



# FAFP CONNECTIONS



Summer Issue 2009

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## *A Message from the President*

Found a peanut, found a peanut, found a peanut just now... ..and it was rotten.

As I write this, I am reflecting on the news of numerous recalls of peanut products over the last couple of months. If you are reading this, there is no doubt you have been affected either personally or professionally by this situation.

A few weeks ago our Association held a timely topic on using 3<sup>rd</sup> party and regulatory audits for an independent evaluation of suppliers and restaurants. Our

host was Publix Super Markets in S. Florida and the Educational Luncheon was put together by Andrew Yap from LEASA Industries Co., Inc. and Angel deArmes from Publix.

The use of a 3<sup>rd</sup> party auditing firm helps to give a snapshot of how a supplier complies with general Good Manufacturing or Agricultural Practices or how a restaurant or retail store complies with Health Codes.

We depend on suppliers, restaurants and retail grocery stores to provide us

with safe, wholesome products that are produced in a clean and safe environment. Many of us are a "one man" Quality Assurance Department. We must depend on 3<sup>rd</sup> Party audits to be our eyes and ears to food safety for the numerous suppliers we depend on. At the same time, we expect audit firms to provide highly knowledgeable and professional personnel to conduct the audits. The auditors must conduct a thorough job of evaluating and provide useful information that will enhance food safety and sanitation.

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## Those First Impressions are Lasting Impressions!

Doris Rittenmeyer



First impressions in your deli, kitchen, or food service work area are important to your customers. What will their first impressions be? Is your food prep area clean or cluttered?

Is it messy or spotless? How about the impression your food workers make? Do they have clean uniforms? Is their hair restrained? Are they frequently and properly washing their hands? Are they using gloves? If they are, are they using them properly?

If your work area is visible, are your customers seeing frequent hand washing and proper glove use or just a cold water "rinse and run" or a changing of gloves with no prior hand washing? Are your employees just walking into the prep area, not washing their hands, then putting

on gloves and going immediately to work at the prep table? Proper hand hygiene is extremely important in preventing a food borne illness outbreak, so examples of proper hand washing and glove use set by management along with on the job training will hopefully reduce the possibility of a having a food borne illness outbreak.

A customer's overall impression of your operation is very important. 82% of customers gave a very high ap-

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# PRODUCE INDUSTRY FOOD SAFETY

ALEX COLES

The earliest reference to bagged salad I could find dates back over 40 years and involved a joint venture between the Whirlpool Corporation and Bruce Church, Inc., a California grower. In June 1966, the [Whirlpool Corporation](#) announced the formation of a new company, the TransFresh Corporation, to provide controlled atmosphere systems for transporting fruits and vegetables.

Unfortunately, the technology took some time to catch up with this revolutionary concept. It wasn't until 1989 that Fresh Express was able to mass-produce the first retail bagged salads. Thanks to new technology, lettuce could now be kept crisp for up to 35 days. Since then, the fresh-cut category has enjoyed double-digit growth with annual sales at around \$15 Billion. As produce consumption increased in the U.S., so has the number of produce-related outbreaks of food-borne illness. FDA data shows that 14 people died and 10,253 were sickened in 96 outbreaks associated with fresh produce from 1996 through 2006. The leading pathogens associated with these outbreaks are Norovirus, *Salmonella*, *E. coli*, *Shigella*, *Clostridium*, and *Cyclospora*.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office released a report indicating the U.S. Food and Drug Administration needs to improve oversight of produce safety. According to the GAO report "FDA acknowledged that it has not yet been able to conduct certain fresh produce work crucial to understanding the incidence of contamination of produce by pathogens such as *E. coli* O157:H7 or *Salmonella*, because it has lacked the resources to either fund its extramural research grant program or perform some critical research internally."

The produce industry has taken great strides to ensure the safety of fresh and fresh-cut produce spearheaded by several industry trade groups such as United Fresh, PMA, and Western Growers. In 2007, the California Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement (CA LGMA) was endorsed by nearly all grower/shippers in California. This marketing agreement has become a model for other growing areas around the U.S., Mexico and Canada.

The technical document the agreement is based on is the Commodity Specific Food Safety Guidelines for the Production and Harvest of Lettuce and Leafy Greens, also known as the GAP Metrics. Using the Metrics as a starting point, food safety professionals spend an enormous amount of time and energy evaluating risks, developing proactive measures and monitoring control points. While there are key inputs that growers and processors can manage, such as water use, animal intrusion, employee hygiene, etc., much of the science needed to appropriately identify specific risks is lacking. Industry leaders such as Fresh Express, Dole, and Taylor Farms have put significant financial resources towards research initiatives to identify and reduce or eliminate risk.

Regardless of your political affiliation, you have to chuckle at a comment made by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld during a press conference at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium on June 06, 2002: "*There are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say there are things that we now know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don't know we don't know. So when we do the best we can and we pull all this information together, and we then say well that's basically what we see as the situation, that is really only the known knowns and the known unknowns. And each year, we discover a few more of those unknown unknowns.*"

While we can laugh at the statement in general, the words ring true, even for the produce industry.

**Known Knowns:** Contamination can potentially occur at any stage of production including seed stock, water use, soil amendments, non-synthetic crop treatments, flooding, animal intrusion, adjacent land use, employee hygiene and processing.

**Known Unknowns:**



Potential contamination can be spread by feces-containing soil amendments

(composting procedures; manure applications scheduling during various phases of the growing cycle), animal carriage (frequency of in-field droppings during various phases of the growing cycle), farm equipment, and produce handlers. What is the frequency and amount of human pathogens introduced via these vectors into the environment?

Water sources can be a source of contamination prior to and during various phases of the growing and harvest cycle.



What is the prevalence and levels of human pathogens contamination of source water?

How does the persistence and survival of human pathogens in the environment during growing, harvest, post harvest handling and/or processing and distribution affect fresh and fresh-cut produce?

What are the mechanisms of transference, frequency, levels and potential for attachment of human pathogens to fresh and fresh-cut produce edible plant surfaces during growing, harvest, post harvest handling, processing and distribution operations?

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proval of an establishment where food-service workers were wearing gloves.\*

Depending on the regulatory requirements of your area, gloves may or may not be mandatory. The 2005 FDA Food Code requires no bare hand contact with ready to eat foods, but in some areas you can apply for a variance. No bare hand contact can be achieved by using utensils, tongs, forks, deli papers or gloves. Check with your local health department if you are unsure about your regulatory requirements.

Remember that 77% of customers believe that hand washing alone is not enough, 61% of customers are “much more likely” to revisit a food service facility where workers are wearing gloves, and 70% of customers are even willing to pay more to visit a restaurant that uses gloves.\*



Customer approval is critical: when patrons observe

glove use in a restaurant they have a strongly favorable perception about the restaurant and are grateful the restaurant cares about consumer health and cleanliness.

Employee health and hand hygiene practices are critically important to the survival of your food service facility. The 2005 FDA Food Code recommends that there are 3 steps that must be taken to improve the safety of ready to eat foods within your restaurant.

- 1) Restrict or exclude ill employees
- 2) Frequent and thorough hand washing
- 3) No bare hand contact with ready to eat foods

Do your part to improve hand washing and proper glove use in your facility.

\*Independent study by NPD Food-world

## Special Needs Food-service – One State’s Approach to Regulation.

Diana Kato



Effective July 1, 2007 the newly adopted California Retail Food Code (Cal Code) made local environmental health agencies responsible

for permitting and oversight of food facilities operating within Licensed Health Care Facilities. In many jurisdictions this required coordination with Skilled Nursing Facilities and Hospitals to inform them of the inspection process to ensure compliance with the newly adopted California Retail Food Code.

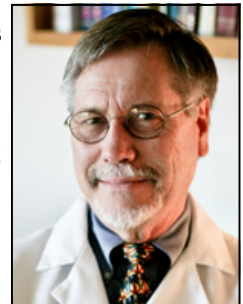
In Contra Costa County, California, a Registered Environmental Health Specialist (R.E.H.S.) surveyed existing facilities gathering information, meeting administrative staff, dietary supervisors, and Registered Dietitians and documenting existing conditions at each location. Field inspection data was gathered from the survey; it included findings on existing food equipment, sinks, menus, restroom facilities, janitorial facilities, State mandated emergency food and water storage for these facilities, existing HACCP plans and identifying the onsite facility certified food handler/manager.

It is critical in these types of facilities that each food service employee is well trained and most importantly there is a certified handler/manager on-site during all stages of food preparation. These highly susceptible populations are especially dependent on safe food

handling. Noroviruses have caused major public health problems and have been repeatedly identified as a causative agent in our epidemiological investigations each year. Outbreaks must be contained quickly and preplanned protocol followed. The Contra Costa County public health epidemiology team coordinates and investigates every reported gastrointestinal illness each time there is an outbreak at these facilities.

Contra Costa Environmental Health’s goal was to create a working relationship with the licensed health care facilities to assist in communicating and transitioning Cal Code into their everyday operations. With this in mind, we integrated the survey findings into a workshop held prior to the Board of Supervisors passing a resolution to permit these facilities. Environmental Health Director, Sherman Quinlan and Health Services Department Director, Dr. William Walker, conducted a very well attended July 2007 meeting.

Many of the questions from Administrators, Registered Dietitians and dietary supervisors provided insight as to what challenges the program would encounter. The meeting was successful as proactive mutual dialogue, networking and education efforts occurred.



Dr. William Walker

In summary, Contra Costa County now has 43 Licensed Health Care Facilities and has a goal of inspecting them three times during the year. We have established a network of contacts not only with these new facilities but also with staff in the State Department of Public Health, Licensing and Certification Branch, Registered Dietitians, Administrators and owners of the facilities as well as working closely with the Contra Costa County epidemiology team.

## Sanitation: Your First

### Line of Defense Against



### Pests

**Zia Siddiqi, Ph.D, B.C.E**

When pests see a food manufacturing or food retail facility, they don't see a business committed to providing safe, quality products to their customers. What they see is an all-you-can-eat buffet. That is, if you let them. Effective sanitation is integral to the success of any pest management program because it helps eliminate the reasons why pests are there in the first place: namely, access to food, water and shelter.

Regular floor-level inspections of your facility, its entry points, water sources, food sources, harborage points and employee areas are a critical first step in all sanitation efforts. Work with your pest management professional to make sure your sanitation program includes these steps:

Immediately clean all food and liquid

spills. Even a small spill can encourage and sustain an infestation.

Carefully and regularly inspect the floor surrounding all appliances and machinery for moisture leaks.

Eliminate standing water and repair leaks as soon as possible. Rodents only require 15 to 30 ml of water per day to survive and smaller pests need much less.

Thoroughly clean drains with an organic cleaner to remove all residual debris that can act as a breeding ground for fruit and drain flies.

Regularly vacuum cracks and crevices that might harbor debris. A HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filter vacuum will remove most particles from hard to see and reach areas.

Tightly seal and line all garbage cans and dispose of trash in a timely manner. Locate dumpsters, particularly those containing food refuse, as far away from buildings as possible and rotate and clean them frequently. Store all food products off the floor on wire-backed shelves positioned away from the wall. Rotate all products on a

first-in, first-out (FIFO) basis, and regularly inspect all storage areas for signs of infestation, including droppings, shed skins, and live or dead pests.

Finally, keep the exterior of the facility from attracting pests. Regularly sweep, hose and wash parking lots, loading docks and other external areas. Also, consult landscapers to minimize vegetation which may attract insects.

Educate your employees on the roles they play in your facility's sanitation program. Even small steps like keeping their lockers clean and properly disposing of lunch items can go a long way to preventing pests. With a written sanitation program and the help of all, you can encourage pests to pass over your facility in favor of a free meal down the road.

*Dr. Zia Siddiqi is Director of Quality Systems for Orkin, Inc. A Board Certified Entomologist with more than 30 years in the industry, Dr. Siddiqi is an acknowledged leader in the field of pest management. For more information, email [zsiddiqi@rollins.com](mailto:zsiddiqi@rollins.com) or visit [www.orkincommercial.com](http://www.orkincommercial.com).*

## Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation – Division of Hotels & Restaurants Update

Debra K. Williams

The Division of Hotels and Restaurants licenses and inspects public lodging and food service establishments in Florida. Our mission is to protect the health and safety of the public by providing the industry with quality inspections and fair regulation.

Division headquarters is in Tallahassee with district offices located in Miami, Margate, Fort Myers, Orlando, Tampa, Jacksonville and Panama City Beach.

Each of the seven district offices is responsible for coordinating daily activities and scheduling inspections. During Fiscal Year 2007-2008, the Division's 186 inspectors completed 148,045 inspections of the more than 44,600 food service establishments, 36,500 lodging establishments and 5,000 temporary food service events licensed by us.

We participate in the U.S. FDA National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards and utilize those benchmark standards for continuous improvement in food safety operations. At this time, we have passed audits on five of the nine standards.

We recognize the importance of education in food safety and integrate education into our program by conducting

inspections with the goal of educating operators on proper sanitation and safety. This educational focus continues into the administrative process through our Hospitality Education Program, which provides educational classes and printed information to licensees and the public. Last fiscal year, the Hospitality Education Program conducted 4,091 seminars with 26,434 attendees. However, Florida law authorizes the Division to assess fines for violations and to suspend or revoke an operator's license. Last fiscal year we issued 4,342 administrative cases for non-compliance and closed 600 restaurants to protect the public health, safety and welfare.

As part of the food service licensing process, we complete approximately

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At the same time, internally we must demand that suppliers, restaurants and retail stores provide solid action plans for long term permanent improvements. In addition, they must make ethical decisions that do not put the public at risk.

Having several audits a year for each individual supplier can be a financial burden. Instead, we should all take a hard look and perhaps adopt an audit strategy set forth in the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI). Making sure that an audit is thorough and revealing helps to strengthen HACCP, Food Safety and Sanitation.

A couple of weeks ago we had the opportunity to come together as an Association and increase our knowledge of food safety and sanitation strategies during our Annual Educational Conference May 5-7<sup>th</sup> at the International Plaza Resort and Spa in Orlando. Even though this a tough economic time, our turnout was great. There were speakers that inspired you to make a change for the better. There was also a lot of networking and fun. We also kicked off our newest way to network with those who may have answers or advice regarding questions – the FAFP Forum. You can access the forum and sign up to share your ideas and thoughts. The new website can be found at [www.fafpnet.ning.com](http://www.fafpnet.ning.com). Look forward to seeing you on the web.

Regards,

Eric Martin  
President, FAFP

Please enjoy the following pictures of our FAFP members at the Sleuth's Dinner Theater FAFP AEC Event.



*(Continued from page 4)*

5,200 plan reviews annually. We centralized all plan review activity to Tallahassee as of January 20, 2009. Before this centralization, the district offices completed all plan reviews. Centralizing plan review has already improved overall customer service by reducing the time required to complete plan reviews, creating a stronger team environment, and providing a single resource for licensees to draw upon. The centralized plan review office has also enabled implementation of electronic storage of all plans and supporting documents, thereby reducing costs and improving our ability to recall and review plans.

Currently, our inspectors conduct electronic inspections on PDAs. We are continuously exploring the latest technology for the next phase of the electronic inspection process. In addition to improving the electronic inspection process, we hope to further enhance our program with real time electronic communication with inspectors statewide. We believe utilizing technology can enhance food safety by improving data transfer and increasing communication within the Division and with the public.

More information on the Division is available on our Internet website at [www.MyFloridaLicense.com/dbpr/hr](http://www.MyFloridaLicense.com/dbpr/hr)

Debra K. Williams is the Plan Review Manager, Office of Program Quality for the Division of Hotels & Restaurants. Email: [Debra.Williams@dbpr.state.fl.us](mailto:Debra.Williams@dbpr.state.fl.us)



## Florida Annual Education Conference 2008 Award Recipient Recap

In case you were unable to attend the 2009 Annual Education Conference, below is a listing of the awards and recipients for the 2008 Food Safety Awards that were given out.



**Bronson Lane Award** is awarded to an individual who exhibits the highest level of knowledge, skill, commitment and dedication to the ideals of food safety during their lifetime of service to Industry, Government or Academia. The award went to Kendall Burkett, DBPR Tallahassee.

**President's Award** is awarded to an individual who exhibits the highest level of commitment and dedication to accomplishing the goals of FAFP and its members. The award went to Zeb Blanton, SGS US Testing Company

**Sanitarian of the Year Award** is awarded to an individual who exhibits the highest level of proficiency in the field of Food Safety Sanitation inspection or Quality Assurance in the field of food service, food inspection, processing, manufacturing, distribution, wholesale and retail for all areas in industry, government and academia related to food safety. The award was given to Debby Newslow, DL Newslow & Associates

**Laboratorian of the Year Award** is awarded to a FAFP Member for their contributions to the ideals of FAFP in the commitment in utilizing and developing innovative and practical laboratory techniques to support food safety through their endeavors in the laboratory. The award went to Dr. Gillian Folkes Dagan, ABC Research Laboratories

**Special Recognition Award** is given to a FAFP Member for their overall contributions to FAFP. The award went to Natalie Dyenson, Wal-Mart

Congratulations !

## Scholarships

The Florida Association for Food Protection (FAFP) offers two academic scholarships each year. One \$500 scholarship will be granted for the Spring Semester and another \$500 scholarship will be granted for the Fall Semester. Applications for the Fall 2009 Semester are due by July 1, 2009. Check the FAFP website for more details: <http://www.fafp.net/students.php>

FAFP is pleased to announce that Laura Strawn won the FAFP scholarship for this spring.

Laura is a Master's student in food science studying pathogens on fresh and frozen cut tropical fruits. She is a member of the FSHN Club, and participates on their Product Development, College Bowl, and Dairy Judging Teams. Laura was recently elected as the Southeast Area Representative to the IFT Student Association, representing UF and several other schools on a national level. Subsequently, she successfully campaigned to bring their regional College Bowl competition here to UF this spring, an event UF had not hosted for nearly 10 years. She did a wonderful job organizing and hosting College Bowl. Additionally, Laura was instrumental in reviving the UF Chapter of Phi Tau Sigma, the Food Science Honor Society, and currently serves as its Vice President. She is also Vice President of the new Gator Chapter of the Florida Association for Food Protection. She currently has three poster abstracts in submission to regional and national conferences, is the co-author of a book chapter in preparation, and has a critical review in preparation. Laura is also an Executive Board Member of the FSHN Graduate Student Club.



L-R: Dr. Ron Schmidt, Laura Strawn, Dr. Michelle Danyluk, Dr. Harry Sitren (UF/



Dr. Mary Keith (FI Section IFT Chair) and Laura Strawn

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How do human pathogens persist and survive on produce during growing, harvest, post harvest handling, processing and/or distribution?

This is just a few of the areas of potential research as identified in a collaborative effort between industry and academia. Several research projects are underway at university, government and private laboratories across the country. The FDA and USDA continue their field projects as well.

Even with all of the research needs, our

food supply is the safest in the world, produce consumption in the U.S. continues to grow and the efforts of the produce industry will always aim to raise the bar on food safety bar. Innovative solutions are being developed and deployed regularly. So tonight, have a nice salad for dinner and know the grower, shipper, processor and their families are also eating the same produce. Oh, and the last part of Secretary Rumsfeld comment regarding the Unknown Unknowns: we will just have to wait and see what we didn't know we didn't know.



## Welcome Our New FAFP Members

Oscar Reksten - Central Seafood Co., Inc.

Olaolu Ajayi

Carl E. Anderson - Ecolab/Kay Chemicals

Lila P. Barry - University of Florida

Jonathan Bentley - Dundee CGA

Eric Dreyer - University of Florida

Amanda Eiden - Hillsborough County Health Dept.

Jeff Fuson - Chemstar Corporation

Sleiman Geagea - Walt Disney World Co.

Steven F. Grover - International Food Safety Group

Michael J. Luczynski - Boar's Head Provisions

William J. Lulves - Coca-Cola Company

John Marshall - Dundee CGA

William E. McCullough

Warren R. McDougle - Hillsborough County Health Dept.

Barry S. Michaels - B. Michaels Group

Jill Roberts - University of Florida

Garry Schneider - FDACS Food Safety

Tony Lahnston - Tropical Nut & Fruit

JoAnne Theodore - Greek Island Spice Inc.

Ventura Gonzalez - Greek Island Spice Inc.

Andres Arteaga - Chemstar Corporation

Marc Craen - United Juice Companies of America

Kiley Harper-Larsen - Hugh Branch Inc.

Shivanand Sing - Tropical Fruit & Nut

Blane Olson - Clearsmoke Technologies Inc.

Belanse Oriol - National Fruit Corp.

Peter Dalia - Winn-Dixie Stores Inc.

Carter Elbon - Seminol Tribe of Florida

Fred Jaeger - Hillsborough Community College

Raul Guerrero - Corman Ship Supplies

Angelica D'Elia - National Fruit Corp.

Isabelle Salgado - Winn-Dixie Stores Inc.

Elizabeth Darragh - Sensitech Inc.

Susan Bitzer - Gary's Seafood Specialties

Jerry Hatch - Pest West USA

Robert Gates - TUV USA

Tom Ford - Ecolab/Kay Chemicals

Burney Veazey - Diversified Maintenance

Peter Belusic - Diversified Maintenance

Alan Butcher - Diversified Maintenance

## Become a Member of FAFP

We are always looking for people interested in joining our organization



### Who Can Join?

The Florida Association for Food Protection is looking for professionals in the Food Industry to join us in enhancing the level of education, service and commitment for Food Safety Officials in Industry, Government and Academia within the State of Florida.

### Benefits of Joining

Your membership demonstrates your support and commitment to promoting food safety in Florida. It helps the Association in the development of procedures, new legislation, ideas and methods. Your membership allows us to educate food safety professionals in all areas, advancing our knowledge and awareness of safe food handling.

### How Can You Join?

To join, we need a completed application and membership dues for the first year. Please contact us for more information and a membership application at: [FAFP2000@hotmail.com](mailto:FAFP2000@hotmail.com), or check out our website at [www.fafp.net](http://www.fafp.net).



If you are interested in submitting an article for the next FAFP newsletter, please contact the Newsletter Editor at [jennifer.walker@disney.com](mailto:jennifer.walker@disney.com)

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Exhibitor & Silent Auction pictures from the recent AEC Conference:

