

Retail and Foodservice PDG

Names of Attendees: Sarah Kozak-Weaver (Chair), Vanessa Cranford (Vice Chair), Theresa Belcher (Secretary), Andrew Appiah Darkwah, Fernando Avelleyra, Amelia Ball, Christina Bongo-Box, Veronica Bryant, David Buckley, Daniel Caldwell, Alexander Cheah, Deanna Copeland, Betsy Craig, Sabahnur Demirci, James Doyle, Monijesu Fadamiro, Mark Flanagan, Tom Ford, Tong-Jen Fu, Juan Goncalves, Radames Gutierrez, Jennifer Harrington, Brittany Holmes, Sharon Humphries, Monica Jiang, Chris Jordan, INHEE KANG, Sarah Kozak-Weaver, Chi-An Lee, Glenda Lewis, Stefhanie Loaiza, Tatiana Lorca, Briana Lorenzo, Yinqing Ma, Richard Magney, Humberto Maldonado, Eric Martin, Rob Middendorf, Eric Moore, Amit Morey, Emily Moyer, Sipei Ouyang, Aaron Patch, Bhavini Patel, Victor Reyna, Scott Robbe, Lisa Ross, Christopher Rupert, Kristin Sanders, Dina Scott, Mandy Sedlak, Natalie Seymour, Tracie Sheehan, Deepa Thiagarajan, Leslie Thompson-Strehlow, Melissa Vaccaro, Akhila Vasan, Prem Sai Veeranki, Martin Wiedmann, Kristen Winnett, Amy Wise, Mary Yavelak, Melissa Yost.

Total Number of Attendees: 59

Meeting Called to Order: 8:30 A.M.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Theresa (Incoming Secretary).

Old Business:

The meeting opened with introductions of the incoming PDG leadership: Sarah as incoming Chair, Vanessa as incoming Vice Chair, and Theresa as incoming Secretary. The group reviewed IAFP Board updates, including an update from Dina, encouragement to bring in new students and colleagues, and a reminder about the new IAFP podcast, which is seeking sponsorships and can be joined by contacting Lisa Garcia. The Board update also noted that the PDG symposia/roundtable acceptance rate is 33%, so proposals should prioritize quality over quantity; that the IAFP European meeting occurs every other year and PDGs are encouraged to submit symposia for it; that Room 202 is designated as the quiet room; and thanks were extended to the LSU food safety group for their support. New PDG members were welcomed. The Chair reported that 8 symposia/roundtable proposals sponsored by the PDG were accepted for IAFP 2026 in New Orleans. The group reviewed the IAFP 2027 proposal timeline: proposals are due September 29, 2026; a status update will be provided in November 2026; Stage 2 review materials are due January 12, 2027; and final decisions and approvals will be issued in March 2027. The group also discussed opportunities to drive engagement and

create more accessible content through webinars, and reviewed communications and promotion related to the Conference for Food Protection (CFP).

New Business:

The PDG held breakout sessions on six topics to generate ideas for future programming. On AI in Food Safety, the group discussed governance, the value to industry of gaining a clear understanding of how to introduce AI into an organization, prompt engineering, the difference between good and bad data, the need for human oversight and guardrails, choosing the right model, legal considerations, and practical uses such as keeping ahead of regulatory updates. On leveraging data and analytics in retail food safety, the group discussed the evolution of data analytics and how to make use of the large amount of data available, the basics of why certain data is collected and how to connect the dots (including connecting high-turnover data such as HR data with food safety metrics for better visibility and preventative action), and the crossover between data analytics and AI.

On navigating regulatory complexity, the group discussed identifying which regulatory agency to work with, the need for a one-stop shop to search state-specific requirements, the supply chain track and whether hazards introduced by changes are properly assessed, moving toward greater transparency in knowing where food is sourced from, and how small retailers can perform a hazard analysis to protect their supply chain. On evolving HACCP in retail settings, the group noted that AFDO has a group (led by Sally Flowers) that can help develop a HACCP plan for multi-state operations, such as for sushi rice, discussed approved food additives for foodservice/retail from a HACCP perspective, and suggested a quarterly webinar on the topic. On time/temperature control in modern retail environments, the group discussed the definition of Time/Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) foods in the Food Code, which FDA is re-evaluating; noted that the last Conference for Food Protection had ten issues related to TCS foods; referenced the Wednesday 8:30 AM R25 workshop; discussed sprouts, which have a 10% rejection rate at retail due to temperature issues, and international examples such as an Australian avocado smoothie; and noted that the “and/or” language in the current definition is unclear and creates challenges for retail food establishments.

On allergen management, the group noted that allergen incidents are trending upward in restaurants, that in the UK roughly 1 in 7 hospitality guests are impacted, and that alpha-gal is not currently classified as an allergen but is becoming more prevalent. The group also discussed differences in international allergen requirements between Europe and the United

States, new evidence in sanitation validations and related opportunities, an upcoming new framework from the allergen committee, and state-to-state variation in regulatory registration requirements.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Confirm Sarah Kozak-Weaver as incoming Chair of the Retail / Foodservice PDG.
2. Confirm Vanessa Cranford as incoming Vice Chair of the Retail / Foodservice PDG.
3. Confirm Theresa Belcher as incoming Secretary of the Retail / Foodservice PDG.

Next Meeting Date: IAFP 2027; Kansas City, Mo.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:00 A.M.

Chairperson Name: Sarah Kozak-Weaver