit, Assessment, and Inspection PDG, participants identified the following themes. General Alignment and Communication: there is a need to improve coordination across participants by sharing contact information, aligning on expectations (especially across regulatory versus third-party roles), and increasing ongoing communication to maintain momentum after meetings. Auditing Best Practices and Consistency: participants emphasized strengthening audit quality through standardized practices, better calibration among auditors, and clearer guidance, along with reinforcing foundational GMPs while learning from real-world successes and failures to improve consistency and effectiveness. Knowledge Sharing and Case Studies: real-world case studies (e.g., recalls, company experiences) and regulator involvement (FDA/USDA) are seen as highly valuable, and learning from industry examples can help translate theory into practical improvements. Evolution of Auditing (Global and Structural): auditing is evolving toward more global alignment and transparency, including better understanding of third-party accreditation systems, incorporating international perspectives, and increasing collaboration across different PDGs. Supplier and Facility Oversight: there is a need for better methods to assess suppliers and facilities that lack formal third-party audits, including developing more flexible, risk-based, and remote auditing approaches while ensuring consistency in expectations. Digitalization and AI in Auditing: auditing is expected to become more technology-driven, with AI and digital tools playing a major role in shaping future audit practices, requiring new frameworks, skills, and possibly dedicated working groups. Workforce Development and Culture: improving auditor capability is a priority, including better training, recruitment, and clearer career pathways, with a strong emphasis on building meaningful food safety and quality cultures rather than just compliance-based systems. Learning from Recalls: recalls are viewed as critical learning opportunities, and there is interest in systematically incorporating recall insights into audit processes and using them as training and continuous improvement tools. Industry Engagement and Programming: future events should be more targeted and collaborative, including symposiums, regulatory discussions, and cross-functional topics like sanitation and microbiology to drive deeper engagement. PDG Structure and Continuous Improvement: there is a desire to formalize how the group operates, including regular meetings, structured knowledge sharing, gap assessments against new regulations, and stronger feedback loops with regulators to influence policy and practice.

In the second breakout session, on ideas for the IAFP 2027 proposal, participants identified the following themes. Regulatory and Technical Priorities: key food safety risks (e.g., mycotoxins, chemical hazards) and regulatory frameworks (FSMA, FDA/state roles) remain central, and there is a need for clearer guidance, better understanding of requirements, and practical application in industry settings. Auditing versus Inspection Clarity: participants highlighted confusion between audits and inspections and the need to better define their roles, clarify expectations, and position audits as part of a broader, strategic system rather than isolated activities. Moving Toward Risk-Based, Holistic Systems: auditing should evolve from siloed activities to integrated systems that assess overall facility risk, with a more strategic, risk-based, and value-added approach needed to improve effectiveness. Industry and Regulatory Challenges: concerns were raised about regulatory inconsistencies, enforcement practices, and reduced government resources, with industry seeking clarity and alignment, especially in emerging areas like ultra-processed foods. AI in Auditing — Opportunities and Risks: AI is seen as a major opportunity to enhance auditing (e.g., data analysis, supplier approval), but there are concerns around ethics, over-reliance, and misuse, and clear boundaries and best practices are needed. Food Safety Culture: there is strong interest in advancing food safety culture beyond compliance, with the challenge being to measure and sustain genuine culture without reducing it

to a checkbox exercise. Benchmarking and Scheme Alignment: comparing GFSI-recognized schemes and understanding their differences and similarities is important for consistency, benchmarking, and improving audit reliability across systems. Collaboration Across Industry: greater collaboration is needed among manufacturers, ingredient suppliers, certifiers, and regulators, and sharing best practices and aligning approaches can strengthen the entire system. Risk and Hazard Focus: audits should prioritize key hazards specific to industry segments and adopt a more risk-based approach that delivers meaningful value rather than just compliance verification. Global Regulatory Alignment: there is interest in comparing global regulations to identify overlaps and gaps, helping companies operate more efficiently across regions. Workforce and Future Talent: supporting new professionals and adapting to changing skill requirements (especially with AI) is critical, and building connections with universities and developing talent pipelines are key priorities. Engagement and Knowledge Sharing Formats: participants want more interactive and frequent engagement — roundtables, workshops, conference sessions, and networking opportunities — to sustain collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Numbered List of Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Approve Taryn Horr for a two-year term as Vice Chair of the Food Safety Assessment, Audit, and Inspection PDG.
2. Approve Ruby Ragland for a two-year term as Secretary of the Food Safety Assessment, Audit, and Inspection PDG.

Next Meeting Date: Saturday, July 17, 2027; Kansas City, Missouri

Meeting Adjourned: 10:00 AM

Chairperson Name: Jose Guerrero