COMMITTEE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GROUP MINUTES

STANDING COMMITTEES

Food Protection Trends Management Committee

Members Present: Sampathkumar Balamurugan (Chair), Jovana Kovacevic (Vice Chair), Teresa Bergholz, Larry Beuchat, Catherine Cutter, Jessica Danzeisen, Yaohua Betty Feng, Dale Grinstead, Sharlanda Khosravi, Matthew Moore, Carrie Rigdon, Joshua Scheinberg, Manan Sharma, John Spink, Laura Strawn, Leslie Thompson-Strehlow, Gretchen Wall, Daniel Weller.

Visitors: Judy Luther (Consultant), Qierui Zhang (Elsevier).

Board/Staff Present: Maria Hoffman.

Total Number of Attendees: 20.

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

Chairperson: Dr. S. Balamurugan (Bala), Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

Recording Secretary: Dr. Jovana Kovacevic (Vice-chair), Oregon State University.

1. Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Chair S. Balamurugan at 1:00 p.m. Members and guests introduced themselves.

2. Appointment of Recording Secretary

By unanimous consent, Jovana Kovacevic was appointed Recording Secretary for the meeting.

3. Additions/Modifications to the Agenda and Approval

The Chair called for additions or modifications to the agenda. None were proposed, and the agenda was adopted as circulated by unanimous consent.

4. Welcome to New FPT Leadership and Committee Members

The Chair welcomed new committee members and thanked all members for their continued service to *Food Protection Trends (FPT)*.

Members whose terms ended: Mi-Kyung Park, Angela Anandappa, Martin Martinez, Efstathia Papafragkou, and Adam Baker. The committee thanked them for their service.

New members: Yuqian Lou, Carrie Rigdon, Ernest Bonah, and Sharlanda Khosravi. The committee welcomed them.

5. Minutes from the 2025 Committee Meeting

The Chair called for corrections to the minutes of the 2025 committee meeting. Hearing none, the minutes were approved as distributed.

6. Executive Board Report – Dr. Manan Sharma

- Attendance at the 2026 Annual Meeting is expected to exceed 3,000 participants.
- A large exhibitor presence is on site; members were encouraged to visit the exhibit hall.
- Members were encouraged to recruit colleagues who are not yet IAFP Members. Membership is $80 in the United States, with reduced rates in other countries. Members were also encouraged to join their local affiliates.
- IAFP Europe is moving to a biennial schedule. The next European meeting will be held in April 2027 in Copenhagen.

7. Executive Director Report – Dr. Manan Sharma

No specific report was presented, but items relevant to the committee were incorporated into the Executive Board report provided by Dr. Manan Sharma. Members were reminded that the IAFP business meeting is open to all; no items were scheduled for a vote.

8. Scientific Editor Report — Dr. Catherine Cutter

- Scientific report was shared with the committee prior to the meeting. Cathy provided brief overview.
- Submissions: *FPT* received approximately 130 submissions last year. Submissions are down by roughly 28 this year, to approximately 101.
- The proportion of general interest papers has increased relative to previous years.
- A backlog had developed in which accepted papers waited 6–9 months to appear in print. That backlog has now been cleared. Several issue volumes were expanded by one to two papers, both general interest and research papers, to catch up.
- Current turnaround to first review is approximately one month.
- The next issues to be published are March–April and May–June.
- The Editor has worked with authors on formatting and on aligning manuscript focus with the scope of the journal.
- Authorship remains predominantly academic, with contributions from government and industry.

9. Old / Ongoing Business

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9a. Creation of an Associate Editor Position for *FPT*

The principal item carried over from the 2025 meeting was approval of an Associate Editor position. The committee discussed the term structure and transition plan:

- Both the Editor and the Associate Editor serve four-year terms, with the Associate Editor succeeding to the Editor position.
- Dr. Cutter's service reaches its term limit in 2027. Because no Associate Editor position previously existed, the committee recommended and the board approved that her term be extended through 2028 as a special circumstance.
- The extension provides one year in which the incoming Associate Editor shadows the Editor before assuming the Editor role in 2028. The Associate Editor position would then be advertised again.

The committee reached consensus on this transition plan without objection, and it is forwarded to the Executive Board as a recommendation.

9b. Update on Publication Model and Access — Judy Luther

- DOIs have been assigned to *FPT* content over the past two years.
- The next step is enabling XML to link content and references, making *FPT* material more discoverable and accessible.

  Q: The Board approved additional articles — what was the size of the increase?

  A: One to two additional papers were added per issue to clear the backlog. No permanent increase is planned.

  Q: If the journal is not printed, does an article limit per issue still matter?

Without objection, the Chair was directed to seek clarification from the Executive Board on whether a per-issue article limit remains necessary.

9c. Discussion of Invited Articles

- Responsibility for soliciting invited articles has fallen primarily to the Editor. The committee agreed that both the Editor and the Associate Editor can play a role in identifying candidates.
- Invited content should complement the membership — *FPT* functions as a members' magazine rather than a strictly scientific journal.
- Limited solicitation occurred last year because of the backlog. The committee aims to be more proactive and involved this year. Members with ideas were asked to contact Dr. Cutter directly.
- Topics currently in progress include third-party laboratory practices and regulatory requirements in different countries. These need not be large review papers.
- Gretchen Wall noted that a quarterly email goes out to this group soliciting ideas.
- Daniel Weller suggested leveraging current and emerging issues, for example, *Cyclospora* in leafy greens and *Salmonella* in shell eggs outbreaks.
- Larry Beuchat asked whether this approach would bypass peer review. Dr. Cutter confirmed it would not: invited articles still receive two reviews.
- Daniel Weller asked whether a smaller group could assist. The committee agreed that *FPT* Management Committee members can serve as reviewers; Carrie Rigdon, Gretchen Wall and Daniel Weller volunteered.

10. *FPT* Award Recipients

Exceptional Reviewer: Dr. Christine Bruhn, University of California–Davis (retired). Dr. Bruhn is not attending this year. She has been notified, and the award is published in the online program and will be recognized again in November.

Kudos to Most Cited (2020), Most Viewed Peer-Reviewed, and Most Viewed General Interest Articles: All recipients have been notified and several are attending the meeting.

Reception: Recipients and the editorial boards will be celebrated at the *JFP* and *FPT* Editorial Board Reception today in Great Hall BC. (4:30 p.m.–5:30 p.m.)

11. New Business

11a. Promotion of Published Content — Short Video Summaries

- The committee discussed producing short video summaries (approximately three minutes) featuring published authors, to highlight published content, particularly general interest articles, and to promote committee engagement.
- IAFP already produces video content; the proposal is to extend that capacity to *FPT* promotion, subject to author willingness to participate.
- Dan Weller provided information that CDC communications staff can be a possible additional resource for papers with CDC authors.
- The committee reached consensus in support of the proposal without objection, and it is forwarded to the Executive Board as a recommendation

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11b. Associate Editor Position Announcement

- The Associate Editor position description has been drafted.
- An announcement will be emailed to the full IAFP membership this week. Members were encouraged to consider applying; the editorial system works well and the process is straightforward.
- The Associate Editor is expected to be in the role before the next IAFP Annual Meeting (i.e., January 2027).

11c. Food Fraud Prevention as a Content Area – Dr. John Spink

- Food fraud prevention authors report difficulty finding publication outlets, and there is a notable gap in the published literature; many working definitions are approaching fifteen years old.
- Practitioner questions include which tests to perform and where to have them performed. A recurring theme was how the field can help industry define its needs so that scientists and laboratories can better supply the required information, and what current trends and practices look like.
- Dr. Cutter suggested working with the relevant PDG to develop content, a roundtable or panel discussion could be synthesized into a general interest paper, or developed as a review paper. Opinion pieces were also identified as a good fit for *FPT*.
- PDGs will be encouraged to pursue these topics.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

The following recommendations were adopted by the committee by unanimous consent and are forwarded to the Executive Board:

1. Scientific Editor term extension and succession: Extend Dr. Catherine Cutter's term as Scientific Editor through 2028 as a special circumstance, to allow the incoming Associate Editor a one-year shadowing period before succeeding to the Editor role, after which the Associate Editor position will be advertised.
- Clarification on issue length: Confirm whether a per-issue article limit remains necessary now that *FPT* is not published in print.
2. Video promotion of published content: Approve production of short (approximately three-minute) video summaries featuring published authors, leveraging IAFP's existing video production capacity, contingent on author willingness.

13. Action Items

1. Committee members: send invited article topics and author suggestions to Dr. Cathy Cutter.
2. Editor: send a quarterly email soliciting article ideas from the committee.
3. IAFP staff: finalize Associate Editor position timelines and distribute the announcement to the IAFP membership.
4. Gretchen Wall and Daniel Weller: serve as reviewers for invited and general interest content, with additional committee members as needed.
5. Chair/Editor: carry the recommendations forward to the Executive Board.
6. Editor: engage the relevant PDG(s) regarding food fraud prevention content for *FPT.*

Meeting Adjourned: 2:30 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: Sunday, July 18, 2026, Kansas City MO. Virtual Meetings throughout the year.

Chairperson Name: Sampathkumar (Bala) Balamurugan.

JFP Management Committee

Names of Members Present: Teresa Bergholz (Chair), Daniel Weller (Vice Chair), Angela Anandappa, Sampathkumar Balamurugan, Cameron Bardsley, Catherine Cutter, Darin Detwiler, Doris D'Souza, Martin Duplessis, Yaohua Betty Feng, Joshua Gurtler, Lauren Jackson, Judy Luther, Yvonne Masters, Kathleen O'Donnell, Panos Skandamis, Daniel Unruh.

New Members Present: Sanja Ilic, Naim Montazeri, Jack Burnett, Tanushree Barua Gupta.

Board/Staff Present: Manan Sharma, Lisa Garcia, Dina Siedenburg.

Visitors: Nas Chaudhary, Diogo da Cunha, Juan Moreira, Ruth Petran.

Number of Attendees: 26.

Meeting Called to Order: 3:00 p.m. CDT, Sunday, July 26, 2026.

Names of Members Present: Teresa Bergholz (Chair), Daniel Weller (Vice Chair), Angela Anandappa, Sampathkumar Balamurugan, Cameron Bardsley, Catherine Cutter, Darin Detwiler, Doris D'Souza, Martin Duplessis, Yaohua Betty Feng, Joshua Gurtler, Lauren Jackson, Yvonne Masters, , Kathleen O'Donnell, Panos Skandamis, Daniel Unruh.

New Members Present: Sanja Ilic, Naim Montazeri, Jack Burnett, Tanushree Barua Gupta.

Board/Staff Present: Manan Sharma, Lisa Garcia, Dina Siedenburg.

Visitors: Judy Luther, Qierui Zhang, Ruth Petran, Nas Chaudhary, Diogo da Cunha, Juan Moreira.

Number of Attendees: 26.

Meeting Called to Order: 3:00 p.m. CDT, Sunday, July 26, 2026.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Daniel Weller.

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Old Business: The meeting started at 3:00 p.m. Teresa Bergholz gave a brief introduction followed by the committee members and attendees introducing themselves. Following the introduction, Teresa appointed Daniel Weller as the recording secretary. Next, Teresa sought approval of the minutes of the meeting of 2025 from the committee members. A motion was passed unanimously to approve the minutes.

Qierui Zhang from Elsevier provided an update on *JFP* metrics, performance, and marketing initiatives over the past year. To date, 295 manuscripts have been submitted, with 153 accepted, 93 rejected, and 15 withdrawn. Submission rates have increased slightly since 2024, reflecting continued growth in journal visibility and reach. Members noted that the increase in submissions has also resulted in a greater editorial workload, with each scientific editor currently managing approximately 120 manuscripts. Current rejection rates are 21% for desk rejections and 17% following peer review. Submissions are now nearly evenly divided between members and non-members, although member submissions have declined to 48%, suggesting increased engagement from the broader research community. Emerging topic areas include communications and social media, policy analytics, and AI-enabled surveillance.

Geographic trends indicate that most submissions originate from Asia and North/Central America, with the United States and China leading submissions and citations. Europe continues to have the highest manuscript acceptance rate, while Asia experiences comparatively higher rejection rates. The editorial board has also become increasingly geographically diverse.

Editorial performance remains strong, with a median time to first decision of 78.5 days, placing *JFP* among top-performing journals. Time from submission to publication has been reduced by approximately 20 days. The journal's CiteScore increased from 4.2 in 2022 to 5.4 in 2025, while the impact factor rose from 2.0 to 3.7 over the same period. *JFP* is now ranked in the second quartile for both Food Science & Technology and Biotechnology & Applied Microbiology categories. Citation impact has also improved substantially, driven in part by strong performance of review articles.

Qierui reviewed outreach activities, including the featured article webpage, monthly article recommendations, and promotional efforts through WeChat, email campaigns, and LinkedIn. A promotional opportunity has been reserved for October and can be tailored to support journal priorities.

Qierui presented the journal's Generative AI policy and associated concerns, including inaccurate or outdated information, hallucinated findings, lack of domain-specific expertise, ethical and bias concerns, overreliance on AI tools, environmental impacts, and inappropriate use during peer review. The policy emphasizes that AI may only be used as a support tool and that authors remain responsible for verifying accuracy, ensuring originality, disclosing AI use, and protecting data privacy and intellectual property. AI-generated images are not permitted for graphical abstracts. The question was raised regarding the use of AI detection tools, and Qierui explained that current AI-detection tools have false-positive rates exceeding 20%, making them unsuitable for decision-making.

Panos Skandamis discussed the success of recent special issues. The AI in Food Safety special issue published approximately 16 articles, the *Listeria* special issue published approximately 8 articles, and the ICPMF special issue has already attracted 10 articles with only one rejection. The ICPMF issue has been particularly successful in attracting European submissions, and JFP will host the next ICPMF special issue. Opportunities to replicate this model with other conferences and organizations were discussed.

Joshua Gurtler gave an update on invited reviews. Since the program began, 71 potential reviews have been proposed, 12 have been confirmed, and 17 invited reviews have been published over the past six years. Members noted that invited reviews continue to have a strong impact on citation performance and discussed expanding these efforts.

New Business: Publication Cost Considerations

The committee discussed mechanisms to encourage submissions from less well-funded groups, particularly state and local government agencies. Potential options for reducing or waiving publication costs for eligible manuscripts were considered.

Fifth Scientific Co-Editor Position

The committee discussed the growing editorial workload and the need for expertise in areas such as chemical-microbial food safety, regulatory and extension science, consumer and social sciences, and digital technologies, AI, and data science. A motion was made by Josh and seconded by Cameron to recommend recruitment of a fifth co-editor through a new announcement. The motion passed unanimously.

Current Co-Editor Search

The committee discussed the ongoing co-editor search, with applications due August 14. Members considered extending Lauren's appointment while evaluating the current applicant pool. Discussion centered on whether sufficient time remained to adjust the search process before the application deadline. No final action was recorded.

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Numbered List of Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. The Committee recommends the appointment of Daniel Weller as the vice-chair of the committee.
2. Given the increase in submissions and to maintain editorial speed, the committee recommends the recruitment of a fifth scientific co-editor through a new call.

Next Meeting Date: July 18, 2027, Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: 4:30 p.m. CDT.

Chairperson Name: Teresa Bergholz.

Committee on Control of Foodborne Illness (CCFI)

Names of Members Present: Laura Gieraltowski (Chair), Melanie Firestone (Vice Chair), Mary Anne Amalaradjou, Alexander Cheah, Jose Emilio Esteban, Neal Fredrickson, Tong-Jen Fu, Jack Guzewich, Xiang Li, Morgan Madison, Patrick Mies, Yoshinori Mizoguchi, Mehran Niazi, Ruth Petran, Brett Podoski, Carrie Rigdon, Mansour Samadpour, Manan Sharma, Katherine Swanson.

Board/Staff Present: Manan Sharma.

Number of Attendees: 17.

Meeting Called to Order: 8:00 a.m., Sunday, July 26, 2026.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Michael Batz.

Old Business: Laura welcomed everyone to the meeting. After a round of introductions, she moderated a short quiz on food safety and the history of CCFI. Everyone was reminded about the antitrust policy. Minutes from the 2025 meeting were approved. The Board Report was put up on the screen and was discussed. No student was present to provide an update; the committee discussed the desire for more student involvement. The committee discussed the Board's responses to the recommendations from last year, including sales and download data recently provided by Springer on the two manuals. We also requested a projector for this year's meeting, and we agreed this change in room format was preferable. The committee discussed CCFI-sponsored symposia and presentations at this year's meeting; only 5 of 15 were accepted, though this matches the overall conference rate of 33%.

New Business: The Committee welcomed Melanie Firestone as the new Vice Chair, following online nomination and acclamation. Melanie will take over as Chair at the 2028 meeting.

The committee discussed the manuals, starting with the data provided by Springer. Although the numbers are not astronomical, they do suggest that people continue to buy and use the book even though this edition is 15 years old and there are other online sources. There remains quite a bit of uncertainty around updating the manuals given the size of the lift and the number of freely available online options. Jack Guzewich raised concerns that parts of the WHO materials on outbreak investigations were taken from the CCFI manuals without approval or even attribution. The room agreed that this was a significant issue that warrants further investigation and action, if necessary. The discussion on manuals also included discussion of CIFOR manuals, the CDC Food Safety COE efforts in this space, and other online resources like those at IFPTI. Members of the committee agreed to investigate these resources to determine potential collaborations. Members once again raised the idea of making the manuals open access so they could be more accessible; this has been discussed many times before, but we cannot do this under the current contract with Springer. The only option to make the book open access is to include these kinds of changes in any new contract for a new edition of the book.

The conversation moved to development of sessions for the next annual meeting and the upcoming European meeting. This discussion was particularly vigorous, and the board will need to organize the discussion and identify people to lead some of these sessions. The committee agreed to schedule a virtual meeting in late August or early September to refine symposium and roundtable ideas.

The committee agreed on a goal of developing two webinars before IAFP 2027.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. The committee recommends that the board approve Melanie Firestone as incoming Vice Chair.
2. The committee recommends that the CCFI meeting be moved to start at 8:30 so it is concurrent with other Sunday morning PDGs and committees.

Next Meeting Date: In-person: July 18, 2026.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:52 a.m., July 27, 2026.

Chairperson Name: Laura Gieraltowski.

Constitution and Bylaws Committee

Names of Members Present: Nathan Anderson (Chair), Laura Strawn (Vice Chair), Richelle Beverly, Faith Critzer, Kathleen Glass, Dale Grinstead, Bobby Krishna, Xiang Li, Steven Murphy, Suresh Pillai, Jennifer Quinlan, Victoria Romano, Don Schaffner, Jenny Scott.

Board/Staff Present: Maria Hoffmann.

Number of Attendees: 14.

Meeting Called to Order: July 26, 2025, 10:34 a.m.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Faith Critzer.

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Old Business: The 2026 meeting minutes were approved unanimously as submitted. Don Schaffner motioned for approval of the minutes, Dale Grindstead seconded.

There was no old business discussed from 2025.

New Business:

1. Steve Murphy - reviewed the C&B prior to today's meeting. Honorary life membership section 2 - item a, amended to add "or Honorary Lifetime Membership" to the membership types.
2. Maria Hoffman - awards criteria, would like the bylaws to be amended to reflect cumulative years of membership instead of the current wording that reflects that.

7.3.1.2 - currently states that Members rejoining after 90 days will be considered as new members. Amend the wording to state, members rejoining after 90 day membership lapse, the years membership would be cumulative from first date of joining instead of when rejoining being viewed as a new member and the years of membership starting over.

3. We polled the C&BL Committee and there are only 3 members who have yet to serve as Vice Chair and Chair.
4. Don Schaffner - nominated Richelle Beverly for Vice Chair of Constitution and Bylaws Committee; she was elected by unanimous consent.

Numbered List of Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Recommendation to the board: Change the bylaws section 2, Item a to add, "or Honorary Lifetime Membership" to the membership types.
2. Recommendation to the board: membership be cumulative years of membership and bylaws be edited to reflect that. Suggested wording, "A lapse in membership of more than ninety (90) days shall result in the suspension of member benefits until membership is renewed. However, previously accrued years of membership shall remain cumulative, and the member's original membership anniversary date shall be retained regardless of the duration of the lapse."
3. Recommend that President-elect nominate some new members to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

Next Meeting Date: Next Meeting July 18, 2027 Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: 11:24 a.m.

Chairperson Name: Nate Anderson.

Foundation Committee

Members Present: Gary Acuff (outgoing chair), Alvin Lee (incoming chair), Tori Stivers, Kathy Glass, Joshua Gurtler, Celina To, Gale Prince, Ruth Petran, Dale Grinstead, Aaron Pleitner, Aaron Uesugi, Rachel Hazen, Kristen Butler, Tim Jackson, Jenny Scott, Cameron Bardsley, Steve Kenney.

Board/Staff Present: Lisa Garcia, Manpreet Singh, Wendy White.

Visitor: Betsy Craig

Number of Attendees: 21

Meeting Called to Order: Wednesday, July 29, 7:30 a.m.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Joshua Gurtler.

Old Business: Summary and Approval of previous year's minutes.

Due to previous year's minutes not circulated to members prior to meeting, the approval of minutes was deferred to next meeting.

New Business:

Financial Report: Lisa reported that the Foundation balance was over $4,000,000, a goal which Gary had set. It was rewarding that we hit the goal while Gary was still Chair. The expenses relating to the Annual Meeting for the Foundation will not come in until August. The investments have done well.

Annual Meeting Fundraising Report: Lisa reported that (at the time of the Foundation Committee Meeting) the Foundation had raised $41,080 at the meeting + $20,000 match = $61,080 + $10,000 from the silent auction for a grand total of $71,080. The silent auction profit was down from last year's profit (2025 = $14,100). Thank you Fred Weber, Tori and David Stivers, Gary Acuff and Jenny Scott!

Dependent Care Grants: There were 11 applications for the dependent care grant this year. Six of these grants were funded. There were two suggestions for increasing the grants, as follows: (1) Increasing the grant amount above the current $500 grant, and (2) offering more than six grants per year. Gary mentioned that a couple of people came up and thanked him for the help they received from the grants. Gary also suggested that even $500 can help these individuals.

Estate Planning: We are currently waiting for a new IAFP Staff person to come on board to help manage this program. Estate planning initiative was drafted, with thanks to Jenny's leadership, and available to members. The document will be further refined when the new IAFP Staff is on board.

Discussions on Future Funding Initiatives:

Discussion on the Katie Swanson donation to be used for a "lab exchange" between students in a developing country and a developed country. Alvin also mentioned that the students could

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spend ca. 2 months in the host lab to learn new lab skills. It was suggested that we ask the Executive Board if the Foundation could do a dollar-to-dollar match with Katie's contribution to help better fund this initiative.

Gale brought up the idea of creating a travel grant specifically for state epidemiologists, because more burden is being placed on them with federal funding cuts.

Gary brought up the idea of creating a Professional Development Grant to provide training for industry personnel. Dale suggested that we could network with the Annual Meeting Local Arrangements to specifically target area-industry employees who could travel to the meeting from home (thus hotel accommodations wouldn't be needed). Manpreet suggested that, for next year (Kansas City, 2027), we could network with the Kansas State University Incubator facility in Olathe, KS (30 min. southwest of Kansas City, MO, K-State Food Innovation Accelerator: https://olathe.k-state.edu/research/food-programs/food-innovation-accelerator/).

Gale mentioned that this would be especially beneficial for the cottage food industry. It was suggested that we could work with the state and local health departments to find suitable/interested industry participants. Gale suggested that this could be conducted as a free workshop on Saturday (or Friday) before the meeting, but it was also mentioned that this would not involve free registration for meeting attendance.

Miscellany: Suggested creating two new positions:

A. Foundation Director/Assistant position to help direct the Foundation Committee, which would be a full-time IAFP Staff hire. Lisa said she has a candidate for this position. This person would follow up on many of the Foundation Committee suggestions and initiatives that could be managed directly by IAFP Staff.

B. The second position would be an IAFP Foundation member liaison to work with the Foundation Director to onboard new members, etc. The IAFP-member position would be a two-year appointment.

There was a discussion on ways to energize the student base for foundation fundraising activities, which the students could organize, which was also discussed in 2025, and a foundation subcommittee was previously developed for this at the 2025 meeting.

It was mentioned that we need more student mentors to assist with mentoring students during the year, but, more specifically, also mentors are needed for students who receive the Foundation Annual Meeting Travel Scholarships.

It was suggested that Gary might stay on the Foundation Committee (as Gale Prince did when he stepped down from Committee Chair), because Gary would continue to provide valuable insight and guidance to the incoming chair/vice-chair, as well as the rest of the committee

Betsy Craig (meeting visitor), a small business owner, asked to be added to the committee.

It was mentioned that Gina Boorn is taking over for outgoing Andrea Belzer as IAFP Program Coordinator.

Thank you Gary for his dedicated multi-year leadership as Chair and having achieved a fantastic goal.

Recommendations to the Executive Board: none.

Next Physical Meeting Date: Wednesday, July 21, 2027, Kansas City, MO.

Upcoming Virtual Meetings:

October 16, 2026, 11:00 a.m. Central Time

January 22, 2027, 11:00 a.m. Central Time

April 23, 2027, 11:00 a.m. Central Time

Meeting Adjourned: 8:30 a.m.

Chairperson Name: Alvin Lee

Membership Committee

Names of Members Present: Angela Walla (Chair), Alexis Hamilton (Vice Chair), Michael Batz, Stephanie Brown, Caio Carvalho, Jessica Danzeisen, Dale Grinstead, Sheetal Jha, Caitlin Karolenko, Susan Linn, Aaron Pleitner, Robert Price, Andre Shaw, Jr., Sara Starck, Lily Yang.

Board/Staff Present: Pamela Wilger.

Meeting Called to Order: Sunday, July 26, 2026 at 3:00 p.m.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Alexis Hamilton.

Old Business: Last year's meeting minutes were unanimously approved with no additions. This year's meeting agenda was approved unanimously with no additions. The committee discussed its mission statement, and Committee Chair Angela Walla reviewed committee membership expectations to include attending semiannual meetings and subcommittee structure emphasizing targeted initiative work. Previous Membership Committee and Welcome Ad-hoc Committee initiatives were reviewed (e.g., Peer to Peer Program, annual meeting tip sheets, Pre-Conference Webinar).

New Business: The need for a membership status update with more granular data about members (e.g., career stage, career

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sector, domestic/international) was emphasized. IAFP Board Representative Pamela Wilger confirmed this was requested of the Board and expected by October after a software migration that may risk historical data. Two retention tactics were discussed: automatic renewal (need to know whether it is or would be opt-in or opt-out) and offering free six-month membership to conference registrants who are not members.

Brainstorming activity identified several recruitment ideas: targeted advertising for local/small businesses near annual meeting cities, tiered or discounted membership rates for those businesses/individuals for the year of the conference, cross-pollination with affiliate groups with adjacent interests (e.g., IFT, NEHA, CFP), and outreach to extension and county-level regulators who face funding barriers. Group membership packages (e.g., company packages), multi-year memberships, buy-one-get-one student discounts, and swag/merch as passive recruitment tools were also proposed.

Leveraging recorded sessions as targeted advertising (free for attendees, paid for non-members) was suggested as a low-effort way to reach local businesses and lapsed members.

Benefits webinar series (highlighting journals, awards, leadership pathways, affiliate groups) was carried over from the Welcome Ad Hoc Committee as a priority, with a suggestion to keep it publicly accessible rather than behind a paywall to maximize recruitment impact. Ambassador program and social media collaboration with food safety content creators (particularly engaging students) was identified as a promising outreach strategy. Speed networking event modeled on "speed dating" proposed for the annual meeting and virtually, to help new and returning members find connections (seen as addressing the intangible "find your people" value that drives long-term retention).

Bylaws Committee is proposing cumulative membership counting so lapsed members who rejoin are not reset to new-member status, with DEI implications noted for career breaks and award eligibility. Survey of current and lapsed members agreed upon as a committee deliverable, with objectives to understand retention barriers, value perception, and demographic breakdowns by career sector; outreach to non-members also proposed via a public-facing version. Retention and recruitment framed as two distinct problems: retention signals a failure to deliver ongoing value (or potential resource availability changes), while recruitment requires targeted outreach. Automatic membership renewal was identified as the single highest-priority fix for lapse driven by inertia. Committee Chair Angela Walla and Committee Vice-Chair Alexis Hamilton will compile ideas and send to committee members as a survey in *IAFP Connect* to identify highest value activities for the upcoming year that committee members will rank for involvement.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

Accurate, granular membership data are needed to identify target areas for improving recruitment and retention of IAFP Members. The Committee requests these data by October so that this committee can review and present the data at the next meeting to identify effective committee activities.

3. Support distributing a membership survey and facilitating focus groups are needed to identify barriers to membership, better understand the value and benefits members receive, and gather feedback from new members, long-term members, and individuals who choose not to renew their membership. This committee proposes to develop the survey, focus group protocols, and overall methodology, but it needs the Executive Board's assistance with dissemination and participant recruitment.
4. Clarity about budget requests and how IAFP prefers these be presented and approved is also requested. Many of this committee's recommendations and/or activities will require a financial investment (e.g., marketing costs) to effectively implement.

Next Meeting Date: Sunday, July 18, 2027, Kansas City MO. And to be scheduled via *IAFP Connect* at the mid-year point.

Meeting Adjourned: 4:26 p.m.

Chairperson Name: Angela Walla.

Webinar Committee

Names of Members Present: Joshua Gurtler (Chair), Michael Batz, Alvin Lee, PC Vasavada, Humberto Maldonado

Board/Staff Present: Manan Sharma, Dina Siedenburg.

Visitors: Betsy Craig, Aaron Patch.

Number of Attendees: 9.

Meeting Called to Order: Sunday, July 26, 2026 at 10:30 a.m.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Dina Siedenburg.

Old Business: Discussed creating webinar guidelines and having Webinar Committee approve before sending to the Executive Board.

New Business: Manan discussed having partnerships (outside associations) for webinars.

Manan suggested developing a *Cyclospora* outbreak update webinar for September.

Discussion on specific ways to solicit webinars from unrepresented IAFP PDGs, including asking PDGs to assign a Webinar Liaison. Joshua mentioned this underrepresentation at the Committee/

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PDG Chair breakfast on Tuesday and will follow up with the PDG leadership on getting more PDGs involved.

Recommended additions to the webinar submission form that includes the questions: *"Have you presented this information at IAFP?"* and *"How many webinars have you been involved with in the last year?"*

Discussion on whether we're becoming too top-heavy with some topics, and/or if we should set limits on the number of annual webinars that can be presented by the same panelist. Further discussion is needed at the next virtual meeting.

Discussion on issue pertaining to industry speakers and consultants using webinars as a commercialization platform (e.g., speakers are sometimes including company names or logos either on (1) their slides, or (2) on their virtual video background). Angela Annandapa (Vice Chair) submitted non-commercialization guidelines that she developed, which we could modify for webinars.

Recommended IAFP-branded slide template for webinar presentations.

Discussion on issues that have been seen relating to webinar attendees making unauthorized recordings of webinars. The suggestion was made to add a copyright symbol on IAFP-branded webinar slides.

Discussed bringing 1-3 additional Webinar Committee Members in to review proposed webinars for approval, modification, or rejection.

Discussion on receiving the list of rejected symposia/roundtables to reach out directly to the ones who did not say, *"would be willing to present this as a webinar"* to see if they have changed their minds and would now be willing to submit as a webinar proposal.

Discussed the drafted *"official webinar guidelines for creating effective webinars"* that Dina wrote (reviewed/edited by Joshua and Angela). Joshua will send this again to the rest of the committee for final feedback before Executive Committee review and potential implementation.

Discussed exploring AI content-checking systems and their application to webinars. Elsevier indicates that their best detectors still have a ≥20% false-positive rate, thus the practicality of using such a tool is questionable. We may table this issue for now.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Recommend creating an IAFP-branded slide template slide template for webinar presentations.
2. Recommend adding the questions to the submission form: "Have you presented this information at IAFP or another meeting," and *"How many webinars have you been involved with in the last year?"*.
3. Recommend asking the PDGs to assign a webinar liaison who can work with the webinar committee to balance webinar topics, especially from underrepresented PDGs.
4. Recommend the committee review the Policy on Commercialism that Angela Andappa created for another purpose to potentially model these guidelines for webinar organizers.
5. Recommend creating IAFP-branded slides to use as a template and adding a copyright symbol on these slides.
6. Recommend adding Betsy Craig to the committee.

Next Meeting Date: Sunday, July 18, 2027, Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: 12:04 p.m.

Chairperson Name: Joshua Gurtler.

Advanced Molecular Analytics

Names of Attendees: Morgan Abe, Brandon Adhikari, Gerardo Afrane, Diana Alneaemy, Jodie Amachawadi, Julie Anany, Joelle Anderson, Ryan Anthos, Jingqiu Appiah Darkwah, Yiqing Arends, Megan Bae, Mu Barlow, Jeff Belas, Steven Bell, Hany Benkowski, Paul Black, Tyler Blaustein, Diego Bolten, Patrick Bono, Amreeta Brover, Irit Burkard, Lauren Burris, Gabriel Cariou, Andrzej Carter, Nikki Casas, Andrew Chambino, Tyler Chandross-Cohen, Antonio Cheah, Mario Chen, Mairui Clark, Adriana Coleman, Michael Cowan, Raghu Da Silva, Haitham De Jesus Torres, Paul den Bakker, David Dinovo, Christopher Dipta, Sharon Eastwood, Irshad Fach, Patrick Fan, Henk Fay, Karen Ferreira, Laura Foley, Monica Fougere, Marianna Gadanho, Magaly Galipothu, Karen Gao, Brett Gartman, Daniel Gummalla, Julien Guzman, Patrick Haendiges, Comfort Hamilton, Annette Hoffmann, Suzanne Hong, Olivia Howard, David Jensen, Lei Jeong, Angie Jiang, Ai Jiang, Prashant John Benedict Ashok, Esther Jordan, Megan Kachelmeier, Bill Kataoka, Rejoice Keromnes, Roberto Kim, Maria Koseki, Rosalia Kwamikorkor, Sangmi Le Den, Aishwarya Lee, Amy Lee, Michelle Legan, Augustine Li, Roger Liao, Robbie Liu, Nicholas LoPorto, Mehul Marathe, Megan McWilliams, Jim Medin, Brad Meeks, Hilal Mies, Prantho Malakar Mora-Lee, Vikas Kumar Morin, Rongrong Morin, Ines Mugabo, Catarina Nauseda, Sanjay Nguyen, Christina Nguyen Van Long, Mike Nyarku, Alexandre Okeh, Carris Yatong

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Palmer, Richard Park, Jaya Patel, Anna Pava-Ripoll, Luis Pierre, Akhila Pietrzen, Mmaduabuchi Potter, Andrew Ramakrishnan, Douglas Adjei Reina, Rebecca Rhatigan, Kellie Roldan Perez, Ellie Salazar, Hyejin Salazar, Hyo-Jin Salazar, Tae-Eun Samut, Han-Jin Sanglay, Sung-Hyup Sansom, Adora Sarjit, Matthew Schaller, John Sha, Pamela Shariat, David Shea, Yagya Shete, Xiang Shiraishi, Hiroki Siceloff, Shige Simonet, Alexander Singh, Ada Singh, Cindy Smieszek, Robert Smith, Dina Sousa, Astrid Stasiewicz, Nadia Stawick, Sophie Stephens, Nicolas Stewart, Max Sulaiman, Yang Sundaram, Sébastien Teplitski, Xue Toro, Annie Iniya Trias Mansilla, Digvijay Ulaszek, Diana Vasan, Vasuki Wang, Marco Weiser, Samantha Welch, Micah Weston, Samantha Ye, Varsha Zhang.

Total Number of Attendees: 136.

Meeting Called to Order: 1:02 p.m., Central Time, Sunday, July 26, 2026.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Tyler Chandross-Cohen.

Old Business: The AMA leadership reviewed the antitrust guidelines for the IAFP meetings, and members approved the 2025 AMA meeting minutes.

New Business: The Leadership was introduced: Mu Ye was introduced as the Chair, Ryan Blaustein was introduced as the AMA PDG Vice-Chair, and Tyler Chandross-Cohen was introduced as the Student Liaison for the AMA PDG. The antitrust guidelines were presented for the IAFP meetings. The 2025 AMA-sponsored symposia were discussed. At last year's meeting, 11 symposia/roundtable proposals were sponsored/co-sponsored by the AMA PDG. The new business was shared, which included the 2026 annual meeting app and program. The 24 accepted proposals for the 2026 annual meeting were then discussed. The AMA was the primary sponsor for 19/24 of the proposals. A total of 13 were accepted (54% success rate), with the AMA PDG as the primary sponsor for 11/13 of them. Co-sponsors included Applied Laboratory Methods PDG, HACCP Utilization and Food Safety Systems PDG, Data Management and Analytics PDG, Meat and Poultry Safety and Quality PDG, and the Viral and Parasitic Foodborne Disease PDG. The symposia/roundtables for each day (Monday-Wednesday) were discussed to inform the PDG. The meeting updates from the Executive Board were shared, including the number of attendees for IAFP 2026 (more than 3000), a discussion about submitting more quality information rather than quantity symposia/roundtable proposals, and the IAFP European symposium in 2027 with the deadline for session ideas of September 21st. Julie Haendiges and Jingqiu Liao gave short presentations titled "Turning Genomes into Insights: Visualization and Analysis of WGS Data" and "Integrating DNA Sequencing and AI to Understand Foodborne Pathogen Ecology, Evolution, and Risk" respectively. The next IAFP Annual Meeting was introduced, which will be held from July 18-21, 2027, in Kansas City, Missouri. The guidelines for the IAFP Symposia/Workshop/Roundtable Proposal development were presented. The deadline for submission of 2027 proposals is September 30th, 2026, with notification of proposal status by November 20th, 2026, and selection for stage 2 review by January 12th 2027. Additionally, abstracts for technical posters/presentations are due January 12th, 2027, for technical talks and posters. It was encouraged that the DEI principles would be considered during the webinar development and webinar series. It was noted that each proposal needed to be sponsored by 2 PDGs, and interested members should email Mu Ye (Mu.Ye@KraftHeinz.com) or Ryan Blaustein (rblauste@umd.edu). The PDG then opened the floor for discussion of ideas for the 2027 IAFP symposia/workshops/roundtable proposals, but there were no suggestions for proposals at this moment.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Recommend approval of Ryan Blaustein as Vice Chair.

Next Meeting Date: Sunday, July 17, 2027, Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: 2:09 p.m., Central Time, Sunday, July 26, 2026.

Chairperson Name: Mu Ye.

Animal and Pet Food Safety

Names of Attendees: Michele Sayles (Chair), Deepa Thiagarajan (Vice Chair), Christopher Archer, Jyoti Aryal, Mark Bauter, Ledon Black, Alana Bryant, Ariel Buehler, Hanyu Chen, Mary-Grace Danao, Jennifer Dorick, Zhujun (Abby) Gao, Beilei Ge, Halle Greenbaum, Megan Hall, Jon Hammond, Vannith Hay, Minghao He, Junjia He, Lauren Howell, Jace Jordan, Chyer Kim, Rob Kooijmans, Tonali Lara-Ramos, Ana Lima, Christian Lozano Guzman, Leticia Mallmann, Anne-Marie Masella, Tyler Mattson, Isabella McGrath, Gerald Miller, Amie Minor-Richard, Tomas Moita, Amit Morey, Jason Neal-McKinney, Yhuliana Nino Fuerte, Richard Otwey, Laurentina Pedroso, Suresh Pillai, Aaron Pleitner, Vasuki Ramakrishnan, Jimmy Robert, Janet Rowat Kraiss, Claire Savage, Anru Shen, Laurie Steed, Savannah Stewart, Christopher Thomas, Celina To, Tamra Tolen, Cole Vaughan, Neha Wavare, Beth Wittenauer, Romy Yu, Bonnie Zhu.

Total Number of Attendees: 54.

Meeting Called to Order: Sunday July 26, 2026, at 1:08 p.m. EST.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Madhuparna Deb.

Old Business: Approval of 2025 Meeting Minutes: 2025 meeting minutes were approved and submitted. Antitrust statement was acknowledged and pricing guidelines confirmed to be in effect.

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Membership and Participation Updates: The acceptance rate for 2026 symposia was 33%, one of the highest across PDGs.

IAFP Deadlines: IAFP European Symposia and Roundtables is now held in alternates years with a submission deadline of **September 21** and North American deadline is **September 29**.

New Business: Dr Deepa Thiagarajan did a quick overview on potential topics for webinars and submissions for symposium and roundtables, for 2027 conference. She will share google link to collect ideas.

Dr. Sayles and Dr. Thiagarajan proposed every other month listening sessions, with one in August and two in September as we ramp up preparation and submissions.

2026 Accepted Symposia: Two symposia were accepted. (1) Monday, July 27 at 3:45 p.m.: Mycotoxins symposium covering new regulatory action levels, AI predictive modeling, and management approaches featuring speakers from Pet Food Institute, NASA, World Food Program, and technology providers. (2) Wednesday: Two-hour session on insect proteins and novel ingredient safety risks titled "Debugging Pet Food Safety" with speakers from FAO, National Insect Protein Association, and CDM. Four rejected submissions from prior year will be repurposed as webinars or rolled to 2027. Last year's webinar achieved record attendance of approximately 300.

Jason (FDA): FDA Reorganization and Compliance Updates: ORA was dissolved with inspections moved to the new Office of Inspections and Investigations. Compliance functions are now within CVM's Office of Surveillance and Compliance. A dedicated animal food inspectorate was created with two inspectorates now solely focused on animal food (previously <25% of inspector time). Current biological hazard focus areas: *Salmonella, Listeria, E. coli, Campylobacter.* Chemical hazard focus: PFAS and mycotoxins.

Megan Hall (FDA): Regulatory updates on FDA reorganization and compliance priorities for animal food safety.

FDA Pre-Market Animal Food Ingredient Pathways (DAFI).

Technology Presentations:

Celina To (bioMérieux): PCR-based root cause analysis typing for *Salmonella* and *Listeria* with sub-2-hour turnaround and facility-level strain resolution.

Tyler Mattson (Synexis): Continuous hydrogen peroxide technology generating low-level H_2O_2 gas 24/7 to fill sanitation gaps between facility cleaning events.

Dr. Alana Bryant (Diamond Pet Foods): Handheld biofilm detection gun using UV fluorescence to identify and target biofilm-prone areas for remediation.

Ariel Buehler (General Mills/Blue Buffalo): Pet Food Institute update on industry trends and safety initiatives.

Dr. Michele gave the updates on the Pet Food Alliance: The alliance is approximately 8 years old with membership grown from 20 to 300-400 across the rendering-to-pet food supply chain.

Recommendations to the Executive Board: none.

Next Meeting Date: July 18 – 21 in Kansas City, MO.

Chairperson Name: Dr. Michele Sayles.

Applied Laboratory Methods PDG

Names of Attendees: NA.

Meeting Called to Order: Sunday, July 26, 2026, 10:30 a.m.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Aditi Bhadauria (ALM PDG Student Liaison).

Old Business: Julie Weller (Chairperson) called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. and began by reviewing the IAFP Anti-Trust Guidelines. She then introduced the prior committee and the new committee members and recognized the 2026 IAFP Executive Board. Aditi Bhadauria (University of Georgia) will serve as the Student Liaison for the ALM PDG. The 2025 PDG minutes were approved, and the 2025 recommendations and board responses were reviewed.

New Business: Julie Weller provided the Executive Board update. More than 3,000 attendees registered for this year's annual meeting. Attendees were encouraged to visit the exhibit floor and speak with exhibitors and were reminded that Room 202 in the convention center was available as a quiet room. The group was encouraged to get involved with IAFP by recruiting new student and colleague members, engaging with local and regional affiliates, and joining a committee or volunteer opportunity. It was noted that IAFP is continuing to develop a podcast and is seeking sponsors. Julie thanked the LSU Food Safety Group for their work assembling materials for the meeting.

Julie reviewed the proposal statistics comparing 2025 and 2026. In 2026, the ALM PDG submitted 23 total proposals (down from 25 in 2025). As primary sponsor, 3 of 7 proposals were accepted (42%), compared with 7 of 12 (58%) in 2025. As secondary sponsor, 5 of 16 proposals were accepted (31%), compared with 8 of 13 (61%) in 2025. The overall acceptance rate was 35% in 2026 compared with 41% in 2025. Members were encouraged to consider submitting proposals that were not accepted into this year's program as webinars. Julie reviewed the accepted sessions for which the ALM PDG is the primary and secondary sponsor and encouraged attendance.

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The IAFP meeting app was reviewed. Members were reminded to download the app and resync when prompted to keep event information, schedules, program details, and announcements current.

Amanda Brookhouser-Sisney led the Validation and Verification (V&V) Interest Group updates. The group formed in 2017 with a shared objective of delivering scientifically robust user guidance on validation and verification to support broader applicability and confidence in method performance. The group's work is organized into four subgroups: Method Considerations, Inoculum Protocols, Webinars, and Laboratory Best Practices.

Amanda handed the update over to Laurie Post for the Method Consideration Subgroup. Laurie noted that the subgroup has 6 published articles, 1 in press with a scheduled publication date of September/October 2026, and 1 in preparation. Three of the published articles have won first place in the "Most-Viewed *FPT* General Interest Publication" award. She provided an overview of the article in press, "Rapid Confirmation of Presumptive Positive Pathogen Screening Test Results: Analytical and Hybrid Confirmations," which examines whether molecular-based confirmation assays could replace culture-based confirmation with greater accuracy and speed. She then discussed the manuscript in preparation, "Pathogen Virulence Diversity and Food Safety Implications," which addresses how targeting pathogenicity differences among species or serotypes could improve surveillance and mitigation strategies.

Julie Weller provided an update on the Inoculum Protocol Subgroup. The manuscript "Are Your Microbial Cultures Stressed? Preparing Target Inoculations for Food and Environmental Matrix Studies" provides a structured framework for designing and conducting matrix validation and verification studies that are robust, reliable, and fit for purpose. The manuscript is approximately 85% complete, with a target submission before the end of the calendar year.

Amanda Brookhouser-Sisney led the update for the Webinar Subgroup. A short tutorial was provided on how members can manage their notification preferences to ensure they receive updates on relevant content, including workshops and webinars. A recap was given of the three-part series already presented, each based on a previously published article and reformatted to reach a larger webinar audience; these are available for IAFP Members in the webinar archive. The most recent webinar was presented in January 2026 in collaboration with the Institute for the Advancement of Food and Nutrition Sciences (IAFNS). The next webinar, "Matrix Additions Part 4: Matrix Extension Study Statistics and Data Interpretation," will cover real-life scenarios and troubleshooting. The subgroup is open to volunteers.

Amanda Brookhouser-Sisney also covered the Laboratory Best Practices Subgroup, which recently submitted a manuscript for review in *Food Protection Trends* on the objective measurement of accountability in partnerships between third-party food testing laboratories and food industry clients.

Veronica Kays from AOAC INTERNATIONAL presented updates on AOAC microbiological standards. She reviewed AOAC's science programs, including standards development, method conformity assessment, and integrated programs, and introduced the newly launched Performance Tested Consumables program, which provides certification criteria for critical lab consumables. She provided an update on the Microbiology Method Validation Guidance (MMVG) initiative, which aims to update and expand AOAC OMA Appendix J to address additional validation topics and support global alignment. The initiative includes 96 volunteers across three subgroups: Qualitative Detection Methods (Culturable Bacteria), Analytical Confirmation, and Quantitative Methods (Culturable Bacteria), with participation from government agencies, technology providers, manufacturers, and academia, and international liaisons including authorities in France and the Netherlands. She also reviewed SPADA (Stakeholder Program for Agent Detection Assays) sequencing initiatives, including the 2026 publication of SMPR 2026.01 for metagenomic sequencing. QR codes were provided to join the subgroups. Members interested in participating were invited to do so.

Julie Weller reviewed the 2027 call for proposals. The 2027 annual meeting will be held in Kansas City, Missouri. The workshops, symposia, and roundtables submission deadline is September 29, 2026, and the abstract submission deadline is January 12, 2027. It was noted that IAFP Europe has moved to an every-other-year format, with symposia and roundtable submissions due September 21, 2026, and abstracts due October 19, 2026. Julie reviewed the symposia and roundtable guidelines and reiterated the importance of proposal quality over quantity. Priority is given to proposals addressing safety and microbial quality of foods; viruses and parasites, retail food safety, epidemiology and public health; non-microbiology food safety issues; general applied food safety microbiology; general food protection for the future; and developments in food safety education. Members were encouraged to consider new and emerging topics not covered in the last two years.

Julie announced the call for Vice Chair nominations. The position is a four-year commitment, consisting of two years as Vice Chair followed by two years as Chair, and requires an active IAFP membership. The Vice Chair assists the Chair with meetings, emails, and conference calls before succeeding the Chair. Nominations will be collected through the end of the calendar year by email to Julie Weller and Amanda Brookhouser-Sisney, with voting to open in March 2027.

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The floor was then opened for discussion of symposium and roundtable ideas for the 2027 annual meeting, with attendees asked to introduce themselves before speaking. Jeff Kornacki suggested a session on approaches to bridge the gap between indicator organisms and pathogens, covering both genotypic and phenotypic methods and the challenge of high false positives. A second topic Jeff suggested was "When is a positive a positive", a spin off a symposium in this year's agenda. Julie Weller raised the development of standards for microplastics in food, noting that the European PDG has expressed interest in the topic. Rachel Binet (FDA) raised the topic of dietary supplement testing and the performance of pathogen detection methods in dietary supplement matrices, noting this is an ongoing discussion at the FDA. David Legan (Eurofins) raised the challenge of detecting pathogens that are rare or difficult to find in a matrix, such as *C. botulinum* in infant formula and *Cyclospora* in produce, where sampling and method sensitivity limit detection, and suggested collaboration with the viral and parasite and other related PDGs. Melanie Downs (University of Nebraska-Lincoln) raised food allergen topics, including end-user guidance for sampling and data interpretation, and Julie Weller noted gluten as a related area. Laurie Post offered to send the ideas out to the group to determine how to collaborate. The submission deadline was noted as the end of September.

The recommendations were the last item discussed and are listed below. No questions were raised after the recommendations, and the meeting concluded at 11:27 a.m.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. The ALM PDG recommends that IAFP add an additional parallel track on one or more days of the meeting to accommodate the continued growth in the size of the IAFP meeting and to allow for additional sessions.
2. The ALM PDG recommends that IAFP make the registration and check-in barcode available in a format that can be added directly to Apple Wallet or Google Wallet, rather than sending multiple separate barcode emails, to simplify check-in and reduce email clutter.

Next Meeting Date: Sunday, July 26, 2027, Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: 11:27 a.m.

Chairperson Name: Julie Weller.

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, Premsai 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

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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.

Dairy Quality and Safety PDG

Names of Attendees: Neil Bogart (Chair), Kara Mikkelson (Vice Chair), Celina To (Secretary), Anna Acosta, Sam Alcaine, Sabina Alexander, John Allan, Ronald Altman, Takiyah Ball, Nate Banner, April Bishop, David Blomquist, Victoria Burgess, Kristin Butler, Catharine Carlin, Erdogan Ceylan, Ada Cowan, Lyndsey Cypriano, Alvaro De Bonis, Alan Deery, Patrick Fach, Zhujun (Abby) Gao, Kathleen Glass, Michele Gorman, Evan Henke, Leslie Hintz, Matt Hudkins, Ingrid Huntley, Jada Jackson, Craig Jewell, Esbal Jimenez, Patrick Kachelmeier, Peter Kennedy, Jeffrey Kornacki, Vijay Krishna, Markus Lacorn, Ingrid Lima, Jermaine Lindsey, Christian Lorenzo, Jeff Lucas, Shikhadri Mahanta, Birata Mainali, Paraskevas Makridis, Yadira Malavez, Ngozi Manukaji, Nicole Martin, Alejandro Mazzotta, Fabiola Miranda, Paola Moncada, Sarah Murphy, Rejoice Nyarku, Amin Omairi Nasser, Chris Paradise, Aaron Pleitner, Christophe Quiring, Cristina Resendiz-Moctezuma, Samantha Roldan Perez, Victoria Romano, Mansour Samadpour, Allen Sayler, Kristin Schill, Arlette Shazer, Calvin Slaughter, Nakia Smith, Abigail Snyder, Esmeralda Soto-Velez, Michelle Stedman, Manuel Trevino, Rosalia Trias Mansilla, Erica Turley, Jack van der Sanden, Ron Van Santen, Stephen Walker, Benjamin Warren, Dina Weston, Sharon Wilson, Anett Winkler, Ren Yang, Justin Zangl, Bonnie Zhu.

Total Number of Attendees: 79.

Meeting Called to Order: Sunday, July 26, 2026, approximately 8:32 a.m.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Celina To.

Old Business: The 2025 meeting minutes were reviewed. No corrections were recorded. Vijay Krishna made the motion to approve the minutes and David Blomquist seconded the motion. The 2025 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

New Business: The Executive Board reported the highest conference attendance since the COVID-19 pandemic, with more than 80 percent of registrants attending. The organization continues its financial recovery, and members were encouraged to support outreach and membership growth.

Samantha Roldán Pérez provided the Student PDG update. Activities are intended to connect students with professionals in academia, industry, and government; expose students to food safety career paths; and strengthen research presentation and science communication skills. Members were encouraged to participate as invited scientists or competition judges, promote student representatives, and include the Student PDG as a co-sponsor for relevant proposals. Activities included Meet Your Favorite Scientist, the 3-Minute Thesis Competition, Food Safety Flash, Student Spotlight, and student proposal development.

Members were encouraged to use the conference application to identify dairy-related symposia, roundtables, posters, and technical sessions. Sponsored or co-sponsored programming included Salmonella and Cronobacter controls in low-moisture facilities using dairy examples, safe water reuse in dairy and food

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processing, and advances in microbial quantitation. Dairy-related posters addressed allergen detection, yeast and mold enumeration, STEC detection, antibiotic residues, environmental monitoring, antimicrobial peptides, AI-assisted environmental sampling decisions, and spoilage organisms.

Industry Updates. Abigail Snyder announced an upcoming 1.5-day Advanced Dry Sanitation Forum at Kerry's national headquarters. The industry-centered, consensus-building forum is intended to identify emerging best practices, determine which concepts should move forward, and advance practical dry-sanitation approaches for low-moisture and dry dairy operations.

***Clostridium botulinum* and Powdered Infant Formula.** Kristin Schill of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Food Research Institute presented an update on botulinum neurotoxin-producing *Clostridium* in powdered infant formula and dry dairy ingredients. The presentation placed recent investigations in the context of the difficulty of detecting rare spores, differentiating closely related organisms, and interpreting PCR, culture, toxin testing, and whole-genome sequencing results.

- The ByHeart-associated outbreak was declared over by CDC on February 26, 2026, after 48 cases and hospitalizations across 17 states. FDA ingredient sampling identified matching isolates from powdered infant formula, whole milk powder, and clinical cases.
- A separate investigation involved four infant botulism cases associated with consumption of Nara Organics Whole Milk Infant Formula. *C. botulinum* was isolated from an opened container, and the company recalled all lots. Evidence was insufficient to establish the supplier or contamination route.
- In FDA post-response sampling, 46 of 48 powdered-milk samples were PCR-negative. Two organic nonfat milk powder samples were PCR-positive and identified by whole-genome sequencing as nearly identical *C. sporogenes* BoNT/B1. The powder had not been used in infant formula and did not match previously reported sequences.
- C. sporogenes is a close genetic relative of Group I *C. botulinum*, and some *C. sporogenes* strains can produce botulinum neurotoxin. This complicates taxonomy, organism identification, and interpretation of presumptive findings.
- Because contamination may occur at fractions of a spore per 100 g, small analytical portions can underestimate prevalence. Sample mass, enrichment, most-probable-number approaches, and limitations of pass/fail criteria require further evaluation.
- Potential spore sources include soil, feed, bedding, feces, teat surfaces, milking routines, and sanitation practices. Processing controls such as bactofugation and microfiltration can reduce spores; however, powdered infant formula manufacturing does not necessarily include a process designed to inactivate all *C. botulinum* spores.

Preliminary survey information was discussed. Among 50 lots representing 29 commercially available dairy-based powdered infant formula brands, 45 lots were below 1 CFU/g by direct plating, four were at 1 CFU/g, and one was at 8 CFU/g. Nine of 50 lots were positive for sulfite-reducing clostridia by direct plating or enrichment. These research-in-progress findings do not establish sulfite-reducing clostridia as a reliable indicator for *C. botulinum*. Key questions include prevalence in nonfat dry milk versus whole milk powder, differences associated with farm practices and organic versus conventional production, the relationship between sulfite-reducing clostridia and *C. botulinum*, and whether direct testing, enrichment, or MPN methods can support meaningful specifications or decision criteria.

International Dairy Federation. Nate Banner, IAFP Liaison to the IDF Standing Committee on Food Hygiene, described IDF's role in advocating for the global dairy sector and developing science-based guidance and standards. Founded in 1903, IDF includes 41 member countries representing approximately two-thirds of world milk production and a network of about 1,200 experts. Its participants represent farmers, cooperatives, processors, national dairy organizations, academia, government, suppliers, and the dairy workforce.

- IDF maintains a dynamic program of approximately 150 to 165 work items through standing committees and task forces. These work items may provide concepts for future IAFP symposia and roundtables.
- IDF and ISO have collaborated since 1963 and have published nearly 200 joint standards; approximately 60 are listed in Codex CXS 234. Harmonized methods support comparable results, regulatory confidence, fair trade, and a common technical language.
- Recent work has included analytical matters, allergen labeling, food additives, water reuse, *Listeria monocytogenes*, STEC, heat treatment, antimicrobial agents, microbial food cultures, food safety management, and mycotoxins.
- Members interested in becoming IDF experts were encouraged to contact the US-IDF National Committee, submit a CV and area of expertise, and seek nomination to a standing committee or task force. Participation is also possible through the USDA/ANSI ISO Technical Advisory Group.

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IAFP 2027 Proposal Ideation. Participants submitted ideas through Mentimeter and worked in breakout groups to organize concepts for 2027 proposals. Major themes included spoilage, spores, sanitation, environmental monitoring, dry dairy, microbiomes, supply chains, yeast, and networking.

- Spoilage: fungal biofilm analysis and mitigation; environmental monitoring for yeast and mold; metagenomics for root-cause analysis, shelf life, and fermented products; and challenge studies or shelf-life validation for fluid milk.
- Spores: enumeration and rapid detection of C. botulinum spores; prevalence, geographic distribution, transmission routes, and farm practices; root-cause analysis, prevention, reduction, activation, and partitioning; and modeling, risk assessment, dose-response, thermophiles, and data sharing.
- Dry Dairy: allergen-cleaning and dry-sanitation tradeoffs; effective CIP/COP and hygienic equipment design; low-moisture guidance and accepted practices; defining a clean break; and avoiding unnecessary introduction of water.
- Sanitation: humidity control; biofilm prevention; novel chemistry in wet environments; decisions regarding when, where, and how much water to use; integration of quality and sanitation teams, tools, culture, and data; and potential spore harborage in poorly maintained piping and biofilms.

Members were reminded that proposals should be scientifically sound, relevant, clearly written, and distinct from recent programming. Organizers should communicate with the PDG, define the target audience and session format, secure speakers representing diverse perspectives, and provide complete speaker information. The initial deadline shown for 2027 symposium, roundtable, and workshop proposals was September 29, 2026. Stage-two notification was listed for November 20, 2026, and finalized proposals were due January 12, 2027.

Recommendations to the Executive Board: none.

Next Meeting Date: Interim PDG meetings will be held virtually, with details communicated through *IAFP Connect*. The next listed PDG meeting is Tuesday, August 11, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. Central Time. The IAFP 2027 Annual Meeting will be held July 18-21, 2027, in Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: David Blomquist moved to adjourn at 10:00 a.m. Central Time and Nicole Martin seconded the motion.

Chairperson Name: Neil Bogart.

Data Management and Analytics PDG

Attendees: Matthew Stasiewicz (Chair), Gustavo Reyes (Vice Chair), Carrie Rigdon (Secretary), Melanie Abley, Yagya Adhikari, Amberlyn Akin, Angela Anandappa, Nathan Anderson, Andrew Appiah Darkwah, Fernando Avelleyra, VM Balasubramaniam, Robert Barlow, Cecil Barnett-Neefs, Deanna Brown, Brett Burkard, Michelle Catlin, Jelf Celestin, Irina Craft, John David, Sabahnur Demirci, Yihong Deng, Augustine Dinovo, James Doyle, Erin Dreyling, Michael Eastwood, Mark Enninga, Sanjit Fernandes, Melanie Firestone, Mark Flanagan, Neal Fredrickson, Ariel Garsow, Kathleen Glass, Michele Gorman, Eduardo Gutierrez Rodriguez, Dave Hill, Samantha Hobart, Minji Hur, Sima Hussein, Indu Aashritha Idumalla, Justyce Jedlicka, Cindy Jiang, Amanda Jones, Don Jones, Chris Jordan, YeonJin Jung, Peter Kennedy, Myungji Kim, Elma Kontor-Manu, Julie Kuruc, Karen Lechuga-Nevarez, Lorenzo Lee, Lorenzo Lee, David Legan, Daniel Leiva, Yiyi Li, Jingqiu Liao, Dave Luedeke, Alejandro Mazzotta, Jeff Nauseda, Ramin Nemati, Melanie Neumann, Sipei Ouyang, Chris Paradise, Mehul Patel, Caitlin Po, Laure Pujol, Luke Qian, Amber Richards, Karina Rodriguez, Michael Rybolt, Luis Salazar, Mark Salter, Sam Santiago, Buddhi Sapkota, Amreeta Sarjit, Deborah Sattely, Jason Scheffler, Nikki Shariat, Arlette Shazer, Katherine Sierra, Calvin Slaughter, Giannis Stoitsis, Stacy Stoltenberg, Nilsson Toro, Tushar Verma, Yiqing Wang, Brett Weed, Julie Weller, Martin Wiedmann, Weifan Wu, Jiyoon Yi, Shuang Yu, Bonnie Zhu, Asun Zhu.

New Members Present: Jelf Celestin, Indu Aashritha Idumalla, Cecil Barnett-Neefs, Deanna Brown, Brett Weed, John David, Alexandra Calle.

Number of Attendees: 93.

Meeting Called to Order: Sunday, July 26, 2026, at 3:02 p.m.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Carrie Rigdon.

Old Business: July 2025 minutes approved with corrected PDG title.

New Business: Executive Board updates and Student PDG updates were provided. Over 3,000 attendees are expected at this year's conference. The acceptance rate for submitted symposia and roundtables was 33%. The acceptance rate for DMA PDG-sponsored proposals from 2022 to 2026 was presented. The highest rate was 52.6% of 19 proposals in 2023, and the lowest rate was 38.9% of 18 proposals in 2026. It was agreed to use the term "not accepted" rather than "rejected" for the proposals that were not accepted in a given year. Additionally, it was suggested to contact the authors of the proposals not accepted in 2026 to see if they would like to present their topic as a webinar.

The Chair presented an update on the proposal sponsorship review process initiated last year. In 2025, the PDG made the following recommendation to the Executive Board:

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Ask the Program Committee to adopt uniform criteria for PDG sponsorship. To facilitate this, the DMA PDG will draft criteria for its own sponsorship of proposals for the 2026 IAFP Annual Meeting, apply those criteria to 2026 submissions, and provide a report to the board with recommendations.

The aim was to provide sponsorship for proposals that aligned with the DMA PDG's mission and scope. There were two proposals for IAFP 2026 that sought but did not receive sponsorship for this year. Both were on the topic of artificial intelligence but did not relate to data management and analytics; only that data were used in the AI approach.

It was decided to continue requesting that those seeking DMA PDG sponsorship submit a brief form for review. The Chair presented the current sponsorship form, which includes a primary contact, session format, session name, primary and secondary PDG sponsorship, the area of data management and analytics this proposal addresses, and why this proposed session fits the DMA scope. The question of whether this topic had been presented before was removed. The sponsorship review deadline is September 22, 2026, one week prior to the proposal submission deadline for 2027 IAFP symposia and roundtables.

There was discussion about recommending that the board adopt uniform sponsorship. Some see value in coordinating among PDGs and avoiding duplication before submission to avoid duplication. There was recognition that it takes a certain amount of energy to do this, and to be successful, it would need to keep the burden of review low. It was decided to bring the idea to the Tuesday PDG Chairperson meeting rather than include it as a recommendation to the Executive Board.

Luke Quan presented results from last year's AI benchmarking student competition. The top three winners from the competition will be presenting during a symposium at the 2026 IAFP. Food AI Nexus, an open platform for publishing benchmark datasets was also created. A paper is also being drafted summarizing the key lessons. There will be a similar student competition in 2027.

The remainder of the meeting was dedicated to open discussion. Proposal ideas for 2027 were captured on a common spreadsheet. There was a suggestion to create guidance and best practices that the food safety community needs (similar to the HACCP PDG). Attendees also mentioned that there are existing statistical guidelines that can be used to elevate best practices on data quality. The group then broke into four discussion groups: Applied (salt), Publishing (machine-readable data), Validation, and larger context questions (what do I need to know before I start?). There was a brief report-out from each group before the meeting adjourned.

There will be a virtual meeting scheduled for late August 2026 to further discuss proposals and other possible PDG work products.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Review our report applying formal criteria for DMA PDG sponsorship for 2026 annual meeting proposals.

Next Meeting Date: Sunday, July 18, 2027, Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: 4:30 p.m.

Chairperson Name: Matt Stasiewicz.

Developing Food Safety Professionals

Names of Attendees: Angela Anandappa (Chair), Melody Yu (Vice Chair), Niam Abeysiriwardena, Shahram Ajamian, Elizabeth Andoh-Kesson, Kitty Appels, Andrew Appiah Darkwah, Olivia Arends, Vera Arthur, Charles Bakin, Amelia Ball, Bright Bansah, Sherry Bansal, Richa Bedi Navik, Shannon Bennett, Marivi Carrera, Han Chen, Hanyu Chen, Andrew Clarke, Kayla Crouch, Martin Cutler, Lyndsey Cypriano, Andrew Armaan Das, Vaidehi Dendukuri, Darin Detwiler, Bennett Dzandu, Monijesu Fadamiro, Anthony Flood, Rahul Fnu, Sean Foster, Tia Glave, Alison Griffino, Andrea Griffiths, Jose Guerrero, Alex Hanley, Jennifer Harrington, Melanie Harris, Vannith Hay, Matt Hudkins, Indu Aashritha Idumalla, Melisa Jaramillo Zapata, Lone Jespersen, YeonJin Jung, Karuna Kharel, Sarah Kozak-Weaver, Mark Lebednick, Vanessa Lindstrom, Morgan Madison, Alejandro Mazzotta, Patrick Mies, Razieh Sadat Mirmahdi, Naim Montazeri, Juan Moreira, Amit Morey, Sara Mortimore, David Mugabo, Ben Murphy, James Nasella, Yhuliana Nino Fuerte, Andrew Stiven Ortiz Balsero, Samet Ozturk, Suresh Pillai, Dheeraj Reddy, Mansour Samadpour, Dina Scott, Varsha Shete, Ivy Smith, Sarah Smith-Simpson, Aswathi Soni, Yuan Su, Cassandra Suther, Manuel Trevino, Chelsea Tyus, Angela Valadez, Akhila Vasan, Rory Wang, Tom Weaver, Irit Weiser, Katherine Woo, Weifan Wu, Shuang Yu.

Total Number of Attendees: 79.

Meeting Called to Order: Sunday, July 26, 2026, 10:30 a.m.

Old Business: The meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m. by PDG Chairperson Angela Anandappa, who along with Vice Chairperson Melody Yu welcomed the PDG and provided introductions. Pam Wilger of the Executive Board provided announcements from the Executive Board, and the Anti-trust guidelines were reviewed with the group.

New Business: The annual meeting of the PDG brought together a diverse group of food safety professionals within IAFP to establish strategic initiatives to strengthen professional development, mentorship, leadership, and career readiness for food safety students and early-career professionals. The session focused on identifying actionable programs to bridge the gap between

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academia and industry while fostering long-term career growth. Four groups held topical discussions to brainstorm ideas that could be developed into Symposia, Roundtables, or Workshops for IAFP 2027, webinars, or other educational content, covering six broad areas.

On the topic of technical expertise alone being insufficient for career longevity, the group noted that professionals must understand how individual work impacts overall business growth, that there is a need for improved communication, professional presentation, and understanding of workplace culture and expectations, and the importance of building resources using curated libraries, video content (e.g., YouTube), and professional networks; recommendations included launching leadership workshops, hosting quarterly leadership meetings, and creating employer expectation guides for onboarding and team collaboration. On bridging the academia and industry gap, the group observed that students often graduate with strong academic knowledge but lack a clear understanding of industry expectations and career pathways, and discussed the transition from academia to industry, entry-level skill requirements, and the need to clarify career tracks across sectors such as Quality Assurance/Control, Regulatory Affairs, Food Law, Manufacturing, Fresh Produce, Meat and Poultry, Seafood, Retail, Supply Chain, and Operations; the recommendation was to develop visual career roadmaps illustrating progression from entry-level roles to executive leadership. On communication and interview readiness, effective communication was identified as a critical competency for career advancement, with support needed in networking, professional introductions, interviewing, communicating with HR, and delivering difficult news professionally; recommendations included establishing virtual mentoring sessions and dedicated workshops focused on communication, interview preparation, salary negotiation, and first-day workplace transition. On mentorship and alumni engagement, the group discussed expanding structured guidance networks for students and young professionals and the need for targeted support surrounding resume building, fellowship applications, transitioning research to industry, and career coaching; recommendations included expanding the mentor-mentee matching program, integrating personality and career assessments, establishing alumni mentoring, and exploring a long-term online platform. On emerging technologies and continuing education, the group discussed the emerging role of AI in food safety operations and job searching, as well as ongoing education needs for alumni and mid-career professionals regarding regulatory updates and operational shifts; recommendations included developing AI literacy sessions, offering continuing education courses for alumni, and hosting webinars on regulatory updates and supply chain management. On interactive networking initiatives, the group proposed creating a networking marketplace with dedicated career networking booths, five-minute career talks offering rapid-fire insights from industry veterans, and structured exhibitor networking sessions connecting students directly with industry vendors and employers.

The PDG discussed a broad range of ideas to support the growth and development of food safety professionals. Future programming will balance technical knowledge with essential professional skills, including leadership, business acumen, mentorship, communication, and AI literacy. Through structured workshops, visual career mapping, enhanced networking opportunities, and ongoing education, the committee will help members navigate the transition from academia to industry and build successful, sustainable careers. As follow-up actions, the PDG will meet quarterly to maintain momentum and review progress, host monthly webinars on priority professional-development topics, and expand mentor-mentee opportunities while exploring workshops, webinars, and other learning formats focused on business skills, ethics, communication, HR, job expectations, AI education, job searching, networking best practices, and professional development.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Confirm Angela Anandappa as Chair of the Developing Food Safety Professionals PDG.
2. Confirm Melody Yu as Vice Chair of the Developing Food Safety Professionals PDG.

Next Meeting Date: July 18–21, 2027; Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: 12:01 p.m.

Chairperson Name: Angela Anandappa.

Food Chemical Hazards and Food Allergy PDG

Names of Members Present: Amy Wise (Chairperson), Nakia Smith (Vice Chairperson), Betsy Craig (Secretary), Hiroki Abe, Samuel Akomea-Frempong, Selim Alarape, Sabina Alexander, Monica Amburn, Kitty Appels, James Arbogast, Richa Arya, Olivia Awate, Joseph Baumert, Mark Bauter, Aaron Beczkiewicz, Richelle Beverly, Christina Bongo-Box, Yang Chen, Michael Ciaramella, Taylor Coho, Tressa Dennett, Brenna DeRocili, Melanie Downs, John Figgins, Anthony Flood, Tong-Jen Fu, Cierra Gadd, Michael Gardner, Jossie Garthoff, Steven Gendel, Laura Howard, Monica Jiang, Jessica Jones, Sefat Khuda, Bala Kottapalli, Markus Lacorn, Kirsten Larson, Megan Lee, Quanhong Li, Craig Llewellyn, Stefano Luccioli, Yinqing Ma, Justin Madsen, Sophia Markus, Ixnorisilda Matthews, Danielle Mayer, Theresa Mazure, Rachel McEgan, Erin Mertz, Emily Moyer, Kristi Muldoon Jacobs, Gopinath Mummaleti, James Nasella, Nikos Natsaridis, Katie Overbey, Mangesh Palekar,

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Rakhi Panda, Georgios Papageorgiou, Gale Prince, Ruby Ragland, Marianna Rhatigan, Karina Rodriguez, Neal Saab, Sarah Sanderson, Nirmal Thirunavookarasu Sankaranarayanan, Claire Savage, Brian Schaneberg, Sara Schlange, Tracie Sheehan, Brook Sherman, Varsha Shete, Julie Simcox, Sue Teegardin, Akhila Vasan, Xue Caroline Wang, Zak Warren.

Number of Attendees: 73.

Meeting Called to Order: Sunday July 26, 2026, 3:00 p.m.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Betsy Craig.

Amy Wise opened the session by welcoming everyone to the Food Chemical Hazards and Food Allergy PDG. She introduced herself and introduced other members vice-chair, secretary, and student assistants. Amy then called the meeting to order, thanking everyone for joining and reminding the group of the PDG's mission statement: to facilitate communication on topics like food toxicology and clean food allergens. She gave a quick overview of the agenda — old business, Anti-Trust Statement, the 2026 program, three speakers, recommendations to the PDG board, announcements, and time for the 2027 symposium, roundtable, and webinar planning. She also took a moment to have attendees greet the people around them.

Old Business: Amy Wise reviewed and summarized the approved minutes from the 2025 Food Chemical Hazards and Food Allergy (FCHFA) PDG meeting, attended by 66 participants, highlighting key leadership transitions, including the introduction of Amy as Co-Chair by former Chair Dr. Lili He. Major topics included Dr. He's presentation on the U.S. Red 3 ban and the shift toward natural color alternatives, as well as a featured IFIC presentation by Tony Flood and Kris Sollid on consumer perceptions of food allergens, intolerances, and sensitivities. Additional business included IAFP Board updates, a call for Vice Chair nominations, and brainstorming on future webinars and sessions covering topics such as allergen detection methods, restaurant communication, mitigation strategies, emerging treatments, ultra-processed and novel foods, and Top 9 allergen management. Following the review, the 2025 meeting minutes were formally approved by member vote, and Amy transitioned to reviewing the 2026 sponsored and co-sponsored program sessions.

New Business: Amy Wise opened the 2026 Food Chemical Hazards and Food Allergy (FCHFA) PDG meeting by introducing three featured presentations focused on consumer food safety communication, allergen risk management, and emerging regulatory challenges. Tony Flood of the International Food Information Council (IFIC) highlighted IFIC's consumer research, science communication, and thought leadership activities, including educational resources, Spotlight Surveys, food safety webinars, and the upcoming 2026 Food & Health Survey. Betsy Craig of MenuTrinfo discussed the evolution of food allergy communication, emphasizing science-based precautionary allergen labeling (PAL), implementation of the CODEX PAL framework, allergen risk assessment principles, and the growing role of third-party certification programs in improving consumer trust and reducing allergen-related recalls. Steven Gendel addressed the rapid growth of the cottage food industry and identified significant regulatory inconsistencies across states related to allergen labeling and consumer protection. He highlighted gaps in allergen management, supply-chain controls, and shared-kitchen environments, emphasizing the risks these challenges create for food-allergic consumers and the need for greater education and awareness.

Amy also summarized outcomes from the June 2026 Virtual PDG meeting and facilitated discussion on future priorities for the PDG and IAFP Annual Meeting. Members advocated for greater visibility of food allergen and chemical hazard topics through improved conference scheduling, increased PDG representation on the Program Committee, expanded educational programming, and stronger collaboration with related disciplines such as mycotoxins, heavy metals, pesticides, packaging safety, and novel ingredients. Attendees recommended additional sessions on CODEX allergen labeling, allergen risk assessment, testing, sanitation, and verification practices, while also supporting increased conference capacity and recognition programs specific to food allergens and chemical hazards. Amy shared updates on IAFP leadership opportunities, toxicology education resources, and efforts to strengthen engagement with the Conference for Food Protection. The meeting concluded with brainstorming for 2027 symposia, webinars, and roundtables, resulting in working groups focused on CODEX allergen labeling, packaging and sustainability risks, PFAS, and other emerging chemical hazard topics to advance proposals ahead of the September submission deadline.

Amy reminded everyone that session proposals are due September 29, urging members to develop their ideas and submit them before then.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Expand the number of parallel conference tracks to accommodate additional content and session opportunities.
2. Increase PDG representation on the Annual Meeting Program Committee to ensure appropriate evaluation of allergen and chemical hazard topics.
3. Develop foundational and introductory educational sessions/webinars to support non-experts and early-career professionals.

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4. Explore the creation of food allergen and chemical hazard awards to recognize achievements in these fields, similar to existing microbiology-focused awards.

Next Meeting Date: July 18-21, 2027, Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: 4:30 p.m.

Chairperson Name: Amy Wise.

Food Fraud

Names of Attendees: Katie Zammit (Chair), Fernando Avelleyra (Vice Chair), April Bishop, Christina Bongo-Box, Hannah Brown, Marivi Carrera, Jelf Celestin, Ashley Collins, Sabahnur Demirci, Mary Donaldson, James Doyle, Bennett Dzandu, John Figgins, Elise Forward, Neal Fredrickson, Farnaz Izadi, Monica Jiang, Peter Kennedy, Susan Linn, Quincy Lissaur, Aishwarya Marathe, Ixnorisilda Matthews, Rachel McEgan, Melanie Neumann, Adriana Paes, Mangesh Palekar, Andrew Pantano, Suresh Pillai, Anne Rölfing, Christopher Rupert, Julie Simcox, Nakia Smith, John Spink, Sue Teegardin, Adebimpe Vaughan, Irit Weiser, Wendy White, Jeffrey Xue.

Total Number of Attendees: 36.

Meeting Called to Order: Sunday, July 26, 2026, 10:35 a.m.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Fernando Avelleyra.

Old Business: Approve the previous year's meeting minutes. The previous year's meeting minutes from the 2025 meeting were approved. Additionally, the paper titled "Food Fraud - What's Beyond Testing?" was accepted for publication in the upcoming issue of *Food Protection Trends*. Recognition and sincere thanks were expressed to Clare Menezes, Anza Bester, Sabahnur Demirci, Julie Simcox, John Points, Stuart Hastie, John Figgins, Fernando Avelleyra, and Angela Anandappa for their collaborative efforts and valuable contributions to this industry resource.

New Business: Wendy presented Board updates and announcements, highlighting IAFP podcasts, the essential role PDGs play in driving industry engagement, plans for IAFP Europe 2027, and encouraging active member participation through the website and local affiliates. PDG administrative topics were discussed, including leveraging *IAFP Connect* for ongoing collaboration, reaffirming the mission statement, reviewing antitrust guidelines, and noting the student liaison role.

The group outlined future member engagement strategies, including distributing a topic interest poll in August and dedicating the September meeting to reviewing poll outcomes. Attendees participated in breakout discussions covering key strategic focus areas: addressing sustainability claims and standards of identity, benchmarking GFSI food fraud vulnerability assessments and supplier risk monitoring, evaluating new technologies and rapid analytical testing, exploring AI applications for static versus dynamic risk assessment, and enhancing early signal detection and horizon scanning capabilities.

Member Engagement and Upcoming Meetings: A poll will be distributed in August to identify topics members would like the group to discuss in future meetings; the September meeting will focus on reviewing and discussing the poll results.

Breakout Discussions: Participants discussed five potential areas of focus. Key comments from each group were captured as follows: Growing sustainability challenges, GFSI benchmarking in Food Fraud, New technology and analytical testing in Food Fraud, AI in Food Fraud, Wild card.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Approve Katie Zammit as Chair of the Food Fraud PDG.
2. Approve Fernando Avelleyra as Vice Chair of the Food Fraud PDG.

Next Meeting Date: Sunday, July 18, 2027, Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: 12:00 p.m.

Chairperson Name: Katie Zammit.

Food Hygiene and Sanitation

Names of Attendees: David Buckley (Chair), Mark Moorman (Vice Chair), Jack Burnett (Secretary), Jennifer Acuff, Seth Adesope, Samuel Akomea-Frempong, John Allan, Ronald Altman, Steve Arnold, Jakob Baker, Bright Bansah, Cameron Bardsley, Eniola Betiku, Anne Bigalke, Ledon Black, David Blomquist, Neil Bogart, Zac Boone, Deanna Brown, CC Caban, Daniel Caldwell, Aneta Cop, Ada Cowan, Vanessa Cranford, Angela Delk, Gayatri Dhulappana, Jodi DuVall-Robertson, Savana Everhart Nunn, Peyman Fatemi, Vanessa Fernandes, Mark Flanagan, Dennis Florentino, Tom Ford, Andy Freer, Toshifumi Fujisaki, Vikas Kumar Galipothu, Ariel Garsow, Charles Giambrone, Kristen Gibson, Juan Goncalves, Michele Gorman, Josie Greve-Peterson, Dale Grinstead, Fabiana Guglielmone, Sanjay Gummalla, Radames Gutierrez, Sam Hadden, Evan Henke, Leslie Hintz, John Holah, Taryn Horr, James Hosford, Mitchel Jackson, Jeff Jackson, Lee-Ann Jaykus, Sanghyup Jeong, Monica Jiang, Chris Jordan, Jace Jordan, Patrick Kachelmeier, Matthew Kirk, Elma Kontor-Manu, Kunihiro Kubota, Sanjay Kumar, Julie Kuruc, Comfort Kwamikorkor, Jason Lafontaine, Justin Larsen, Sangmi Lee, Glenda Lewis, Quanhong Li, Xin Li, Rob Limburn, Quincy Lissaur, Xiyang Liu, Max Lorcheim, Kevin Lorcheim, Briana Lorenzo, Mihkel Lossman, Yuqian Lou, Birata Mainali, Sophia Markus, Yvonne Masters, Steven Mesia, Rob Middendorf, Kara Mikkelson, Fabiola Miranda, Nathan Mirdamadi,

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Paul Mitchell, Yoshinori Mizoguchi, Eric Moorman, Mark Moorman, Emily Moyer, Nadia Narine, Nikos Natsaridis, Jason Neal-McKinney, Tracy Nowaczyk, Tomi Obe, Haley Oliver-Jischke, Rocio Ortega, Bhavini Patel, Kavita Patil, Monica Pava-Ripoll, Laurentina Pedroso, Brian Perry, Brett Podoski, Bill Potter, Timothy Pruitt, Laure Pujol, Clay Quassa, Joemel Quicho, David Rasmussen, Samantha Roldan Perez, Victoria Romano, Evan Rosen, Michael Rybolt, Gaganpreet Saini, Mark Salter, Sarah Sanderson, Sam Santiago, Eric Schweitzer, Dina Scott, Mike Shannon, Tracie Sheehan, Richard Shiraishi, Calvin Slaughter, Deb Smith, Abigail Snyder, Aswathi Soni, Shabarinath Srikumar, Michelle Stedman, Rick Stokes, Greta Swanson, Katherine Swanson, Ryo Takemasa, Abdullatif Tay, Helen Taylor, Eric Tetteh, Hein Timmerman, Francis Torko, Afrina Akter Turna, Wladir Valderrama Barandiaran, Adwy van den Berg, Premsai Veeranki, Stephen Walker, Benjamin Warren, Michael Wernigk, Jason White, Anett Winkler, Amy Wise, Meri Beth Wojtaszek, Ren Yang, Caroline Yates, Melissa Yost, Bonnie Zhu, Don Zink, Noemi Zuniga Thimeos.

Total Number of Attendees: 154.

Meeting Called to Order: July 26, 2026 at 10:03 a.m.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Jack Burnett.

Old Business: Reviewed minutes, in the absence of items of old business, we asked for additions/changes to the minutes from 2025, there were none. Neil Bogart put forward a motion to approve 2025 minutes and Taryn seconded. The motion was approved without objection. David shared information about 2027's meeting. Called out that *JFP* is looking for a scientific edition and share the list of invited reviews.

New Business: We went through the planned outline for today's meeting and let the attendees know we will have a brainstorming session for PDG submissions at the end. Shared the AI processing of all meeting notes since 2010 to highlight the subjects of this PDGs discussions over the years. Introduced the three speakers to follow: Eric of 3A, Quincy of SSAFE, and Calvin of Cornell.

Eric Schweitzer of 3A took the microphone to go through his slides giving a brief introduction to 3A as an organization as well as himself and his position. One feature he shared is 3A's new free online tool which is a "Total Cost of Use" calculator. Quincy of SSAFE introduced his organization a 501c(3) entity. Membership organization and it is a public/private partnership. One slide in his presentation shared QR codes for all of the free resources offered through their website. He introduced Tom Ford as an SSAFE board member. Calvin Slaughter from Cornell University presented, "risk negation between wet and dry cleaning."

David Buckley then kicked off the networking session. Afterwards we put up a QR code for a group poll, gave members time to fill it out, then pulled up the results so that the PDG members could reference them during our session brainstorming session.

Recommendations to the Executive Board: none.

Next Meeting Date: Sunday, July 18, 2027, Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: 11:50 a.m.

Chairperson Name: David Buckley.

Food Law PDG

Names of Attendees: April Bishop (Chair), Jennifer McEntire (Vice Chair), Maryam Ajasa, John Allan, Nas Chaudhary, Hanyu Chen, Troy Corley, Ada Cowan, Betsy Craig, Vanessa Cranford, Sabahnur Demirci, Carol Dlima, Mary Donaldson, Melanie Downs, Monijesu Fadamiro, Christina Ferreira, Sean Foster, Steven Gendel, Alison Griffino, Sanjay Gummalla, Anushuya Guragain, Leslie Hintz, Taryn Horr, Farnaz Izadi, Justyce Jedlicka, Monica Jiang, Peter Kennedy, Jens Kjaer, Vijay Krishna, Glenda Lewis, Quanhong Li, Vanessa Lindstrom, Craig Llewellyn, John LoPorto, Jeff Lucas, Deon Mahoney, Ixnorisilda Matthews, Rachel McEgan, Steven Mesia, Benjamin Miller, Paola Moncada, Emily Moyer, James Nasella, Melanie Neumann, Sergio Nieto Chávez, Katie Overbey, Akenio Patterson, Grishma Prabhukhot, Ruby Ragland, Vasuki Ramakrishnan, Karina Rodriguez, Christopher Rupert, Pratiksha Shrestha, Julie Simcox, Ivy Smith, Nakia Smith, Matthew Stasiewicz, Janiah Thomas, Angela Valadez, Wladir Valderrama Barandiaran, Akhila Vasan, Tammy Walsky, Tom Weaver, Amy Wise, Beth Wittenauer, Jamie Woodside, Xiaojing Zhou.

Total Number of Attendees: 66.

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

Minutes Recording Secretary: Pratiksha Shrestha.

Old Business: The meeting commenced with a call to order, and a welcome was extended to all attendees. Antitrust guidelines were reviewed. All attendees were asked to introduce themselves and share how many years they have participated with IAFP. Minutes from the 2025 annual meeting were reviewed and approved, with no recommendations to the Board.

New Business: All sessions sponsored by the Food Law PDG this year were shared with the group. The new Vice Chair, Jennifer McEntire, was announced and introduced.

Student Liaison Pratiksha presented slides on the activities and initiatives of the Student PDG during the 2025 to 2026 year and the scope to collaborate with the Food Law PDG. The main discussion this year centered on chemical hazard enforcement, with the group exploring how the food industry can approach chemical hazards with the same rigor applied to microbial hazards, including building programs, conducting risk analysis, and determining appropriate responses when a hazard or elevated risk is identified.

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The discussion noted that action levels have not been established for many heavy metals, and that whether a level is considered too high can depend on the intended consumer, since a level acceptable for adults may be unsafe for children. Arsenic and pending infant formula legislation were cited as examples, along with the challenge of defining the target population and the related liability and supply chain concerns. The group agreed that chemical hazards are equally important as microbial hazards and deserve a similar level of understanding and concern for food safety, and discussed collaborating with other PDGs, such as the Food Chemical Hazards and Food Allergy Professional Development Group. The group also discussed the intersection of state and federal law, noting a rise in state level bills to ban certain ingredients and the growing influence of state activity on federal policy, and the role of artificial intelligence, noting that AI cannot perform a complete hazard analysis or replace verification and should be used wisely.

The group then broke into small groups to develop session ideas for the 2027 annual meeting. Groups brainstormed for approximately 30 minutes, focused on chemical hazards, understanding risk by intended use, visibility to liability, state versus federal law, and the use of AI. The breakout topics and suggested program formats reported back to the PDG are summarized below:

Chemical hazards and understanding risk by intended use: Symposium; roundtable case study.

Visibility to liability: Discussion panel, workshop, or roundtable, State versus federal law: To be determined, Use of AI:Webinar, symposium, or roundtable.

Key dates noted were the next PDG submission meeting in August, the roundtable and symposium submission deadline of September 30, 2026, and the abstract submission deadline of January 12, 2027. The group then took a group picture together.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Recommend Jennifer McIntire as incoming Vice Chair.

Next Meeting Date: July 18 to July 21, 2027, Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: 2:30 p.m. Sunday, July 26, 2026.

Chairperson: April Bishop.

Food Packaging

Names of Attendees: Niam Abeysiriwardena (Chair), Monica Amburn, Swara Bhatt, Yang Chen, Betsy Craig, Bennett Dzandu, Ahmed El-Moghazy, Xuetong Fan, Jossie Garthoff, Upasana Hariram, Mitchel Jackson, Monica Jiang, Tony Jin, Quincy Lissaur, Caitlin Martin, Diana Mora-Lee, Kristi Muldoon Jacobs, Nadia Narine, Gabriela Oliva Coba, Kavita Patil, Ruby Ragland, Dheeraj Reddy, Victoria Romano, Evan Rosen, Xue Sha, Tracie Sheehan, Digvijay Singh, John Spink, Sue Teegardin, Max Teplitski, Quang Tran, Premsai Veeranki, Jason Wan, Nuradeen Yusuf.

Total Number of Attendees: 33.

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

Minutes Recording Secretary: Swara Bhatt.

Old Business: No members objected to the acceptance of the minutes from the last annual meeting. The 2025 meeting minutes were approved.

New Business: Anthony Flood, Senior Director of Food & Ingredient Safety at IFIC, presented on the results of IFIC's survey on consumer perceptions of chemicals in food and food packaging. Of key importance to the PDG was the existence of a significant number of consumers concerned about packaging materials and that microplastics are now the second largest food safety concern after pathogens.

Dr. Eva Almenar, a Professor at the School of Packaging at Michigan State University, presented on the current landscape of sustainable food packaging materials, comparisons of the degradation profiles of different materials, the development of antimicrobial derivatives of sustainable materials, and environmentally friendly ethanol emitting materials.

The attendees were asked to raise some topics for the PDG to work on were discussed. These included Food Contact Substance Notifications, and addressing consumer perceptions

The group moved to a closer group discussion format, where additional topics were discussed. The need for sharing best practices and standardizing methods for assessing migration and safety in packaging materials was raised, with a collaboration with the assessment and auditing PDG proposed. Writing an academic or white paper on the current methods for assessment and the move towards standardization was proposed. Collaborating with the education and training PDG was also proposed, for this and for other topics where packaging is not currently being addressed in training. For the regulatory side, the changing regulatory environments in California and in Europe with respect to packaging were brought up, with the potential for a webinar to start the discussion sooner than the next meeting. Also raised was a reminder to propose for IAFP events in Europe and Latin America. A collaboration with the food fraud PDG was raised for the potential for fraudulent recycled packaging. There was also the idea of getting representation for the Food Packaging PDG on other PDG's roundtable proposals. A collaboration with the Food Chemical Hazards and Food Allergy PDG or the Food Hygiene and Sanitation PDG was proposed to put together a roundtable on

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contamination issues in food packaging. The lack of research to confirm assumptions about migration characteristics in recycled materials, and the lack of general education regarding how food packaging relates to food safety more broadly, were both raised. An intersection with acid and acidified foods was relayed by one attendee.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Recommend appointment of Niam Abeysiriwardena as the new Chairperson of the Food Packaging PDG, beginning at the 2026 Annual Meeting, for a two-year term.

Next Meeting Date: Sunday, July 18, 2027, Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: 2:30 p.m.

Chairperson Name: Niam Abeysiriwardena.

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 a.m.

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 a.m.) 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 p.m.) 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 p.m.) 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

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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 symposia, 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.

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, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:00 a.m.

Chairperson Name: Jose Guerrero.

Food Safety Culture PDG

Names of Attendees: Tia Glave (Chair), Andrea Griffiths (Vice Chair), Karla Acosta, Adejare Adegbuyi, Leili Afsah-Hejri, Shahram Ajamian, Sam Alcaine, Sabina Alexander, Adriana Alfaro, Nonyelum Anumba, Charles Bency Appolon, Lauane Araujo, Vera Arthur, Samir Assar, Takiyah Ball, Bright Bansah, Richelle Beverly, Zac Boone, Chad Boushee, Victoria Burgess, Jack Burnett, Marivi Carrera, Jelf Celestin, Han Chen, Vanessa Coffman, Taylor Coho, Ashley Collins, Aneta Cop, Deanna Copeland, Paola Corea Ventura, Martin Cutler, Lyndsey Cypriano, Diogo da Cunha, Angela Delk, Sabahnur Demirci, Brenna DeRocili, Darin Detwiler, Melanie Downs,

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Jodi DuVall-Robertson, Bertrand Emond, Vanessa Fernandes, Amanda Fernandes, Julia Ferrell, Melanie Firestone, Mark Flanagan, Elise Forward, Neal Fredrickson, Donna Garren, Ariel Garsow, Fanny Gozzi, Jose Guerrero, Jennifer Harrington, Jean-Paul Hategekimana, Matt Hudkins, Sharon Humphries, Indu Aashritha Idumalla, Farnaz Izadi, Mitchel Jackson, Larry Kohl, Sarah Kozak-Weaver, Bobby Krishna, Julie Kuruc, Jason Lafontaine, Mark Lebednick, Tatiana Lorca, Briana Lorenzo, Morgan Madison, Gary Maloncon, Eric Martin, Anne-Marie Masella, Kara Mikkelson, Benjamin Miller, Miranda Mirosa, Paul Mitchell, Amelia Navarre, Adeniyi Odugbemi, Samet Ozturk, Adriana Paes, Bhavini Patel, Brian Perry, Timothy Pruitt, Narindra Randriamiarintsoa, Dheeraj Reddy, Suyapa Rojas, Victoria Romano, Lisa Ross, Michael Rybolt, Gaganpreet Saini, Kristin Sanders, Marsha Sayre, Dina Scott, Mistelle Signor, Amanda Slate, Michelle Stedman, Rick Stokes, Autumn Stoll, Lauryn Strong, Ujjwol Subedi, Janiah Thomas, Nilsson Toro, Manuel Trevino, Chelsea Tyus, Adebimpe Vaughan, Bonnie Waldemarson, Stephen Walker, Jason Wan, Dina Weston, Jason White, Vanessa Whitmore, Gary Wills, Kristen Winnett, Laís Zanin, Giddy Zipori.

Total Number of Attendees: 110.

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

Minutes Recording Secretary: Andrea Griffiths.

Old Business: Tia Glave reviewed symposia/roundtables of accepted 2026 annual meeting. She also reviewed the 2025–2026 webinars, the Executive Board Update, and the Student PDG updates.

New Business: Tia reviewed the Attain Better Culture Toolkit Working Group and asked members email her or the co-chair, Andrea Griffiths, if they are interested in joining. She also encouraged members to host a webinar. She covered the next IAFP Annual Meeting details and let the members know to look out for a PDG meeting in August or September to discuss submissions. The PDG will also look to nominate a Vice Chair in the Spring 2027.

She then introduced the three speakers for the educational topic: Practical Advice for Building a Sustainable Food Safety Culture – Bertrand Emond, Ambassador & Culture Excellence Lead, Campden BRI; Julia Ferrell, Director of Food Security & Regulatory Compliance, Baystate Milling Co.; Chelsea Tyrus Ph.D, Quality Director, Baily International Foods. The group then went into breakout groups to discuss other practical ways to sustain a food safety culture.

Recommendations to the Executive Board: none

Next Meeting Date: IAFP 2027 July 18–21 Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: 2:30 p.m., Sunday July 36, 2026.

Chairperson Name: Tia Glave.

Food Safety Education

Name of Attendees: NA

Meeting Called to Order: Sunday, July 26, 2026, 8:32 a.m.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Andrea Cerrato.

The Chair, Dr. Ellen Shumaker, welcomed everyone and began with introductions from the attendees. Betty Feng was introduced as the incoming Chair of the Food Safety Education PDG. Dr. Shumaker reviewed the IAFP antitrust guidelines and the meeting agenda.

Old Business: The 2025 PDG meeting minutes were approved by a motion from Jennifer and a second from Wendy White.

New Business: Wendy White, IAFP Executive Board Representative, welcomed attendees and provided updates from the Executive Board, including record conference attendance, opportunities to become involved through volunteer committees, the importance of submitting high quality symposium proposals, reminders about the IAFP Europe 2027 meeting, and member resources such as the conference app, quiet room, affiliate organizations, and IAFP communications.

Andrea Cerrato presented updates from the Student PDG, highlighting activities conducted throughout the year, including the Meet Your Favorite Scientist series, the Three-Minute Thesis Competition, the Food Safety Flash Competition, student representative opportunities, and upcoming student networking events. Members were encouraged to volunteer as speakers, judges, mentors, and proposal collaborators to further engage students in IAFP activities.

Dr. Ellen Shumaker announced the leadership transition, recognizing Dr. Betty Feng as the incoming Chair and requesting nominations for the Vice Chair position, with elections planned for the fall. The nomination deadline is September 30, 2026. Members also reviewed the increasing competitiveness of symposium and roundtable proposal submissions. This year, approximately 35% of proposals were accepted, a lower acceptance rate than in previous years, likely due to the increased number of submissions. Strategies to improve proposal acceptance were discussed, including collaboration among PDGs, the inclusion of international perspectives, student participation, diverse speakers, and emerging topics.

Vanessa Coffman from STOP Foodborne Illness shared information on food safety culture resources, mentorship programs, recall modernization efforts, *Cyclospora* education, and upcoming webinars. Brittany Saunier, Executive Director of the Partnership for Food Safety Education, discussed educator resources, needs assessments, newsletters, webinars, and the National Food Safety

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Education Month Day of Action. Tony Flood from IFIC presented updates on consumer research, educational resources, food safety communication efforts, and preliminary findings from the 2026 Food and Health Survey.

The remainder of the meeting focused on brainstorming potential symposiums, roundtables, webinars, and technical session topics for IAFP 2027. Suggested themes included food waste and food donation safety, recall modernization, food safety communication through social media, artificial intelligence in food safety education, digital education effectiveness, climate change, disaster preparedness, K-12 food safety education, and other emerging topics. Members emphasized the importance of beginning proposal development early and collaborating with other PDGs to strengthen submissions.

The meeting concluded with a reminder of the upcoming sessions scheduled during the conference.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Recommend Approval of Betty Feng as Chair of the PDG.

Next Meeting Day: Sunday, July 18, 2027. Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:57 a.m.

Chairperson Name: Dr. Ellen Shumaker.

Fruit and Vegetable Safety and Quality

Attendees: Govindaraj Dev Kumar (Chair), Adam Baker (Vice Chair), Precious Aduloju, Douglas Adjei Afrane, Leili Afsah-Hejri, Maryam Ajasa, Mohammad Alam, Adriana Alfaro, Ana Allende, Andrew Appiah Darkwah, Charles Bency Appolon, Samir Assar, Al Baroudi, Chad Becnel, Rebecca Bell, Gabriela Betancourt, Betsy Bihn, David Blomquist, Samantha Bolten, Smita Borkar, Kellie Burris, Kristin Butler, Michelle Carter, Chloe Castanon, Alex Castillo, Yuhuan Chen, Caroline Clark, Donna Clements, Kinsey Clishe, Mario Cobo, Nigel Cook, Vanessa Cranford, Kayla Crouch, Alexandre Da Silva, Michelle Danyluk, Angela Delk, Gayatri Dhulappana, Francisco Diez-Gonzalez, Diane Ducharme, Ashley Eisenbeiser, Ahmed El-Moghazy, Savana Everhart Nunn, Monijesu Fadamiro, Xuetong Fan, Christina Ferreira, Mark Florin, Tong-Jen Fu, Ellen Gabriel, Vikas Kumar Galipothu, Donna Garren, Charles Giambrone, Joseph Glavin, Juan Goncalves, Jose Guerrero, Sanjay Gummalla, Anushuya Guragain, Alan Gutierrez, Jack Guzewich, Rick Heiman, Evan Henke, Shauna Henley, Farnaz Izadi, Lee-Ann Jaykus, Tony Jin, Lynette Johnston, Ai Kataoka, Chyer Kim, Margaret Kirchner, Maria Klobongona, Larry Kohl, Jovana Kovacevic, Kento Koyama, Sarah Kozak-Weaver, Comfort Kwamikorkor, Sangmi Lee, Susan Leonard, Girvin Liggans, Paul Liu, Robert Lynch, Morgan Madison, Birata Mainali, Humberto Maldonado, Gary Maloncon, Justin McConaghy, Jennifer McEntire, Meredith Melendez, Courtney Mickiewicz, Marlee Mims, Karen Nájera Salcido, Mehran Niazi, Mmaduabuchi Okeh, Rocio Ortega, Monica Osorio-Barahona, Sipei Ouyang, Esther Palmer, Amy Parks, Jitu Patel, Akenio Patterson, Amanda Philyaw Perez, Suresh Pillai, Arenis Piñon, Alda Pires, Jenna Porter, Vasuki Ramakrishnan, Joanna Rothwell, Miriam Ruiz, Christopher Rupert, Arlette Shazer, Adrienne Shearer, Amy Siceloff, Jared Smith, Eric Stevens, Don Stoeckel, Stacy Stoltenberg, Laura Strawn, Lauryn Strong, Yuan Su, Sriya Sunil, Cassandra Suther, Irene Tchagou, Max Teplitski, Eric Tetteh, Janiah Thomas, Phillip Tocco, Francis Torko, Quang Tran, Grace Tung, Adriana Vanegas, Adebimpe Vaughan, Premsai Veeranki, Jeff Veesenmeyer, Gretchen Wall, Jason Wan, Rory Wang, Jason White, Jacquelina Woods, Jeffrey Xue, Caroline Yates, Kranti Yemmireddy, Christine Yu.

Number of Attendees: 138.

Meeting Called to Order: Sunday, July 26 2025, 3:00 p.m.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Precious Aduloju.

Old Business: Approved 2025 FVSQ PDG Meeting Minutes.

New Business: The PDG Vice Chair Adam Baker, introduced the new Student Liaison Officers (Precious Aduloju & Juan Gao). Precious Aduloju provided an update on student PDG activities and initiatives. The FVSQ PDG served as the primary sponsor of five symposia and a secondary sponsor of one roundtable at the 2026 IAFP Annual Meeting. A live poll was conducted to assess members' experience in food safety and quality, as well as their reasons for participating in the FVSQ PDG. Vice Chair Adam Baker called for nominations for an industry representative to serve as the next FVSQ PDG Vice Chair starting July 18, 2026.

Presentation updates were provided by Dr. Betsy Bihn on Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) activities, including PSA's objective of establishing a fellowship program in the Northeastern United States. Dr. Kristin Butler presented FDA Produce Safety updates, and Dr. Brooke Whitney provided an update on the CORE Network.

Following the presentations, members participated in a networking session and brainstormed ideas for symposia and roundtables for the 2027 IAFP Annual Meeting. A dot-voting exercise was conducted to identify the most preferred topics from each discussion group.

Recommendations: none.

Next Meeting Date: Sunday, July 18, Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: 4:30 p.m.

Chairperson: Govindaraj Dev Kumar.

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International Food Protection Issues

Attendees: Constanza Vergara (Chair), Alvin Lee (Vice Chair), Amelia Ball, Richa Bedi Navik, Les Bourquin, Jessica Burke, Erin Crowley, Sweta Deb, Nicola Dermer, Maura Di Martino, Bennett Dzandu, Jeffrey Farber, Amanda Fernandes, Elise Forward, Rashmi Gaikwad, Francisco Garces-Vega, Kelly Getty, Fabiana Guglielmone, Jean-Paul Hategekimana, Rachel Hazen, Andrea Hines, Ingrid Huntley, Indu Aashritha Idumalla, Ian Jenson, Monica Jiang, Rob Kooijmans, Bobby Krishna, Jeffrey LeJeune, Natalia Lopresti, Deon Mahoney, Yoshinori Mizoguchi, Rose Omari, Jennifer Quinlan, Christophe Quiring, Anne Rölfing, Jenny Scott, William Shaw, Aswathi Soni, Katherine Swanson, Magaly Toro, Rosalia Trias Mansilla, Laís Zanin, Xiaojing Zhou, Marcel Zwietering.

Meeting Called to Order: Sunday, July 26, 2026 at 3:04 p.m.

Introduction of attendees to the PDG meeting.

The meeting agenda was approved, the anti-trust guidelines were reviewed and announcements from the IAFP Board was conveyed to the members.

Objectives of the PDG and its current initiatives (Regulatory System Summaries) were explained and communicated to the members. The current state of IAFP 2026 meeting, the number of attendees (3100) and the sold out exhibit hall were communicated to the members. Also IAFP Europe will now be held on alternate years with the next meeting at Copenhagen, Denmark (28–30 April) in 2027. Proposals for symposia and roundtables are due 21 September 2026 and call for abstracts are due 19 October, 2026.

The IFPI PDG would like to thank the faculty, staff and students of LSU for their assistance at IAFP 2026.

Old Business: IAFP Executive Board approved the Vice Chair of IFPI PDG, Alvin Lee appointment.

On the recommendation of a process to carry forward sessions of international presenters not able to get visa approval for travel to the USA – The IAFP Board understands the frustration and uncertainty of visa applications application and suggest proposals to be resubmitted the following year to ensure relevance of the topic.

On the recommendation to the IAFP Executive Board to defer symposia and roundtable submission dates to a later date – The Board decide not to change the datelines.

New Business: The sessions sponsored or co-sponsored by IFPI PDG were highlighted and the PDG has a good number of sessions that were accepted. There were also good number of submissions that were not accepted and encouraged for resubmission or can be converted to webinar.

Nominations for Vice Chair of IFPI PDG to start during IAFP 2027 at Kansas City. Nominations considered from government or private sector so as to have balanced representation. However, all nominations are accepted.

Introduction of Student Liaison – Rashmi Gaikwad, Kansas State University.

Dr. Erin Crowley, Neogen, provided updates on the Regulatory Systems Summaries (RSS) Working Group. Dr. Crowley went through the background of how the initiative came out and the need to highlight the food safety and regulatory policies of various countries. This has been the collaborative work of the PDG members. One of the first objective is the submission of the first RSS group (USA, Canada and Mexico) to be published in FPT, second one will be South America, and Asia and Oceania to round up 2026 publication. In 2027, the RSS Working Group will focus on Africa, EU and UK.

One of the objective of the RSS Working Group is to have a depository for future reference and use by IAFP Members.

The PDG intends to host webinars (topics TBD) and including RSS and interested members are encouraged to submit topics and join in the effort. Once RSS is completed, the PDG will need to consider how updates will be implemented.

Dr. Quincy Lissaur presented an invited discussion topic on "The future approach of Food Safety to Support Global Trade, Food Security and Sustainability. Provided background of SSAFE and its mission.

Update of FAO/JEMRA activities and their work to support food safety and food security was provided by Dr. Jeff Lejune. Also antimicrobial resistant bacteria was recently published in JFP (vol. 89, Sept 2026, 100857). https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0362028X26001626

Ideas for 2027 Program Submission due 29 September 2026 (Symposia and Roundtables) and abstracts due 10 January 2027.

September 2026 meeting to have discussion on webinars and PDG meeting.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

Rephrase PDG previous second recommendation –

- In relation to the participation of attendees from other non-U.S. countries and who do not have visa waiver facilitation, the board could explore ways to help these people in the process, either through a letter that authorizes their participation as an speaker in IAFP, or taking the proposals of these people in their evaluation as a priority so that if they are accepted they have more time to do the visa processes. There are cases of countries where not only is the process long, but the application for a visa interview can take months to schedule and then go through the process.

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Next Meeting Date: Sunday, 18 July 2027, Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: 4:40 p.m.

Chairperson Name: Constanza Vergara.

Vice Chairperson Name: Alvin Lee.

Low-Water Activity Foods

Names of Attendees: Ariel Buehler (Chair), Ren Yang (Vice Chair), Jennifer Acuff, Sam Alcaine, John Allan, Avelino Alvarez-Ordóñez, Vera Arthur, Jakob Baker, Suhan Bheemaiah Balyatanda, Sherry Bansal, Larry Beuchat, Yannick Bichot, Ledon Black, Neil Bogart, Chad Boushee, Alana Bryant, Erdogan Ceylan, Alicia (Bairu) Chen, Han Chen, Aneta Cop, Paola Corea Ventura, Toni de Senna, Vaidehi Dendukuri, Natali Diaz-Yepes, Shivaprasad Doddabematti Prakash, Emily Durbin, Jodi DuVall-Robertson, Melanie Fabio, Daniel Fajardo, Natoavina Faliarizao, Megan Fay, Dennis Florentino, Rahul Fnu, Elise Forward, Zhujun (Abby) Gao, Beilei Ge, Jaber Ghorbani, Michele Gorman, Elizabeth Grasso-Kelley, Ben Graves, Roberto Guzman, Linda Harris, Minghao He, Ian Hildebrandt, Kristen Hunt, Keith Ito, Sheetal Jha, Carris Yatong Jiang, Sarah Jones, Veeramani Karuppuchamy, Pawan Khanal, Karuna Kharel, Martha Kimber, Katie King, Elma Kontor-Manu, Jasna Kovac, Girvin Liggans, Rob Limburn, Xiyang Liu, Max Lorcheim, Kevin Lorcheim, Leticia Mallmann, Bradley Marks, Ryan Maus, Ellie Meeks, LaDarius Millen, Molly Mills, Alexis Minnich, Nathan Mirdamadi, Razieh Sadat Mirmahdi, Yoshinori Mizoguchi, Andy Mollo, Jaqueline Moraes, Nadia Narine, James Nasella, Chantal Nde, Ruth Oni, Mike O'Rourke, Samet Ozturk, Kavita Patil, Brian Perry, Laurie Post, Grishma Prabhukhot, Timothy Pruitt, Raghu Ramaswamy, Narindra Randriamiarintsoa, David Rasmussen, Juliany Rivera Calo, Jena Roberts, Suyapa Rojas, Samantha Roldan Perez, Evan Rosen, Gaganpreet Saini, Joelle Salazar, Nirmal Thirunavookarasu Sankaranarayanan, Sofia Santillana Farakos, Michele Sayles, Ahnna Schulte, Xue Sha, Manoj Shah, Neelam Sharma, Arlette Shazer, Anru Shen, Dikshya Shilpakar, Pratiksha Shrestha, Amarat Simonne, David Singer, Amanda Slate, Bill Soest, Hailey Spray, Diana Stewart, Rico Suhalim, Aparna Tatavarthy, Abdullatif Tay, Leslie Thompson-Strehlow, Jodie Ulaszek, Ron Van Santen, Purnendu Vasavada, Stephen Walker, Benjamin Warren, Michael Wernigk, Anett Winkler, Aixia Xu, Romy Yu, Yang Zhai, Xiaojing Zhou.

Meeting Called to Order: Sunday, July 26, 2026, 3:02 p.m.

Minutes Recording Secretary & Student Liaison: Ren Yang & Dikshya Shilpakar.

Old Business: The 2025 meeting minutes were reviewed. The minutes were approved with no objections following a motion and a second.

New Business: Former PDG Chair Erdogan Ceylan introduced the incoming Chairperson, Ariel Buehler, and Vice Chairperson, Ren Yang. Dr. Purnendu C. Vasavada, Professor of Food Science at the University of Wisconsin River Falls, delivered a presentation titled "Myths and Misconceptions About Low-Water Activity Foods." The presentation emphasized that low water activity and low moisture foods are not identical. Dr. Vasavada debunked common safety myths, noting that dry goods are not inherently sterile and that pathogens like *Salmonella, E. coli,* and *Cronobacter* can survive in dry processing environments for months or years. Contamination factors discussed included ingredients, improper drying, contaminated processing equipment, and cross-contamination. Ariel Buehler reviewed the PDG's progress, highlighting a 55 to 60 percent acceptance rate with six symposia accepted for the current year. Accepted symposia topics cover smarter validation strategies, dry ingredients, natural mold inhibition, *Salmonella* in tahini, and dry sanitation solutions. The group hosted three pre-meeting workshops this year, including a dry cleaning workshop led by Neil Bogart and a session on validation and pathogen reduction processes. Jacob, representing Abby Snyder's group, announced an upcoming Dry Sanitation Research Advisory Council conference scheduled for October 26th and 27th in Beloit, Wisconsin. Ariel Buehler noted that September 29th is the deadline for next year's proposal submissions.

Breakout Group Discussion Results:

Topic 1, Infant Formula: The group discussed the lack of data for the presence of C. botulinum spores in infant formula. They also covered the use of indicators and raw materials in a round table format. **Topic 2, Ingredient Control:** Participants explored ways to reduce the impact of large recalls of dry ingredients. Suggested methods included lot size reduction, industry-wide surveillance testing, partnership with the FDA on risk assessments, and industry-wide validation of kill steps. The discussion also addressed cereulide toxin formation in infant formula and dietary supplements. Methods, policy, risk assessment, and applied methods were noted as a gray area. **Topic 3, Dry Cleaning and Sanitation:** The conversation focused on the validation of sanitation methods in the plant, surrogates for low moisture foods, and indicators. **Topic 4, Digital Tools:** The group discussed data collection for humidity in the environment and the use of real-time sensors to predict issues.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Recommend Ren Yang as Vice Chair for this PDG.

Next Meeting Date: Sunday, July 18, 2027, Kansas City, MO.

Chairperson Name: Ariel Buehler.

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Meat and Poultry Safety and Quality

Names of Attendees: Alexandra Calle (Chair),Jose Emilio Esteban (Vice Chair), Seth Adesope, Selim Alarape, Mary Anne Amalaradjou, Ryan Arsenault, Cynthia Austin, Sherry Bansal, Eniola Betiku, Amy Bosco, Mick (Joseph) Bosilevac, Alex Brandt, Hannah Brown, Alana Bryant, Alexander Cheah, Mike Clark, Pamela Coleman, Ada Cowan, Ada Cowan, Maria Dolores (Lola) Crespo, Mary-Grace Danao, Dinithi De Silva, Prantho Malakar Dipta, Maria Duarte, Patrick Fach, Casey Gallimore, Brandon Gartman, Halle Greenbaum, Alison Griffino, Upasana Hariram, Vannith Hay, John Jarosh, Annie Iniya John Benedict Ashok, Jace Jordan, Patrick Kachelmeier, Jens Kjaer, Chi-An Lee, Stefhanie Loaiza, Jeff Lucas, Tyson Mauser, KatieRose McCullough, Patrick Mies, Razieh Sadat Mirmahdi, Diana Mora-Lee, Amit Morey, David Mugabo, Yhuliana Nino Fuerte, Tomi Obe, Gabriela Oliva Coba, Amin Omairi Nasser, Aryany Pena Gomez, Sophie Pierre, Bill Potter, Clay Quassa, Justin Ransom, Dheeraj Reddy, Marco Reina, Maria Salazar, Anru Shen, Subash Shrestha, Robbie Smith, Rick Stokes, Kassim Sulleyman, Jaya Sundaram, Ana Tejeda, Nilsson Toro, Afrina Akter Turna, Adebimpe Vaughan, Morgan Welch, Jason White, Vanessa Whitmore, Meri Beth Wojtaszek, Jamie Woodside, Season Xie.

Total Number of Attendees: 72.

Meeting Called to Order: Sunday, July 26, 2026, 3:00 p.m.

Minutes Recording Secretaries: Maria Camila Duarte and Maria Jose Salazar.

Old Business: Dr. Alexandra Calle, Chair of the Meat and Poultry PDG, called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees, reminding them to scan their badges to record attendance. The agenda, which had been posted earlier that morning, was reviewed by Dr. Calle, who noted that the meeting would include updates from USDA FSIS, an international food-safety presentation from the FAO, and a discussion of future symposium and webinar proposals. Dr. Calle also noted that although IAFP is an international organization, the Meat and Poultry PDG has historically focused primarily on U.S. regulatory topics, and that this year's agenda intentionally included a stronger international perspective in response to previous recommendations that the PDG provide greater international representation. No modifications to the agenda were proposed, and a motion to approve the agenda was made and seconded by Stevie Hretz; the agenda was approved as presented. The minutes from the previous year's meeting, which had been made available to members for review, were approved without corrections upon a motion made by Laura J. Garner and seconded by Amit Morey. Dr. Calle announced that this was her final year serving as PDG Chair, and that Dr. Emilio Esteban, the current Vice Chair and Chair-Elect, will assume the role of Chair during the following year; members were informed that nominations for the next Vice Chair would likely be requested in August or September. Two student liaisons, Camila Duarte and Maria Jose Salazar, both of Texas Tech University, were introduced to the group.

New Business: Dr. Esteban reviewed expectations for PDG activities and reminded attendees to follow IAFP policies, including avoiding conflicts of interest and inappropriate negotiations related to meeting programming and sponsorship. In the absence of an Executive Board member, Dr. Esteban shared several announcements: PDGs are encouraged to submit symposium proposals for upcoming IAFP meetings; the next IAFP European Symposium is expected to be held in April 2027 in Copenhagen, Denmark, with proposals due in October 2026; IAFP 2027 will be held in Kansas City, Missouri, with symposium and abstract deadlines following a timeline similar to previous years; and members were encouraged to develop internationally relevant topics and consider submitting proposals through the Meat and Poultry PDG.

Dr. Justin Ransom, Administrator of USDA FSIS, provided a regulatory update describing the agency's approximately 7,000 personnel supporting roughly 7,000 regulated establishments nationwide. He discussed FSIS's efforts to improve use of data within its Public Health Information System to support risk-based, insight-driven inspections, citing the agency's *Listeria* control efforts involving more than 120,000 ready-to-eat environment questionnaires as an example. Dr. Ransom described a pilot program using smart glasses to enable remote veterinary support for carcass disposition decisions, with an expanded rollout planned for the Denver District beginning around October 1, 2026, using approximately 150 pairs of glasses. He also described FSIS's exploration of camera-assisted inspection technologies to support inspectors in high-speed poultry and livestock establishments, emphasizing that such tools are intended to assist rather than replace inspectors, guided by principles of scientific evidence, transparency, credibility, and risk-based decision-making. Dr. Ransom further described a new national food safety training center under development in Urbandale, Iowa, in collaboration with Iowa State University and Drake University, intended to strengthen and standardize training for FSIS personnel. In response to audience questions, Dr. Ransom encouraged researchers and technology developers to engage with FSIS's chief information officer's office regarding new tools, and indicated that additional states are expected to join the Cooperative Interstate Shipment program based on state interest and readiness.

Dr. Jeffrey LeJeune, Food Safety Officer with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, provided an international food-safety update, describing FAO's approximately 15,000 personnel worldwide and its mission connected to

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Sustainable Development Goal 2 on ending hunger and improving food security. He outlined FAO's three pillars of food-safety work, namely scientific advice, capacity development, and foresight on emerging issues, and described FAO's role supporting Codex Alimentarius through joint scientific advisory work with the World Health Organization, including recent risk-assessment topics such as Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli, Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* control in poultry, foodborne viruses, and antimicrobial resistance. Dr. LeJeune also described FAO capacity-building initiatives, including food-safety projects with Indigenous Arctic communities and antimicrobial-resistance projects funded by the Republic of Korea, and noted opportunities for researchers to participate through expert calls, consultancies, or academic sabbaticals. In response to questions, Dr. LeJeune discussed how FAO addresses gaps in surveillance data from lower-resource countries by seeking diverse expert representation and tailoring recommendations to varying resource levels, described additional pathways for outside experts to collaborate with FAO beyond its six standing scientific advisory groups, and noted that two-tier food-safety systems, in which export products are held to different standards than domestic products, remain a significant international challenge.

Dr. Calle opened the floor for proposals for IAFP 2027 symposia, webinars, and future PDG presentations, noting that approximately one-third of submitted symposium proposals had been accepted during the previous cycle. Suggested topics included an international symposium on *Salmonella* Enteritidis outbreak response in poultry, proposed by a representative from New Zealand Food Safety; a session on the use of artificial intelligence, machine learning, imaging systems, and large language models in meat and poultry inspection and processing; a possible biomonitoring symposium or webinar addressing environmental-monitoring data and predictive microbiology; the inclusion of brief student presentations based on accepted abstracts, modeled on a format used by another PDG; and a session to help the poultry industry respond to anticipated changes in FSIS's approach to Salmonella control, with an FSIS representative confirming that additional announcements on this topic were expected during the conference.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Explore formal collaboration with related professional organizations, including those focused on poultry science, meat science, and reciprocal meat conferences, with the goal of expanding IAFP's professional network, increasing participation by experts in related food-safety and processing fields, developing joint sessions or collaborative programming, and reducing duplication while strengthening interdisciplinary engagement.

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

Meeting Adjourned: 4:46 p.m.

Chairperson Name: Dr. Alexandra Calle.

Modelling and Risk Analysis

Attendees: Heidy den Besten (Chair), VM Balasubramaniam (Vice Chair), Niam Abeysiriwardena, Douglas Adjei Afrane, Leili Afsah-Hejri, Hany Anany, Lauane Araujo, Ryan Arsenault, Vera Arthur, Charles Bakin, VM Balasubramaniam, Adriana Belas, Andrzej Benkowski, Aditi Bhadauria, Rachel Binet, Micah Black, Aaron Bodie, Samantha Bolten, Amy Bosco, David Bosco, Mick (Joseph) Bosilevac, Alex Brandt, Brett Burkard, Astrid Cariou, Catharine Carlin, Michelle Carter, Mark Carter, Erdogan Ceylan, Ines Chambino, Alexander Cheah, Yuhuan Chen, Mike Clark, Pamela Coleman, Nigel Cook, Chris Crowe, Alvaro De Bonis, Antonio De Jesus Torres, Suresh Devatkal, Augustine Dinovo, Prantho Malakar Dipta, Melanie Downs, Erin Dreyling, Mariem Ellouze, Jose Emilio Esteban, Natoavina Faliarizao, Xuetong Fan, Peyman Fatemi, Rahul Fnu, Nicholas Fougere, Mario Gadanho, Zhujun (Abby) Gao, Ariel Garsow, Brandon Gartman, Jaber Ghorbani, Rusty Gildner, Eduardo Gutierrez Rodriguez, Lauren Hamilton, Jon Hammond, Kailyn Hanke, Minghao He, Ian Hildebrandt, Brittany Holmes, Laura Howard, Kristen Hunt, Keith Ito, Farnaz Izadi, Melisa Jaramillo Zapata, John Jarosh, Lee-Ann Jaykus, Megan Jensen, Craig Jewell, Suzanne Jordan, YeonJin Jung, Veronica Kays, Leonie Kemmerling, Sébastien Keromnes, Sharlanda Khosravi, Myungji Kim, Jens Kjaer, Maria Klobongona, Jeffrey Kornacki, Shige Koseki, Shanmukh Kottapalli, Kento Koyama, Kunihiro Kubota, Gillian Kuehnle, Quynh Le, Nadia Le Den, Lorenzo Lee, David Legan, Xiang Li, Jingqiu Liao, Xiyang Liu, John LoPorto, Dave Luedeke, Bradley Marks, Nicole Martin, Ryan Maus, Karen McWilliams, Rodrigo Mendoza, Razieh Sadat Mirmahdi, Naim Montazeri, Diana Mora-Lee, Paul Morin, Nikos Natsaridis, Ramin Nemati, Nicolas Nguyen Van Long, Rejoice Nyarku, Amin Omairi Nasser, Andrew Stiven Ortiz Balsero, Georgios Papageorgiou, Mehul Patel, Sophie Pierre, Karen Pietrzen, Alda Pires, Aytan Pirverdiyeva, Laurie Post, Christophe Quiring, Narindra Randriamiarintsoa, Marco Reina, Marianna Rhatigan, Amber Richards, Anne Rölfing, Hilal Samut, Kristin Sanders, Nirmal Thirunavookarasu Sankaranarayanan, Annette Sansom, Sofia Santillana Farakos, Buddhi Sapkota, Roger Schaller, Kristin Schill, Anna Schumann, Nikki Shariat, Arlette Shazer, Katherine Sierra, Panos Skandamis, Daniel Smieszek, Robbie Smith, Aswathi Soni, Brad Stawick, Stacy Stoltenberg, Irshad Sulaiman, Vianca Tashiguano, Nikki Taylor, Christopher Thomas, Leslie Thompson-Strehlow, Evangelia Tsara, Alex Tudor, Erica Turley, Jeff Veesenmeyer, Tushar Verma, Brent Wallen, Yiqing Wang, Surabhi Wason, Morgan Welch, Dina Weston, Weifan Wu, Season Xie, Shuang Yu, Nuradeen Yusuf, Justin Zangl, Don Zink, Anthony Zoropogui, Marcel Zwietering.

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Number of Attendees: 162.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Nirmal Thirunavookarasu Sankaranarayanan, Student PDG Liaison.

Meeting Called to Order: 8:30 a.m. CDT on Sunday, July 26, 2026.

Dr. den Besten read the Antitrust Policy, emphasizing that PDG members must adhere to guidelines prohibiting discussions on trade secrets, price fixing, and related topics.

Welcome and Agenda: Dr. den Besten opened the meeting with a welcome message and provided an overview of the meeting agenda. Dr. den Besten presented PDG leadership updates.

Old Business:

Approval of Minutes: Dr. V.M. "Bala" Balasubramaniam moved to adopt the 2025 PDG meeting minutes as published on the IAFP website. The motion was seconded by Mr. Keith Ito and unanimously approved.

Achievements: The PDG had a 43% acceptance rate for sponsored proposals (including symposia, roundtables, workshops, and webinars) submitted to IAFP. Of the 23 proposals submitted, 10 were accepted. The acceptance rate increased from 35% in 2025 to 43% and Dr. den Besten applauded the efforts of the members for this success.

New Business:

Leadership Changes: Dr. Abdullatif Tay's term as Chair ended in 2026. The past vice chair, Dr. Heidy den Besten was named the incoming Chair of the PDG. Dr. Bala was elected as the vice chair of the PDG.

Mission Statement Update: Proposal to delete 'microbial' from the mission to underline the general scope of the PDF. Keeping predictive modeling (PM) in the new proposed mission statement was approved. The motion was proposed by Dr. Tay and seconded by Dr. Ellouze.

Important Dates and Deadlines: Proposal submissions for the 2027 IAFP Meeting in Kansas City are due September 29, 2026, and final speaker information are due January 12, 2027. Dr. den Besten emphasized that members should also target webinar submissions that are less stringent on timelines, have a wider reach, and can strengthen PDG proposal quality and submission success rates.

Journal Opportunity: Dr. den Besten highlighted that the impact factor of the *Journal of Food Protection (JFP)* has increased significantly and encouraged the members to publish invited review articles in the journal.

Updates from Outside the MRA PDG:

ICPMF Update: Dr. Shige Koseki, Chair of ICPMF, provided updates on the activities of ICPMF. ICPMF 14 will be held in June 23–25, Shanghai 2027, and further details can be found on the official website. ICPMF had two newly elected board members Dr. Coroller and Dr. Skandamis. Shige concluded by encouraging PDG members to submit and engage in upcoming ICPMF 14 conference.

ISO Cardinal Parameters:

Dr. Mariem Ellouze gave a talk on the new ISO standard 23691:2026. She mentioned about the purpose of the new standards and the steps involved in the development. She also emphasized on the need for standardization and acknowledged the collaborators involved in development of the new ISO standard.

Student PDG Updates: Nirmal Thirunavookarasu Sankaranarayanan, a PhD candidate from Tennessee State University, presented updates on the student PDG's 2025–26 activities and opportunities for members to engage with and collaborate with the student PDG.

Student Awards: Dr. Den Besten thanked the reviewers for selecting the best abstracts and presented student abstract awards to the first-place winner, Leonie Kemmerling, and the second-place winner, Yuan Su. Certificates were awarded to both recipients. Dr. Den Besten recognized and welcomed all the new members to the PDG.

Guest Speaker: Dr. Kento Koyama, presented a technical talk on Machine learning vs. Mathematical models and reviewed the transition from traditional deterministic growth models, such as the Baranyi primary model, toward modern machine learning approaches. It was highlighted that machine learning methods, including Support Vector Regression (SVR), Extremely Randomized Trees (ETR), and Gaussian Process Regression (GPR), can accurately predict *Escherichia coli* O157 growth without requiring predefined primary and secondary model structures. The presentation then shifted to stochastic aspects of bacterial growth. It was emphasized that microbial growth is inherently variable. The presentation explained that these sources of variability influence both the number of cells observed at a given time and the time required for a population to reach a specific concentration. Mathematical representations using Poisson and negative binomial probability distributions, were presented as ways for capturing this variability, particularly for small bacterial populations. The presentation concluded that integrating **stochastic components** with machine learning provides a more realistic representation of bacterial population behavior than deterministic models alone. By incorporating the omics, metabolomics or the spectral data into the machine learning models in the future can even enhance the predictive behavior.

Future Proposals for 2027 IAFP Symposia, Roundtables, Webinars, and Workshops (Group Session): An extensive discussion on proposals for the 2027 annual meeting was conducted by dividing

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the members into three groups by category: predictive modeling, risk assessment, risk communication and management. The groups discussed future topics for 30 minutes, and the facilitator for each group reported a summary of the discussion and potential ideas. These are captured in the addendum.

Addendum: Future proposals.

Predictive Modelling: Dr. Ellouze mentioned that webinars on microbial risk ranking in low moisture dry matrices and microbial inactivation and predictive tool application would be conducted by Dr. Den Besten. Dr. Tay and Dr. Ian would work on modeling of microbial inactivation in low moisture foods. Dr. Skandamis will focus on a webinar or symposium on different ways or approaches of modelling and further can be converted to a review paper.

Risk Assessment: Dr. Zwietering listed the potential topics which were discussed: Surrogate selection for noroviruses and viable non cultivable cells will be led by Dr. Soni. The data gathering standardization of meta data and data quality will be led by Dr. Liao. Dr. Chen will lead communication for risk assessment and intervention strategies.

Risk Communication and Management: Dr. Ariel highlighted the important points in discussion and mentioned that she will lead a public health crisis on sodium consumption and cardiovascular diseases and about the consumer acceptance and preference. Review of the available food safety tools and designing a model for user lead by Dr. Randriamiarintsao and Dr. Klobongona.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Rotation of timing of the PDG meetings facilitating increased number of attendees.

Next Meeting Date: July 18, 2027, Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:10 a.m.

Chairperson: Dr. Heidy Den Besten.

Physical Hazards and Foreign Materials

Names of Attendees: Sandy Adams Hildebrand, Adejare Adegbuyi, Justin Ai, Amberlyn Akin, Nonyelum Anumba, April Bishop, Ledon Black, Aaron Cadotte, Troy Corley, Irina Craft, Casey Gallimore, Victory Igwe, Amanda Jones, Kunihiro Kubota, Craig Lorei, Yuqian Lou, Christopher McNamara, Swapnika Medikonda, Gerald Miller, Jacob Mitmoen, Paola Moncada, Jamie Mueller, Adeniyi Odugbemi, Monica Pava-Ripoll, Brian Perry, Keith Rhoades, Janet Rowat Kraiss, Paula Schwarz, Tom Sidebottom, Ryan Simmons, Ivy Smith, Sarah Smith-Simpson, Laurie Steed, Rick Stokes, Shreya Talan, Wladir Valderrama Barandiaran, Tom Weaver, Jason White, Romy Yu.

Total Number of Attendees: 38.

Meeting Called to Order: Sunday, July 26, 2026, at 3:00 p.m.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Swapnika Medikonda, Shreya Talan.

Old Business: The previous year's meeting minutes were approved. Five abstracts were submitted (4 RT and 1 short symposium) for the 2026 meeting. Initially none were accepted for the second round. One RT proposal was accepted in collaboration with Retail and Foodservice PDG after revision later. No feedback was received after multiple requests. One webinar planned from last year was given in June! The second is scheduled for August.

The meeting also featured a guest presentation by Keith Rhoades, Intertek.

New Business: The committee discussed recruiting a secretary – all members voted yes. We will proceed with an election. The group agreed to have a secretary for the duration of 1 year with the opportunity to transition to Vice Chair.

Continued efforts will focus on increasing visibility and participation within the PDG. The group agreed we do not have the recognition that microbiology and chemical safety are given.

Multiple ideas for future symposia and round tables were suggested for the 2026–2027 cycle: Limited availability of standardized physical hazard data. Difficulty in establishing regulations due to insufficient industry-wide data. Need for stronger scientific justification when incorporating physical hazards into food safety plans. Physical hazard regulations remain an evolving area requiring additional research and data collection. Existing regulatory thresholds are largely based on industry data and available evidence. Therefore, there is a need for industry to set acceptable thresholds. Utilizing hygienic design for equipment to reduce physical hazards. Linking the concepts of food safety plans, HACCP, and hazard analysis to the lack of physical hazard regulations. The topic of physical hazards through a medical lens will be revisited by Amanda Jones. The impact on cost due to physical hazards, including rework, inspection, audits, etc. Contacting medical and veterinary students to discuss the impact of physical hazards from a different perspective. The marketplace could be utilized. Data modelling and the use of AI were major topics of discussion. Aaron volunteered to take the lead on this. The Food Laws PDG can be a co-sponsor for a symposium. Melanie agreed to have a discussion with the PDG and provide more information.

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Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Consider that within Food Safety there are 3 hazards recognized: Microbiological, Chemical, and Physical. Please recognize the Physical.
2. Communication is key – help us promote PDGs and share what a "marketplace" is? There is a lot of confusion there. Also, can there be a feature in *IAFP Connect* to send meeting invites for virtual meetings in between the annual meeting.

Next Meeting Date: Sunday, July 18, 2026, Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: 4:30 p.m.

Chairperson Name: Sarah Smith-Simpson.

Plant-Based and Alternative Products Quality and Food Safety

Names of Attendees: Lily Yang (Chair), Deepa Thiagarajan (Vice Chair), Hiroki Abe, Nonyelum Anumba, VM Balasubramaniam, Nate Banner, Adriana Belas, April Bishop, Hanyu Chen, Bhaswati Chowdhury, Toni de Senna, Heidy den Besten, Mary Donaldson, Martin Duplessis, Natoavina Faliarizao, Razieh Farzad, Tong-Jen Fu, Jossie Garthoff, Steven Gendel, Ingrid Huntley, Chyer Kim, Martha Kimber, Christian Kreuter, Sanjay Kumar, Markus Lacorn, Chi-An Lee, Xiang Li, Ingrid Lima, Ana Lima, Yinqing Ma, Richard Magney, Leticia Mallmann, Alejandro Mazzotta, Tomas Moita, Amit Morey, Kristi Muldoon Jacobs, Mike O'Rourke, Sipei Ouyang, Bhavini Patel, Monica Pava-Ripoll, Aaron Pleitner, Brett Podoski, Ruby Ragland, Victor Reyna, Lisa Ross, Mansour Samadpour, Brian Schaneberg, Aditya Sharma, Arlette Shazer, Adrienne Shearer, Ellen Shumaker, Panos Skandamis, Catarina Sousa, Lauryn Strong, Janiah Thomas, Evangelia Tsara, Ron Van Santen, Irit Weiser, Xinran Xu, Marcel Zwietering.

Total Number of Attendees: 59.

Meeting Called to Order: Sunday, July 26, 2026, 10:30 a.m.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Lily Yang, who welcomed participants and provided time for opening introductions. Attendees were reminded to download and sync the conference app, follow Robert's Rules of Order, use microphones for accessibility, and attend the New Member Information Session. Updates were provided on staying connected through IAFP Connect and weekly communications. The PDG mission statement and scope were displayed and reviewed. The minutes from the previous meeting, led by Aaron Pleitner, were reviewed and key topics highlighted. Lily Yang moved to approve the previous year's meeting minutes; the motion passed unanimously. The group then reviewed the current mission statement, discussing potential revisions regarding label claims, functionality, nutritional and health benefits, and clarification on cell-cultured products. Deepa Thiagarajan agreed to draft the updated scope for further discussion. Lily Yang moved to close old business, seconded by Deepa Thiagarajan and Steve Gendel, and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business: The group reviewed session proposal outcomes, noting a 42% acceptance rate for submitted proposals. Highlights were shared for upcoming poster sessions, technical talks, and specific roundtable and two-hour sessions (RT17, RT19, S62, S63, S64) covering ingredient sourcing, FSIS risk assessment, and regulatory oversight. Members with postponed sessions were encouraged to adapt them into webinars or resubmit for IAFP 2027 in Kansas City.

Requirements for webinar proposals and international listening/discussion sessions were presented. Following agenda updates, breakout discussions were conducted across four main thematic areas: Test Method Validation, Cell-Cultured Products, Microbial Risk and Hazards, and Chemical Risk and Hazards. Summary reports from the breakout groups emphasized developing webinars and roundtables on time-temperature controls, mathematical modeling, cumulative ingredient risks, heavy metals/mycotoxins, allergen risks, matrix extraction challenges in partnership with the ALM PDG, *Clostridium botulinum* risk assessment, and bridge building between academic education and industry practices.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Recommend the approval of Deepa Thiagarajan as Vice Chair of the Plant-Based and Alternative Products Quality and Food Safety PDG.
2. Recommend that IAFP explore ways to promote information and research updates from student members across IAFP communication channels.
3. Recommend considering starting the official IAFP Annual Meeting conference program on Saturday (rather than Sunday) to ensure maximum attendance and participation in PDG meetings.

Next Meeting Date: Sunday, July 18, 2026, Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: 12:30 p.m.

Chairperson: Lily Yang.

Pre-Harvest Food Safety

Names of Attendees: Seth Adesope, Ana Allende, Charles Bakin, Rebecca Bell, Eniola Betiku, Aaron Bodie, Alex Brandt, Anna Brover, Kellie Burris, Emily Cason, Bhaswati Chowdhury, Prantho Malakar Dipta, Jodi DuVall-Robertson, Sanjit Fernandes, Christina Ferreira, Zhujun (Abby) Gao, Brandon Gartman, Eduardo Gutierrez

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Rodriguez, Keith Ito, Julie Kase, Jens Kjaer, Larry Kohl, Heath LaFevers, Megan Lee, Torey Looft, Christian Lozano Guzman, Ly Mai, Jennifer McEntire, Amie Minor-Richard, Karen Nájera Salcido, Mehran Niazi, Sergio Nieto Chávez, Sergio Nieto-Montenegro, Kathleen O'Donnell, Isabella Oliveira Tosta, Esther Palmer, Georgios Papageorgiou, Jitu Patel, Laurentina Pedroso, Nikki Shariat, Aditya Sharma, Arlette Shazer, Amy Siceloff, Jared Smith, Shabarinath Srikumar, Tyler Stephens, Diana Stewart, Don Stoeckel, Sriya Sunil, Luke Thevenet, Quang Tran, Pilar Truchado, Afrina Akter Turna, Adriana Vanegas, Premsai Veeranki, Tammy Walsky, Morgan Welch, Eric Wilhelmsen, Jeffrey Xue, Nuradeen Yusuf.

Total Number of Attendees: 59.

Meeting Called to Order: July 26, 2026, 8:31 a.m.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Alyssa Rosenbaum.

Old Business: Rafael Davila (Chair) reviewed the PDG's IAFP 2025 Annual Meeting Minutes, which were approved on July 26, 2026, 8:41 a.m.– First, Rafael Davila; Second, Received; No objections.

New Business: Rafael reviewed executive board updates for IAFP 2026. Notably, there are over 3,000 attendees, and the symposia/roundtable proposal acceptance rate was 33%. PDGs are encouraged to submit session ideas for IAFP Europe, and company/organizations sponsoring is available for IAFP's podcast. Alyssa Rosenbaum (Student Liaison) shared student PDG 2026 updates. Please contact the Student PDG chair, Aakankshya Dhakal (adhaka5@lsu.edu), for more information on becoming involved with the PDG's events.

Dr. Samoa Asigau, Senior Scientist, Scientific Affairs at bioMérieux, presented on EHEC Testing with PEC, followed by Dr. Ynes Ortega, Associate Professor at the University of Georgia, on *Cyclospora* in the Environment. The meeting was concluded with a panel discussion and Q&A, featuring both presenters, Drs. Asigau and Ortega, joined by Dr. Christina Ferreria, Vice President of Food Safety & Quality for the International Fresh Produce Association, on *Cyclospora* in the Pre-Harvest Environment.

Important deadlines for the IAFP 2027 Annual Meeting include September 29, 2026, 11:59 p.m. CT, for symposium, roundtable, and workshop proposals, and January 12, 2027, 11:59 p.m. CT, for technical and poster abstract submissions.

PDG members are encouraged to contact Rafael Davila (Chair) or Kate Burr (Vice Chair) for future topic ideas on webinars, symposia, roundtables, and workshops.

Recommendations to the Executive Board: none.

Next Meeting Date: July 18, 2027, Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: July 26, 2026, 10:00 a.m.

Chairperson Name: Rafael Davila.

Retail and Foodservice

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, Ibhee 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, Premsai 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).

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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 a.m. 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 and Foodservice PDG.
2. Confirm Vanessa Cranford as incoming Vice Chair of the Retail and Foodservice PDG.
3. Confirm Theresa Belcher as incoming Secretary of the Retail and Foodservice PDG.

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

Meeting Adjourned: 10:00 a.m.

Chairperson Name: Sarah Kozak-Weaver.

Sanitary Equipment and Facility Design

Names of Attendees: Jason White (Chair), Ronald Altman, Steve Arnold, Jakob Baker, Deanna Brown, Jack Burnett, CC Caban, Aneta Cop, Ada Cowan, Vikas Kumar Galipothu, Charles Giambrone, Josie Greve-Peterson, Dale Grinstead, Rick Heiman, John Holah, Megan Jensen, Sanghyup Jeong, Johana Lilian John Muthiah, Jace Jordan, Rob Kooijmans, Justin Larsen, Vanessa Lindstrom, Craig Lorei, Yuqian Lou, Anne-Marie Masella, Fabiola Miranda, Nathan Mirdamadi, Paul Mitchell, Mark Moorman, Nikos Natsaridis, Haley Oliver-Jischke, Aaron Patch, Brian Perry, Aytan Pirverdiyeva, Gale Prince, Timothy Pruitt, Joemel Quicho, David Rasmussen, Eric Schweitzer, Deb Smith, Kelly Stevens, Rick Stokes, Helen Taylor, Hein Timmerman, Wladir Valderrama Barandiaran, Adwy van den Berg, Premsai Veeranki, Tom Weaver, Pamela Wilger, Meri Beth Wojtaszek, Patrick Wouters.

Total Number of Attendees: 50.

Board/Staff: Helen Taylor.

Meeting Called to Order: Sunday, July 26, 2026, 8:31 a.m.

Jason white passed the motion and Josie Greve Peterson seconded the motion

Minutes Recording Secretary: Johana Lilian John Muthiah.

Old Business: Student PDG updates were given by Johana Muthiah and 2025 annual meeting surveys were discussed. The members who were involved in the 2026 webinars were appreciated. The motion to approve 2025 meeting minutes was started by Mary Beth Wojtaszek and seconded by Deb Smith.

New Business: Dale Grinstead started the motion for name change from sanitary to hygienic and Adwy van den Berg seconded the motion. Johana introduced the guest speaker, Kelly Stevens, who gave a talk on the topic: Evaluating Hygienic Design Priorities Using Risk Assessments. It was an interactive session and covered topics like equipment selection exercise, Prioritization between

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hazard severity and likelihood and financial impact, and AI tools available for hygienic design. This was followed by networking mixer where members got together in small groups and rotated among groups to discuss the topics which were displayed on the screen. Members were asked to review the criteria and discuss the topics for Symposium and Roundtable Sessions. Suggestions were also requested for the symposium organization from this PDG. The next PDG meeting is set to be on September 4th, 2026 at12:00 p.m. (CDT).

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

Recognize the name change from Sanitary Equipment and Facility Design PDG to Hygienic Equipment and Facility Design PDG.

Next Meeting Date: Sunday, July 18, Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:01 a.m.

Chairperson Name: Jason White.

Seafood Safety & Quality

Names of Attendees: Evelyn Watts (Chair), John Boyce (Vice Chair), Chad Becnel, Gabriela Betancourt, Alex Brandt, Hannah Brown, Kristin Butler, Alexandra Calle, Michael Ciaramella, Andrew Clarke, Ada Cowan, Razieh Farzad, Tanushree Barua Gupta, Rachel Hazen, Jessica Jones, Marlee Mims, Mehran Niazi, Katheryn Parraga-Escalante, Kayla Rivera, Prashant Singh, Aswathi Soni, Tori Stivers, Sarah Thomas, Adebimpe Vaughan, Evelyn Watts, Wendy White, Jacquelina Woods, Christine Yu, Shuang Yu, Bonnie Zhu.

Total Number of Attendees: 28.

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

Minutes Recording Secretary: Razieh Farzad.

Evelyn Watts started the meeting by welcoming everyone, new and old members, and thanking them for attending the Seafood Safety and Quality PDG. Evelyn introduced herself as the current PDG Chair, and John Boyce was introduced as the PDG Vice Chair. IAFP Executive Board announcements were given by Wendy White. John Boyce reviewed the Antitrust guidelines for everyone, followed by a brief introduction from every attendee.

Old Business: Evelyn Watts requested a motion to approve the 2025 meeting minutes. John Boyce made a motion; Sarah Thomas seconded the motion. The motion was accepted with all votes in favor and none against. Evelyn Watts reviewed the recommendations given to the Executive Board during the previous year: 1) Recommend the Board to accept John Boyce as incoming vice chair. *Board Response*: The Board approves the appointment. The PPG sponsored the webinar "Food Safety Culture at the Source: Leading Strong Practices in Primary Seafood Processing." A total of nine proposals were submitted, three were accepted. Evelyn encouraged to work on quality not quantity. She also recommends watching the Webinar How to Develop a Strong Symposium, Roundtable, Workshop, and Abstract Submission available through IAFP connect (How to Develop a Strong Symposium, Roundtable, Workshop, or Abstract Submission - Aug 18th, 2018 on Vimeo). Members were encouraged to attend the Seafood PDG Sessions: S5 - Surf & Turf Safety: Innovations in Dry-Aging Muscle Foods, S39 – All Hands On Deck: The Pivotal Role of Food and Agrifood Systems in the Global Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Pandemic, and S9 – From Risk to Regulation: FAO/WHO Scientific Advice on *Listeria monocytogenes* and Codex Applications.

New Business: Evelyn presented the 2026 Student PDG updates, encouraging attendees to get involved with the Student PDG through different activities that included Meet Your Favorite Scientist, 3-Minute Thesis Competition, Proposal submissions, Food Safety Flash Competition and inviting students to participate as student representatives.

Michael Ciaramella, Seafood Safety and Technology Specialist, New York Sea Grant, Seafood HACCP Alliance Director was the first guest speaker who presented about "Aquatic Foods Food Safety Training Updates".

Andrew Clarke, Senior Director, Quality Assurance, Loblaw Companies Limited was the second guest speaker who presented about "Beyond the Dock: How Loblaw Brings Safe, Trusted Seafood to Canadian Consumers."

Evelyn, and John led a brainstorming discussion on session proposals for the IAFP 2027 Annual Meeting. Multiple ideas were developed, and champions/points of contact were identified for numerous topics. Session proposals for the topics will be further developed and refined via email/virtual meetings before the submission deadline. Submissions are due September 29, 2026. Proposed PDG session topics include: (1) seaweed food safety, including food safety considerations when seaweed is used as a soil amendment; (2) protecting the U.S. seafood industry from products containing unapproved drug residues; (3) emerging pathogens of public health significance; (4) applications of artificial intelligence in food production, harvesting, processing, and food safety; (5) multidisciplinary approaches to seafood safety that integrate remote sensing, geospatial science, and hydrology for risk assessment. Several additional emerging topics are also being explored.

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Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. We would like to thank the Board for establishing the PDG schedule for the 2026 meeting. The schedule greatly benefited our members by reducing session conflicts and allowing them to participate in PDGs that had previously overlapped. We appreciate the effort to improve accessibility and engagement across the various professional development groups.

Next Meeting Date: July 18, 2027, Kansas City, MO.

Katheryn Parraga motioned to adjourn the meeting, John Boyce seconded.

Meeting Adjourned: 2:30 p.m.

Chairperson Name: Evelyn Watts.

Student Professional Development Group (SPDG)

Names of Attendees: Aakankshya Dhakal (Chair), Ujjwol Subedi (Vice Chair), Anna Acosta, Adejare Adegbuyi, Douglas Adjei Afrane, Adora Anthos, Charles Bency Appolon, Jyoti Aryal, Charles Bakin, Takiyah Ball, Cecil Barnett-Neefs, Shannon Bennett, Aditi Bhadauria, Swara Bhatt, Micah Black, Tejaswi Boyapati, Andrea Cerrato, Erdogan Ceylan, Ines Chambino, Ashley Chew, Bhaswati Chowdhury, Jillian Dalrymple, Andrew Armaan Das, Sweta Deb, Yihong Deng, Brenna DeRocili, Darin Detwiler, Prantho Malakar Dipta, Monijesu Fadamiro, Amanda Fernandes, Diego Fredes-García, Julia Fukuba, Alexandra Garlick, Jaber Ghorbani, Fanny Gozzi, Anushuya Guragain, Kailyn Hanke, Vannith Hay, Yihan He, Indu Aashritha Idumalla, Mitchel Jackson, Sheetal Jha, Carris Yatong Jiang, April Jimenez Artavia, Johana Lilian John Muthiah, Leonie Kemmerling, Pawan Khanal, Karuna Kharel, Kham Khatri, Arshpreet Kaur Khattra, Maria Klobongona, Veera Venkata Praveen Kosuri, Daniel Leiva, Ingrid Lima, Ivannova Lituma, Stefhanie Loaiza, Christian Lorenzo, Deb Madhuparna, Ly Mai, Gary Maloncon, Ngozi Manukaji, Marlee Mims, Tomas Moita, Diana Mora-Lee, David Mugabo, Ramin Nemati, Yhuliana Nino Fuerte, Mmaduabuchi Okeh, Andrew Stiven Ortiz Balsero, Sipei Ouyang, Akenio Patterson, Narindra Randriamiarintsoa, Dheeraj Reddy, Marco Reina, Kayla Rivera, Suyapa Rojas, Luis Salazar, Hilal Samut, Nirmal Thirunavookarasu Sankaranarayanan, Neelam Sharma, Manan Sharma, Dikshya Shilpakar, Pratiksha Shrestha, Katherine Sierra, Esmeralda Soto-Velez, Catarina Sousa, Lauryn Strong, Kassim Sulleyman, Vianca Tashiguano, Helen Taylor, Anjana Thankachan, Janiah Thomas, Bonnie Waldemarson, Yiqing Wang, Tom Weaver, Irit Weiser, Meri Beth Wojtaszek, Katherine Woo, Tongzhou Xu, Jeffrey Xue, Caroline Yates, Nuradeen Yusuf, Alejandro Zelaya Menjívar.

Total Number of Attendees: 102.

Meeting Called to Order: July 26th, 11:00 a.m.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Sweta Deb.

Old Business: Sheetal Jha called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees, followed by a review of the IAFP Antitrust Guidelines. The 2025–2026 Executive Board (Sheetal Jha, Chair; Aakankshya Dhakal, Vice-Chair; Andrea Cerrato, Secretary; Arshpreet Kaur, Treasurer; Stefhanie Loaiza, Networking Coordinator; Julia Fukuba, International Affiliate Representative) was introduced and thanked, along with the 14 candidates who ran for the Board and the 31 members who voted in this year's election. The SPDG mission statement and goals were reviewed: to provide students of food safety with a platform to enrich their IAFP membership experience by facilitating peer networking, serving as a resource for employers seeking qualified applicants, encouraging exchange of information on protecting the food supply, maintaining high student membership, and serving and adapting to student interests and needs.

The group reviewed how to join *IAFP Connect* and the Student PDG through the Member Dashboard, and how to sign up for IAFP volunteer opportunities (mentoring, committees, and annual meeting roles). Members were encouraged to connect with SPDG on LinkedIn, Instagram (@iafpspdg), and GroupMe, and to consider enrolling in the IAFP Mentor Match Program, which pairs students with a food safety professional mentor for at least monthly communication. A year-in-review recap covered the "Meet Your Favorite Scientist" virtual speaker series (featuring Dr. Joshua Gurtler, Dr. Julian Cox, Dr. Angela Anandappa,

Dr. Matthew Moore, and Dr. Byron Chaves), three Virtual Coffee Hour sessions (finding your path in academia, interacting with the executive board, and connecting affiliates and students), the T-shirt design competition (14 submissions, 51 votes), the 3-Minute Thesis competition (19 video submissions narrowed to 5 finalists), the Food Safety Flash competition (13 flyer submissions narrowed to 9 finalists), and quarterly SPDG newsletters. Recipients of the Student Travel Scholarship were congratulated, and several Student Spotlight members were recognized. The Board reported raising over $14,500 during 2025-2026 to fund the Student Luncheon, Luncheon Trivia, the Student Mixer, and virtual event prizes, and thanked this year's donors: Ecolab, American Institute of Banking, Phi Tau Sigma, Vikan, R&F Products, and the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry. The previous year's meeting minutes were approved.

New Business: The incoming 2026–2027 Executive Board (Aakankshya Dhakal, Chair; Ujjwol Subedi, Vice-Chair; Sweta Deb, Secretary; Jaber Ghorbani, Treasurer; Madhuparna Deb, Networking

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Coordinator; Daniel Leiva, International Affiliate Representative) was then introduced. The group reviewed the student-sponsored and co-sponsored sessions being offered at IAFP 2026: Roundtable RT16, "How LGBTQIA+ Food Safety Professionals Can Thrive During Less-Affirming Times" (Monday, July 27, Room 208), and Symposium S47, "Advancing AI in Food Safety Through Student Competition on Benchmark Datasets" (Wednesday, July 29, Room 203-205). Members were reminded of SPDG events taking place during the conference, including the Business Meeting, Student Luncheon, Student Mixer, and Student Booth (where members can meet Board members and take photos), and were encouraged to get involved with their local IAFP Affiliate — IAFP currently has 59 Affiliates worldwide — and to join the SPDG LinkedIn group to share highlights and see Affiliate events; questions on Affiliates can be directed to incoming officer Daniel Leiva or outgoing officer Julia Fukuba. The upcoming FoodMed 2026 Affiliate event (Hong Kong, November 5–6, 2026) was also highlighted.

Appreciation was extended to student volunteers who signed up to monitor sessions and poster set-up, with reminders to arrive early to the Speaker Ready Room and pick up vests and materials. The Board asked members to submit recommendations for the 2027 "Meet Your Favorite Scientist" speaker series and reviewed the formats and requirements for future Symposium, Roundtable, and Webinar proposals, noting key upcoming deadlines: the IAFP 2027 Call for Symposium, Roundtable, and Workshop Proposals closes September 30, 2026, and the IAFP 2027 Call for Abstracts (Technical/Poster) closes January 12, 2027 (Student Travel Scholarship deadline TBA).

The Board also promoted the AI Benchmarking Competition ahead of its second year in 2027, citing this year's results (30+ teams, sponsored travel for top teams, and a dedicated symposium at IAFP 2026) and benefits for 2027 participants, including the opportunity to present at IAFP, guaranteed co-authorship on a working challenge paper for finalists, travel support for top teams, hands-on team-based machine learning work with real food-safety data, expert mentorship, and a leaderboard; interested students were directed to scan a QR code to join the 2027 interest list or contact Luke Qian. The Board closed by presenting its 2026–2027 vision — to build a welcoming community, help students form a strong professional network, connect students with professionals in the field, and organize activities that build professional skills, including the Student Luncheon and Mixer, student session monitoring, Virtual Coffee and Social Hours, the 3-Minute Thesis competition, the Food Safety Flash competition, the 2026- 2027 "Meet Your Favorite Food Scientist" series, and the AI Benchmarking Competition on Predictive Food Safety Models — and announced that IAFP 2027 will be held in Kansas City, Missouri, July 18–21, 2027.

Discussion during New Business centered on career development opportunities for students. Suggestions and comments received from students and participants are listed below:

-Yusuf (PhD student) suggested some webinar topics revolving around early-career PhD comparing industry versus academia and career pathways; however, the board noted that this topic was previously covered in an SPDG webinar.

-Razia (PhD, University of Florida) noted that it will be helpful if students were connected to professors for post doc/PhD opportunities. The board commented that the mentor-mentee match program is already in place to help students guide their career moves and also suggested that attendees add that industry and government also offer postdoctoral opportunities that the board can try featuring upcoming postdoc/PhD opportunities in future newsletters.

-Gopinath (PhD, University of Georgia) suggested organizing a virtual career fair for students, one-on-one conversations with industry, and coordinating with companies that are actively hiring, and recommended increasing the number of travel scholarships available. Other attendees emphasized that one-on-one conversations at the annual meeting are valuable for early-career scientists seeking jobs, that the process can be more difficult for non-U.S. citizens navigating online applications, that in-person interaction carries particular weight with employers, and that students should take advantage of mentorship conversations. Sheetal encouraged members to attend virtual coffee chats and other social events, and another PhD student from the University of Florida suggested featuring students in newsletters and highlighting social and figure-illustration tools students can use, noting that such features could also help attract company sponsorship.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Approve the 2026–2027 SPDG Executive Board as elected: Aakankshya Dhakal (Chair), Ujjwol Subedi (Vice-Chair), Sweta Deb (Secretary), Jaber Ghorbani (Treasurer), Madhuparna Deb (Networking Coordinator), and Daniel Leiva (International Affiliate Representative).

Next Meeting Date: Sunday, July 18–21, 2027, Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: July 26th 12:00 p.m.

Chairperson Name: Aakankshya Dhaka.

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Viral and Parasitic Foodborne Disease

Names of Attendees: Maria (Sonia) Almeria (Chair), Matthew Moore (Vice Chair), Joseph Antonucci, James Arbogast, Samoa Asigau, Sherry Bansal, Rosie Beaulieu, Shannon Bennett, Yannick Bichot, Nigel Cook, Alexandre Da Silva, Sapphira Darmawan, Brenna DeRocili, Gayatri Dhulappana, Mauricio Durigan, Laura Ewing-Peeples, Patrick Fach, Irene Falco, Jeffrey Farber, Natasha Ferney, Hannah Ferouz, Kristen Gibson, John Grocholl, Sanjay Gummalla, Jack Guzewich, Rachel Hazen, Laura Howard, Ingrid Huntley, Tim Jackson, Julie Jean, Suzanne Jordan, Mariya Julien, Chyer Kim, Comfort Kwamikorkor, Deja Latney, Alvin Lee, Susan Leonard, Quanhong Li, Rob Limburn, Ly Mai, Gary Maloncon, Sonia Marotta, Florence Martel, Karen McWilliams, David Medin, Courtney Mickiewicz, Razieh Sadat Mirmahdi, Paul Morin, Nikos Natsaridis, Georgios Papageorgiou, Alba Perez-Cataluna, Sophie Pierre, Karen Pietrzen, Charlène Plénière, Gale Prince, Marianna Rhatigan, Guy Robinson, Gloria Sanchez, Annette Sansom, Monica Santin-Duran, Manan Sharma, Diana Stewart, Gabriella Strocko, Irshad Sulaiman, Cassandra Suther, Sue Teegardin, Francis Torko, Jean-Philippe Tourniaire, Grace Tung, Angela Valadez, Amy Wise, Katherine Woo, Jacquelina Woods, Suhao Yin, Christine Yu, Anthony Zoropogui.

Total Number of Attendees: 75.

Meeting Called to Order: Sunday, July 26, 2026, 8:30 a.m.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Matthew Moore.

Old Business: The minutes from the IAFP 2025 PDG meeting were reviewed and approved with no modifications.

New Business: Dr. Manan Sharma, IAFP President-Elect, provided an update from the IAFP Executive Board. He reported that more than 3,000 attendees had registered for IAFP 2026 and encouraged new students and colleagues to become IAFP Members. He noted that the acceptance rate for submitted symposia and roundtable proposals this year was 33%, and emphasized prioritizing the quality of submissions over the quantity of sessions submitted by the PDG. He reported that IAFP Europe has moved to an every-other-year format and encouraged PDGs to submit session ideas for the 2027 European Symposium. Members were directed to the IAFP website for information on committee and volunteer opportunities, reminded to download the meeting app if they had not already done so, and informed that Room 202 in the Convention Center was designated as a Quiet Room. Dr. Sharma noted that involvement in local or regional IAFP Affiliates is a good way to network and develop leadership skills, and the PDG thanked the LSU Food Safety Group for their work supporting the meeting. The PDG also announced plans to hold an election for a new Vice Chair in spring 2027, prior to the 2027 Annual Meeting, and issued a call for volunteers.

Chair Dr. Sonia Almeria provided additional announcements, including a review of the IAFP Anti-Trust Guidelines and a summary of accepted sponsored and co-sponsored symposia and roundtables, as well as posters and technical sessions relevant to the PDG. Three Brief Research Updates were presented to the group. Dr. Gloria Sanchez (CSIC, Spain) presented "Hidden Threats: Emerging Viruses in the Food Chain," noting that norovirus carries the highest economic impact among enteric viruses, that early concerns about detecting COVID-19 in food were ruled out, and that avian influenza (H5N1) has been detected in raw milk. Dr. Guy Robinson (Cryptosporidium Reference Unit, Wales, UK) presented "Exploring the Population Structure and Epidemiology of *Cryptosporidium parvum*," describing spring and fall case spikes and MLVA group profiles correlated with overseas travel or consumption of farm-stand products, including a group associated with a spring spike and animal contact at petting zoos, a group present year-round, and a group associated with an autumn peak with no identified exposure source. Dr. Monica Santin presented "*Cyclospora cayetanensis*: Five-Minute Fast Facts," noting an estimated 10 million annual cases, an ongoing multistate U.S. outbreak initially linked to Taco Bell lettuce that has since expanded to other states, an FDA finding that a supplier sample result was a false positive, the biology of oocyst shedding and infectivity, and the replacement of the 18S PCR assay with the Mit1C qPCR assay for detection.

In preparation for IAFP 2027, to be held July 18–21, 2027, in Kansas City, Missouri, the PDG discussed potential roundtable, webinar, and symposium topics through five breakout groups. Suggested topics included a one-health approach and gap analysis for foodborne virus control; challenges in surveillance of viruses and parasites in foods, including limited access to virulent strains for research; improving communication and knowledge-sharing between industry and regulatory offices; advances in virus recovery methods; research with direct application to public food safety recommendations, such as freezing produce to reduce parasite risk; strategies for quantifying contamination severity in raw produce; appropriate and careful use of artificial intelligence in this field; the influence of regional culture and practices, such as farm petting zoos, on parasite spread; comparisons of virus versus parasite transmission vehicles; and lessons learned from ongoing outbreaks such as the *Cyclospora* outbreak, including a proposed roundtable on outbreak communication, the effect of social media and news coverage on produce consumption and consumer purchasing behavior, methodology sharing for detection, use of surrogates in control-strategy analysis, and sequencing and genotyping approaches. Additional topics discussed included vaccine and vaccination policy in food production and service, and inactivation methodologies for viruses and parasites.

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Numbered List of Recommendations to the Executive Board: None.

Next Meeting Date: July 18–21, 2027, Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:00 a.m.

Chairperson Name: Dr. Maria (Sonia) Almeria.

Water Safety and Quality

Names of Attendees: Don Stoeckel (Vice Chair), Seth Adesope, Adora Anthos, Micah Black, Anna Brover, Caroline Clark, Donna Clements, Brenna DeRocili, Prantho Malakar Dipta, Diego Fredes-García, Ellen Gabriel, Michael Gardner, YeonJin Jung, Karuna Kharel, Kali Kniel, Comfort Kwamikorkor, Lorenzo Lee, Megan Lee, Shikhadri Mahanta, Ngozi Manukaji, Diana Mora-Lee, Juan Moreira, Gabriela Oliva Coba, Isabella Oliveira Tosta, Monica Osorio-Barahona, Jitu Patel, Alda Pires, Narindra Randriamiarintsoa, Joanna Rothwell, Allen Sayler, Arlette Shazer, Katherine Sierra, Ivy Smith, Jared Smith, Gabriella Strocko, Viaca Tashiguano, Adriana Vanegas, Bonnie Waldemarson, Bonnie Zhu.

Total Number of Attendees: 37.

Meeting Called to Order: Sunday, July 26, 2026 at 10:30 a.m.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Tamara Walsky, Student PDG Liaison, Cornell University and Kalmia Kniel, University of Delaware due to a scheduling conflict for Tamara. Thank you, Kali, for stepping in.

Following a brief welcome, three student "flash talks" were presented. These talks were prioritized on the agenda so that the students could then move to the Student PDG meeting at 11:00. The titles and presenters were: "Integrating Microbial Indicators into Pathogen Wastewater Surveillance Systems of Different Population Sizes" by Adora Anthos, U. Delaware, "Spatiotemporal Dynamics of Multidrug-resistant (MDR) Enterobacterales: Seasonality and Water Physicochemical Properties Drive High Third-Generation Cephalosporin Resistance in Central Chile" by Alejandro Zelaya Menjivar, U. Andrés Bello; "Disinfection of Poultry Processing Wastewater Using Advanced Oxidation Processes" by Seth Adesope, U. Arkansas.

Old Business: Approval of 2025 meeting minutes–Anna Allende first, unidentified participant second.

Reviewed 2025 board recommendation responses.

New Business: Reviewed 2025 submissions accepted and not accepted for 2026 annual meeting.

Executive Board reminders, student PDG updates, reminders about IAFP app, PDG election cycle, IAFP meeting proposal submittal deadlines all discussed.

Open discussion conversation began with a Vice Chair request for input on whether student presentations should be continued. The response was overwhelmingly positive. Next the Vice Chair requested input on PDG member expectations and desire for interaction during the coming year. The consensus was to try for one PDG-sponsored webinar and quarterly PDG touch-base meetings that would include a 15 minute technical presentation, 15 minutes of discussion on that topic, and 30 minutes open forum discussion. Key topics were discussed and kept in a separate set of notes for later reference. PDG members self-selected into four topical groups to discuss potential session proposals for IAFP 2027. The four topic areas were pre-harvest (fruit and vegetable) water, postharvest (fruit and vegetable) water, cricis management specific to a water resource becoming unavailable, and water reuse/recovery. The meeting ended with a brief report-out by each group. The Vice Chair collected worksheets from each group and will follow up with a the self-identified point of contact to assist with proposal development.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. The Water Safety and Quality PDG did not have any recommendations to the Executive Board during the PDG meeting. Consensus is that the IAFP Annual Meeting, webinars, and other services to members are provided effectively and the Executive Board should keep up the good work.

Next Meeting Date: Sunday, July 18, 2027 in Kansas City, MO.

Meeting Adjourned: 12:10 p.m.

Chairperson: Dr. Clair Murphy, in absentia; Dr. Don Stoeckel, Vice Chair, led the meeting.