

Beverages and Acid/Acidified Foods

Names of Attendees: Yuqian Lou (Chair), Raghu Ramaswamy (Vice Chair), Leili Afsah-Hejri, Nathan Anderson, VM Balasubramaniam, Erdogan Ceylan, MARIO COBO, Mary-Grace Danao, Toni de Senna, Vaidehi Dendukuri, Natali Diaz-Yepes, Ahmed El-Moghazy, Elise Forward, Tong-Jen Fu, Toshifumi Fujisaki, Rashmi Gaikwad, Michael Gardner, Kelly Getty, Charles Giambrone, Jose Guerrero, Hideyuki Hara, Upasana Hariram, Ingrid Huntley, Keith Ito, Sarah Jones, Martha Kimber, Jeffrey Kornacki, Christian Kreuter, Andrew Lee, Chi-An Lee, Glenda Lewis, Rob Limburn, Birata Mainali, Theresa Mazure, Christopher McNamara, Diana Mora-Lee, Tracy Nowaczyk, Wilfredo Ocasio, Sipei Ouyang, Kavita Patil, Brett Podoski, Samantha Roldan Perez, Sarah Sanderson, Satoshi Sekimoto, Manoj Shah, Arlette Shazer, Amarat Simonne, Digvijay Singh, Cassandra Suther, Ryo Takemasa, Abdullatif Tay, Janiah Thomas, Leslie Thompson-Strehlow, Wladir Valderrama Barandiaran, Ron Van Santen, Prem Sai Veeranki, Meri Beth Wojtaszek, Don Zink.

Total Number of Attendees: 57.

Meeting Called to Order: Sunday, July 26, 2026, 1:00 p.m.

Old Business: The PDG Chair, Yuqian Lou, and incoming Vice Chair, Raghu Ramaswamy, called the meeting to order. The Chair thanked outgoing PDG Student Liaison Julia Ai Fukuba for her service and welcomed the new liaison, Gopi Yalavarthi (not present). The Chair read and explained the PDG mission statement: to provide a forum to discuss and develop symposia on issues facing the beverages and acid/acidified foods industry. PDG attendees introduced themselves by name and affiliation (47 attendees present). The Vice Chair read the Anti-trust guidelines and emphasized key points. The Chair reviewed the 2025 IAFP PDG meeting minutes, which had also been shared ahead of the meeting; a motion to approve the 2025 minutes was seconded by Martha Kimber and approved by everyone. The Chair then introduced the IAFP 2026 sessions sponsored by the Beverages and Acid/Acidified Foods PDG and encouraged members to attend, including Roundtable RT17, "Hydration Prior to Processing: Controlling Microbial Contaminants in Dry Ingredients," moderated by Manoj Sawale of PepsiCo, held July 28 from 8:30 to 10:00 a.m.; Roundtable RT23, "Exploring Tomorrow's Food, Today Under High Pressure: Latest Advances and Challenges," a 1.5-hour session moderated by Mary-Grace Danao of the University of Nebraska Lincoln, held July 28 from 3:45 to 5:15 p.m.; Symposium S63, "Bubbly, Brewed, and Plant-Based: Microbial Food

Safety and Spoilage Considerations for Alternative Beverages,” a 2.0-hour session moderated by Martha Kimber of Eurofins, held July 29 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.; and Poster Session 2 — Beverage and Acid/Acidified Foods, held July 28 in the Exhibit Hall.

New Business: The PDG hosted two guest speaker presentations. Michael Gardner of INDIGO Biosciences, Inc. presented on bioanalytical assays for assessing food safety risks caused by chemical contaminants in water, discussing emerging chemical challenges facing the industry, including recycled water, packaging, ingredients, and mixtures. He emphasized the complementary use of bio-assays and targeted chemical analysis to support a stronger weight-of-evidence approach, explained the use of cell-based in-vitro bio-assays and how to monitor treatment performance over time, and discussed their use in water reuse, food packaging, and leachates, noting that bio-assays complement analytical chemistry rather than replace it. Dr. Donald Zink of IEH, formerly Senior Science Advisor for CFSAN, then held a question-and-answer session on acidified foods and other topics. Dr. Zink shared his background and experience in industry and regulatory fields, discussed how his background in toxicology and statistics helped him solve problems, and shared his views on the overlap of regulatory guidelines from the FDA and EPA. He touched on current industry events from his past experience, including the difficulty of culturing norovirus, and emphasized the importance of the right approach to interpreting results. On acidified foods, he discussed the history, food safety risk, and lack of specificity in the guidelines, along with specific examples related to shifts in pH and solids or particulates such as olives, noting that it is hard to compromise products at an equilibrated pH below 3.8. In response to questions on hot-filling requirements, he shared his experience of finding a roughly 30-degree Fahrenheit difference between the hot-filled product and the packaging surface near the lid, and alternatives such as steam flushing, inversion, and other packaging decontamination methods, including high-pressure processing, were discussed.

The Chair reminded participants of the September 29, 2026 submission deadline for IAFP 2027 proposals and asked PDG members to consider volunteering for the *Journal of Food Protection*’s potential editor-invited reviews. During the ideation process, attendees divided into three groups to brainstorm proposals for 2027 symposia, roundtables, and webinars; due to time constraints, the brainstorming session closed at the end of the PDG meeting, and it was decided that virtual meetings would be held to finalize proposal topics and potential speakers.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Approve Raghu Ramaswamy as incoming Vice Chair of the Beverages and Acid/Acidified Foods PDG.

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

Meeting Adjourned: 2:30 p.m.

Chairperson Name: Yuqian Lou.