

## **AFSAC Meeting Minutes**

### **January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

#### **In Attendance**

Katie Burbage – Tanana Chiefs Conference  
Dr. Bob Gerlach – State Veterinarian  
Barbara Hanson – Division of Agriculture  
Dr. Brian Himmelbloom – Kodiak FITC  
Kate Idzorek – UAF Cooperative Extension  
Steve Lacy – Fred Meyer  
Rachel Lee – Tanana Chiefs Conference  
Lorinda Lhotka – DEC/FSS  
Randy Pfeuffer – DEC/FSS  
Ginger Provo – Section of Epidemiology  
Sarah Stanley – Doyon Universal Services (DUS) Food Safety & QA  
Kimberly Stryker – DEC/FSS  
Susan West – Juneau Emergency Preparedness  
Bryce Wrigley – Salcha-Delta Soil and Water Conservation District  
Dale Yamnik – Yum Brands  
SSgt Moises "Ace" Ascencion-Gudino

#### **Section of Epidemiology News – Ginger Provo**

- In 2013, 22 food and waterborne outbreaks were reported to the CDC website.
- During the month of October, the Section of Epidemiology conducted investigations in Juneau and Sitka.
- A publication providing overviews of food borne outbreak reporting entitled “Foodborne Bulletin” is due to be available this month.
- A poster from the Section of Epidemiology was put on display at the Alaska Health Summit. Tony Barrett of the Municipality of Anchorage was in attendance.

#### **Farm Food Safety Presentation – Barbara Hanson**

- To date, nine food safety workshops for produce growers have been conducted by the Division of Agriculture in an effort to emphasize that

despite the lack of regulation involving the growing and sale of farm grown produce, a high liability factor exists in regard to consumer health.

High contamination risks due to improper composting, use of chemical cleaning agents, and varying types of animal manure pose significant hazards. Risk gradients vary with other factors such as irrigation methods, product handling, and storage.

- Mock safety audits of farms, gardens, and greenhouses, the development of self-audit checklists, and customized online food safety plans have served as effective teaching tools for the workshops.
- Lorinda Lhotka attended the first workshop and lent her practical insight. The workshops have received much positive feedback and requests have been made for additional and more comprehensive ones in the future.

## **FSS Program Updates – Kimberly Stryker**

### **Personnel Changes:**

- EHO resignation in Fairbanks.
- Short term non-perm EHT position to be reclassified to an EHO I-II.
- New EHO Bevin Durant – Anchorage.
- New EHO Shawn Dickson – Dutch Harbor.

### **Training:**

- New staff are actively engaged in a variety of training.
- Recently attended courses:
  1. FDA manufactured food.
  2. Learn to Return (flight/marine safety).
  3. AKOSH Seafood Processing Safety.
- Pending FDA courses (March 3-7):
  1. Foodborne Illness Investigations.
  2. Special Processes in Retail (AFSAC members are encouraged to attend).

### **Budget:**

- FY14 budget remains stable. No increments will be requested but no cuts have been made.

### **Other News:**

- Annual billing for retail food establishments and seafood/shellfish permitting are well underway. FDA contract inspections continue to be conducted.
- The seat on the Alaska Food Policy Council Governing Board vacated by Ron Klein is now filled by Lorinda Lhotka.
- An executive order was recently signed by Governor Parnell creating the Alaska Food Resources Working Group.
- Efforts to establish collaboration with rural communities continue.
- Based on analysis revealing levels of arsenic exceeding acceptable parameters, China has banned shipments of geoducks exported from Alaska, the west coast and British Columbia. No information has been provided by Chinese officials regarding the methods by which they reached their findings.
- Kimberly Stryker and Shellfish Permit Coordinator George Scanlan will be attending an interstate shellfish conference in San Antonio.

### **Small Processor Committee Update – Lorinda Lhotka**

Lorinda Lhotka, Morgan Poloni, Brennan Smith, John Walker, and Bryce Wrigley have been actively engaged in the following projects:

- Updating labeling guidance documents.
- Developing guidance for the writing of ingredient statements.
- Developing a checklist designed to assist small producers in getting their operations started.
- Developing an acidified food producers checklist.
- A pending project entails the development of a recall plan for small producers.

### **Food Establishment Recognition Program**

The idea of an outreach program designed to recognize outstanding achievements by food establishments in implementing food safety systems to help prevent food borne illness, was discussed. Sarah Stanley suggested that such a program would also prove to be a successful employee morale booster and asserted that it is a worthwhile endeavor that Doyon Universal Services would strongly support. “The Gold Star Program”, was suggested as a possible name for this project. Lorinda Lhotka recommended the establishment of a work group that can fully develop the concept.

## **Member Updates**

### **Tony Barrett:**

- Several food borne illness complaints have been reported to the Municipality of Anchorage in the last month with only one person ill. Such complaints are often used as educational opportunities to highlight the need for safe food handling practices.
- Two presumed Norovirus outbreaks have been recently reported involving local sushi and Chinese restaurants.
- A position vacancy was recently filled and approval has been received to hire a Standardization Officer.
- Online Food Worker Card testing is now live. It is available in English, Spanish, Korean, and Chinese.

### **Randy Pfeuffer:**

- Randy made an announcement regarding the ill health of Michel Villon's mother. Michel is presently in France attending to her. Sympathy messages may be forwarded through Randy.

### **Dr. Brian Himmelbloom:**

- Brennan Smith has replaced Chuck Crapo as Process Authority for UAF Kodiak. Brennan will be in Anchorage on February 3-5.
- An FDA Better Processing Workshop will be held on February 6-7.
- A smoked seafood workshop will be held in late August or early September.
- Based upon demand, a smoked meat workshop can be accommodated.

### **Lorinda Lhotka:**

- Kate Idzorek, Lorinda Lhotka, and Morgan Poloni will be conducting Farmers Market Food Safety training at the end of February via video and teleconferencing. This outreach effort geared towards the training of farmers market managers and vendors will focus on topics such as, prohibited activities, which activities require a permit, and booth construction.

## **Topics For The Next Meeting**

- More in-depth discussion about the "Gold Star Program".

**The next meeting is scheduled for April 1<sup>st</sup> at 10:30 am**