

AFSAC Meeting Minutes October 6th, 2015

In Attendance

Haley Bissett – TEDS Box
Barb Hansen – Division of Agriculture
Dr. Brian Himelbloom – Kodiak FITC
Kate Idzorek – UAF Cooperative Extension
Lorinda Lhotka – DEC/FSS
Bobbie McDonald – DEC/FSS
Ginger Provo – Section of Epidemiology
Carlos Romero – Doyon Universal
Kim Stryker – DEC/FSS
Dan Tew – Yum! Brands

Opening Remarks & Program Updates – Kim Stryker

Budget:

At present, no further budgetary cuts to FSS have been proposed by the state legislature.

Personnel Changes:

- DEC Director of the Division of Environmental Health Elaine Busse Floyd has retired. Until a permanent replacement is found, Christina Carpenter and Bob Blankenburg will split the Director's duties.
- Seafood Permit Coordinator Aaron Poloni has resigned. Kodiak Environmental Health Officer Rebecca Stephany has accepted the position and will be relocating to the Anchorage office.
- Anchorage Environmental Health Technician Kaylee Purinton has resigned. An offer for the position has been accepted.
- Wasilla Environmental Health Officer George Kulhanek has resigned. His position remains open.
- Anchorage Environmental Health Officer Jim Moore's last day with the program will be 10/15. Approval for recruitment has been granted.

Program Updates:

- Retail food risk factor surveys continue to be conducted.

- The findings of a recent favorable FDA manufactured food audit remained consistent with the program's own self-assessment.
- A recent FDA shellfish audit proved to be very successful.
- A shellfish conference is scheduled for the end of October in Salt Lake City, Utah.
- An AEHA conference is scheduled for 10/7 and 10/8 in Anchorage.
- Updates to the seafood, model food and pool and spa regulations, as well as performance measures are underway.
- Efforts to efficiently coordinate sample results with the Environmental Health Lab continue.
- Efforts to replace the FSS database continue.
- Collaborative efforts with UAA Cooperative Extension continue.

Marijuana Initiative:

- A website detailing marijuana regulations is available via the Department of Commerce and Economic Development.
- It is the intention of FSS to approach its role in marijuana regulation in a similar fashion as it does the regulation of food.
- FSS and the Municipality of Anchorage have been in discussions regarding the Muni's role in marijuana regulation within Anchorage.

Section of Epidemiology Updates – Ginger Provo

- 14 confirmed cases of salmonella involving cucumbers traced back to Mexican distributors by Environmental Health Officer Jeremy Ayers, resulted in a 9/4 recall of the product.
- 9 confirmed cases of salmonella involving pork obtained from the state of Washington, were recently reported.
- An investigation is underway regarding 3 cases of vibrio linked to Alaskan oysters.
- A presentation on botulism is pending.

Safety on the Go: Mobile Food Truck Safety Presentation – Dr. Brian Himelbloom

Based on his own online research, which details food truck violations reported by state health departments in Washington, Indiana and California, in addition to a 5 year study of inspection reports compiled from 7 major cities, Dr. Himelbloom has concluded that the food safety practices employed by operators of food trucks are generally on par, if not at times superior to those of non-mobile restaurants. He asserts that an overwhelming number of these violations were negligible and often not a result of improper food handling on the part of operators, but rather on other outside factors such as contaminated produce acquired from a supplier. Furthermore, he is of the opinion that food truck operators run substantially greater risks of contending with potential fire hazards such as propane explosions, than they are of accruing significant food handling violations.

Member Updates

Kate Idzorek:

Kate will be offering a class for Small Food Businesses online class via Zoom. 20 students have enrolled.

Dr. Brian Himelbloom:

- Dr. Himelbloom recently participated in an 8 hour CFPM workshop offered by UAA Cooperative Extension. He will be proctoring a CFPM exam this week, as well as offering seafood courses via video conferencing throughout autumn.
- The 6th annual Smoked Seafood School has been scheduled.
- A course offered by the Alaska Seafood Processors Leadership Institute will be conducted in November. The course is designed to educate seafood industry middle management on topics such as, industry knowledge, quality control, the development of business plans, and leadership.
- A meeting of the Pacific Fisheries Technology Institute will be held in Seattle, Washington in February 2016.
- A meeting of the Alaska Food Policy Council will be held in the UAA campus in February 2016.

Lorinda Lhotka:

Lorinda's work with the Alaska Food Policy Council, as well as the Arctic Council continues.

Haley Bissett:

The TEDS (Tracking Environmental Deviation) Box is an air cargo container designed for storage within wide body aircraft, capable of maintaining temperatures of 2-8 degrees Celsius, making it possible to safely transport perishable, temperature sensitive food items such as fish to remote Alaskan communities as well as international markets.

Dan Tew:

Dan will deliver hepatitis A training and crisis management courses to various Yum! Brands affiliates this month and the next.

Carlos Romero:

Carlos's efforts to encourage Doyon site managers and cooks to perform regular self-audits have met with much success.

Barb Hansen:

Barb has been busy performing GAP audits and continuing her efforts to encourage the development of farm to school programs throughout the state.

Topic For The Next Meeting

A TEDS Box presentation.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 5th 2016 at 1:30 pm.