

Lecture Hall

Session Abstracts

National Environmental Health Association (NEHA)
72nd Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition

Food Safety and Protection

Sunday, June 22

1:00 – 2:50pm

Presentation and Panel: Establishing an Effective Field Training Process for Regulatory Retail Food Protection Professionals

Presenters:

John A. Marcello, REHS, CP-FS, Pacific Region Retail Food Specialist, FDA, AZ

David McSwane, HSD, REHS, CP-FS, Professor, Indiana University, IN

Panelists:

Dawn Beck, REHS, EH Specialist, Olmsted County Public Health Services, MN

Jason Froehle, RS, Standardization Officer, Municipality of Anchorage, AK

Michelle Morris, RS, Training Officer, Maricopa County Environmental Services, AZ

Research conducted by the Conference for Food Protection (CFP) revealed that existing training and standardization programs for retail food safety professionals were nearly as varied as the number of regulatory jurisdictions throughout the country. What has been missing is a national recognized model upon which regulatory retail food protection programs can design basic training for staff responsible for conducting inspections of retail food and/or foodservice facilities.

A multi-tiered approach for training and standardizing retail food protection staff has been outlined in Program Standard #2 - Trained Regulatory Staff, FDA Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards. The first two steps of this approach primarily focus on preparing new hire or staff newly assigned to the retail food protection program to conduct independent inspections. The CFP has developed a field training manual that includes pre-requisite coursework and a field training process. The classroom and field training are based on a national research study used to identify the basic competencies needed to perform effective regulatory retail food program inspections. These basic competencies cover 6 inspection training areas:

- I. Pre-Inspection
- II. Inspection Observations and Performance
- III. Oral Communication
- IV. Written Communication
- V. Professionalism
- VI. Additional Inspection Areas (jurisdiction can add performance element competencies)

A Field Training Manual, Training Plan and Field Training Worksheets have been developed through the CFP work group process and are based on the minimum competencies identified in the national study. The training process and worksheets developed by the CFP have been reviewed by subject matter experts comprised of psychometricians, and representative from state and local regulatory retail food programs; industry trade associations; retail food and foodservice operations; academia; and the FDA. In 2007, 28 State, local, and tribal jurisdiction participated in a pilot project to field test the CFP training process and worksheets. Based on the feedback from

the pilot project, the process and forms have been modified to better meet the needs of regulatory retail food protection programs.

All new employees or individuals new to the regulatory retail food protection program should complete pre-requisite coursework and a field training process similar to that presented in the CFP Field Training Manual. Flexibility has been built into the process to allow regulatory jurisdictions the opportunity to customize training content and methods so that it represents a jurisdiction's own administrative policies, procedures, and inspection protocol.

The availability of the CFP Field Training Manual, Training Plan and Field Training Worksheets, regulatory retail food protection programs have a nationally recognized model upon which to design basic training programs for inspections staff. Moreover, ongoing use of this model will both enhance the effectiveness of regulatory retail food safety inspections across the country and increase uniformity among regulatory professionals.

3:00 – 3:50pm

Foodborne Outbreak Investigations—Importance of the Environmental Assessment

Carol A. Selman, Senior Public Health Advisor, CDC, GA

Contributing factors to foodborne illness outbreaks and the environmental antecedents to those contributing factors need to be understood so prevention measures can be developed to reduce the risk of future contamination and illness. To that end, the Environmental Health Specialists Network (EHS-Net), a network of environmental health specialists affiliated with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and nine states, conducted a study to describe contributing factors and environmental antecedents associated with foodborne illness outbreaks occurring in food service establishments.

For this study, EHS-Net environmental health specialists conducted environmental health assessments, which included interviews with kitchen managers and observations of the kitchen environment, in food service establishments where outbreaks had recently occurred. Data collection focused on: 1) contributing factors to the outbreaks and 2) establishment characteristics thought to be antecedents to outbreaks, such as food handling policies, worker training, and language barriers. Results describe the contributing factors and food handling policies and practices of outbreak establishments. The data indicate that environmental health assessments are an important tool in evaluating the contributing factors and environmental antecedents of foodborne diseases.

4:00 – 4:50pm

Food Smuggler's Blues—A Multi-Agency Approach to Regulating Imported Foods

Andrew Linton, RS, Mobile Food Program Supervisor, Maricopa County Environmental Services, AZ

Rhonda Harrington, Smuggling Interdiction and Trade Compliance Officer, USDA, AZ

Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) wants to ensure the availability of domestic and imported foods in the market place, facilitate the exportations of agricultural commodities to foreign countries, and preserve the health and diversity of our agricultural resources.

Plant Protection and Quarantine's Smuggling Interdiction and Trade Compliance (SITC) program seeks to prevent unlawful entry and distribution of prohibited products that may harbor exotic plant and animal pests, diseases, or invasive species. These harmful organisms could seriously damage America's crops, livestock and environment.

SITC works in many facets of commerce and ports of entry to accomplish this mission. SITC conducts outreach to other agencies in order to complete the full circle of trade compliance. SITC and Maricopa County Environmental Services are partners in working to protect American agriculture.