



MAFP NEWSLETTER

The Metropolitan Association for Food Protection

Volume 12, Issue 2

Fall 2010



*Announcing Our
Fall 2010 Seminar*
October 13, 2010, 8:30a.m. to 3:30p.m.

**Douglass Student Center
Rutgers, New Brunswick, NJ**

< See Details Starting on Page 7 >

♦ MAFP HAS GONE GREEN ♦

MAFP has gone green! Paper copies of the newsletter are no longer printed and mailed. If you know anyone who would like to receive our newsletter, please send name and e-mail address on your registration form or membership application, or send an e-mail to cschwar@co.warren.nj.us. As always, our newsletter will be available on our web site www.metrofoodprotection.org.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Your Perception May Be Your Reality

Alan L.Talarsky, MPH



I was reading an interesting study of Taiwanese consumers on how their individual health concerns impact their attitudes towards consuming functional foods (foods perceived to be nutritious and health-supporting). The format was a self-reported questionnaire study comprised of 633 consumers. Not surprisingly, the researchers found that their "modern health worries" directly impacts their attitude and willingness to use functional foods. We see this all the time, really, of people who regularly consume dietary supplements, purchase organic only foods, etc. if they perceive that these foods will positively impact their health.

I'm certain that this concept can be applied toward food safety and which foods we choose to purchase and eat. I saw a trailer on the side of the road selling tomatoes at a very good price. So, you might tell me, go buy some - if you're worried about the source, then just wash it really well. However, the food safety professional in me tells me "Don't forget that tomatoes can absorb salmonella into the pulp" and so I drive by the roadside vendor and purchase more expensive tomatoes at my local supermarket. My perception is that the supermarket chain has a good reputation for vetting out unsanitary suppliers and so I'm willing to pay more for that comfortable thought.

I sometimes do the same thing if I'm away from home and in the mood for a hamburger. While the thought of a home-style cooked burger at a mom-and-pop joint appeals to me, I can't help but be concerned about the way it's handled and cooked. So I'm probably sacrificing flavor for safety by going to the fast food restaurants instead, where their execution of food safety, as a whole, is better than the mom-and-pop places.

Does your perception of food safety impact the choices of what and where you eat?

Spotlights on Jessica Albrecht



Jessica is currently the Second Vice President for the Metropolitan Association for Food Protection and has been a board member since 2007. Upon entering the food industry she was referred to MAFP by a local consultant and immediately joined the board to help in any way she could. Being "green" in the industry did not stop her from getting involved to help a local industry and regulatory association. Jessica has a B.S. in Finance and Marketing from Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, CT. She worked in finance for two years after graduating and realized that she needed something different. Jessica made her way into the food industry and currently works for RK Environmental Services as an Account Executive. She met the owner of RK Environmental at an MAFP Seminar! Her responsibilities include managing her clients, customizing food safety solutions for existing and new clientele, expanding the footprint of the company as well as supporting clients with any food safety initiative they may be going through or looking to go through. Jessica looks forward to and is working toward the growth of the MAFP membership, seminar attendance and organization. Jessica resides in Glen Rock, NJ with her boyfriend and 125 lb Bernese mountain dog, Max.

USDA and DuPont Joint Project to Address Emerging E. coli Serotypes

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) has recently announced a joint project with DuPont Qualicon aimed at developing analytical tools to detect rare pathogenic strains of E. coli that are not regulated and have been causing increasing instances of food contamination. Tests already exist for detecting E. coli O157:H7, the type of shiga toxin-producing E. coli (STEC) most frequently associated with global food contamination outbreaks, including the May 2010 E. coli O145 outbreak in 5 states. The cause of this outbreak was due to contaminated shredded romaine lettuce from one processing facility.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control estimate that non-O157 STEC bacteria are responsible for 36,000 illnesses, 1,000 hospitalizations and 30 deaths annually. The majority of these infections have been associated with six specific serotypes: STEC O26, O45, O103, O111, O121, and O145 (also called 'The Big 6'). ARS will be working with DuPont to develop an effective test for the 'Big 6' in food.

ARS microbiologist Pina Fratamico stated, "The USDA continually looks for opportunities to collaborate in ways that will expedite research to assist regulatory agencies and move technologies into the marketplace. This collaborative project to develop a discriminating STEC test is a good fit with our mission."

The USDA already uses DuPont's BAX System to monitor for E. coli O157:H7 bacteria in the products that they regulate. The automated system uses a range of methods - including polymerase chain reaction (PCR) assays, tableted reagents, and optimized media to detect *Salmonella* spp., *Listeria* spp., *Listeria monocytogenes*, E. coli O157:H7, *Enterobacter sakazakii*, *Campylobacter*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Vibrio* spp., and yeast and mold.

For more information please consult:
http://www2.dupont.com/Qualicon/en_US/news_events/article20100802.html

Welcome New Board Members!

The MAFP executive board has recently been enriched by the addition of several new board members: Susan Algeo, Gary Cohen, Alfredo Cortes, Anthony Simas and Virginia Wheatley. Please be sure to welcome them to the board at our next meeting. MAFP is currently looking to add at least one more Member at Large to the Board. If you are a current MAFP member, and would like to join the Board, please contact Carol Schwar at cschwar@co.warren.nj.us or via telephone at 908-475-7960.

Why are produce-associated outbreaks on the rise over the last 30 years?

By Jeanne Garbarino, Principal REHS, Vineland Health Department

Spinach, green onions, tomatoes, lettuce, cantaloupes, parsley and basil have all been in the news recently for being associated with 75% of the foodborne outbreaks linked to fresh produce. Aren't raw veggies and fruit supposed to be good for you? Well, they are if they are not contaminated from outside sources!



1. **30 years ago**, we did not purchase as much fresh produce from so many areas of our country and world. 28% of our fresh produce now comes from foreign countries. However, 64% of the produce-related outbreaks originate from domestic sources.
2. **Our technologies have increased to improve our detection** of an outbreak. Scientists can "fingerprint" the specific disease and see if a case in California matches a case in New Jersey. Now we can determine if cases are caused by eating the same foods all across the country. We probably missed some before.
3. **Four sources of contamination are of importance** in produce outbreaks: soil, water, health and practices of farm workers, and animals (both wild and domestic). For example, the source of the spinach outbreak a few years ago was determined to be the feces of wild pigs in the farm fields. FYI: Proper cooking will kill harmful viruses and bacteria.
4. **The location and time of year** also affects the chances of harmful contamination on produce. For example, Salmonella is known to grow on tomatoes grown on the east coast in the summer. E. coli is more likely to be on lettuces grown in the Salinas Valley of California in the fall for unknown reasons.

So what can you do to ensure that food establishments serve fresh produce safely to their customers? Food establishments should:

- ✓ **Rinse produce** well with clean water that is at least 10° F warmer than the produce. The warmer water will prevent the bacteria from infiltrating into the flesh of the produce and allow any contamination to rinse off more easily. Scrub brushes can be used, but soap should never be used.
- ✓ **Store ready to eat or cut produce at 41° F.** E. coli, for example, will start to grow on leafy greens at a temperature as low as 46° F. At 33° to 41° F, E. coli dies off.
- ✓ **Uncover fresh produce in the refrigerator.** Studies have proven that Norovirus survives very well when produce is sealed up in a bag. After one day uncovered, 30% of the virus had died. On the covered produce, no virus had died.
- ✓ **Use of produce washes** will reduce some germs that are attached to the surface of the produce, but are not a substitute for washing.
- ✓ **The hands of employees are clean** prior to handling the produce. The equipment they use must be clean as well. 

NEW COLUMN !
"Thinking Food Packaging"

In our world consumed with modern technology and fast paced life we often take things for granted. Such is the case with Food Packaging and it's relationship with food safety. For good reason, focus is primarily on proper temperature controls, handling and sourcing as history has proven them to be the primary concerns that could affect the health and welfare of the food consuming public. Food packaging is given very little consideration in the factors contributing to safe food.

That's OK! The general public has enough to worry about!

It's to the credit of most processors and food packaging professionals that food packaging is not a concern. Within these organizations it's normal policy that food safety and food packaging go hand in hand. With an ever-increasing distribution cycle there is an ongoing demand for innovative ways to provide proper packaging to insure that the food product is kept fresh and safe over longer periods of time. Whether it's the correct film needed for a MAP (Modified Atmosphere Packaging) package for meat or cheese processors or a snack food company looking to keep their energy bar fresh for 12 months. Proper food packaging is a vital component to insure food safety. Incorrect packaging could promote premature degradation, biological growth and potential health hazards.

So the next time you purchase a package of meat, cheese or candy bar, take note of the packaging and appreciate in most cases that the manufacturer has invested quite a bit of time and resources into making sure that the product you are about to consume is fresh and safe. 

Gary Cohen
Food Packaging Specialist
Supply One

(Gary is a new MAFP board member. Please welcome Gary and thank him for his contribution).

**Congratulations to Our
MAFP 2010 Sustaining Members**

Health & Sanitation Systems
Ted Diskind
Highland Park, NJ

RK Environmental Services
Hank Hirsch
Cresskill, NJ

Readington Farms, Inc.
Patrick Boyle
Whitehouse, NJ

Weber Scientific
Fred Weber
Hamilton, NJ

Fruitcrown Products Corp.
Eric Ducey
Farmingdale, NY

True World Foods NY, LLC
Helder Cabrita
Elizabeth, NJ

Thank you for your support

**Consider Becoming a MAFP
Sustaining Member!**

*This extra level of support is
vital to the continued success of
our association*

Sustaining members will be recognized in both our Spring and Fall Seminar programs by being announced in the opening remarks at the seminars. In addition, special notice will be given in our newsletters and on our website. A sustaining membership includes one paid individual membership. Contact Carol Schwar for more information.

Protecting Highly Susceptible Populations: Their Health Is In Our Hands

Virginia Wheatley, Research Scientist 2, NJDHSS

As food safety professionals, we work hard day in and day out to protect the health of the public we serve. When our work affects people who are highly susceptible to foodborne illness, that responsibility becomes even more critical.

In 1996, unpasteurized apple cider products tainted with *E.coli* bacteria sickened 65 people, over half of whom were children. Very young children are considered to be a *highly susceptible population*. According to Chapter 24, this term means “a group of persons who are more likely than other populations to experience foodborne disease because they are immunocompromised, or older adults and in a facility that provides health care or assisted living facilities, such as a hospital or nursing home; or preschool age children in a facility that provides custodial care, such as a day care center.”

The effects of foodborne illness are amplified in highly susceptible populations. A pregnant woman who contracts a foodborne illness can miscarry, or her fetus can suffer permanent, damaging health effects. For example, a large *Listeria*-related outbreak in 1985 that was linked to soft cheese caused 19 stillbirths and 10 infant fatalities. Foodborne illness in elderly and immunocompromised individuals can also be very deadly.

The elderly, and those with HIV/AIDS, diabetes, cancer, or undergoing kidney dialysis are especially susceptible to foodborne illness. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) estimates that 2-3% of foodborne illnesses lead to chronic conditions, like major organ damage. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), says that mortality rates in elderly people with foodborne illness can soar up to 10 times higher than the general population.

Chapter 24 has more stringent requirements for establishments that serve highly susceptible populations. For example, protein-rich foods such as meat, fish, shellfish, and eggs shall not be served raw or undercooked. Seed sprouts, as well as juices that display a warning label, are also taboo.

The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) Food and Drug Safety Program urges local health departments to ensure that:

- soft cheeses made from raw milk are never served to highly susceptible populations, particularly the elderly and pregnant women;
- for children especially, burgers are not served raw or undercooked, but are always fully cooked to an internal temperature of 155°F;
- all juice served is prepackaged and obtained pasteurized, and/or is shelf-stable;
- only pasteurized eggs (not shell eggs) are used in meringue, Caesar salad dressing, Hollandaise/Béarnaise sauce, eggnog, mayonnaise, and mousses;
- food workers with vomiting or diarrhea are restricted to non-food operations, or sent home and do not return without a medical clearance.

Routine food safety precautions such as washing hands thoroughly and cooking, cooling, and reheating foods properly are especially critical to those preparing food for highly susceptible populations.

This September, the theme of National Food Safety Education Month is “High Risk Customers: Serve Your Fare With Extra Care.” To help spread the word, the Food and Drug Safety Program is conducting presentations to food safety organizations, issuing a press release, and promoting educational materials. Local health departments who are interested in involving their community in National Food Safety Month can contact Virginia Wheatley, Research Scientist 2, at (609)826-4935, or virginia.wheatley@doh.state.nj.us.

Additionally, the Food and Drug Safety Program is offering local health departments and the foodservice industry a variety of free printed materials, many of which are relevant to highly susceptible populations. Some examples include “Your Baby Eats What You Eat” (available in English and Spanish) or “Food Safety for People With Weak Immune Systems.” Contact Ms. Wheatley for a sample packet of publications, and to order as many materials as needed. These and other publications are always available at:

www.state.nj.us/health/foodanddrugsafety/index.shtml 

(Virginia is a new MAFP board member. Please welcome Virginia and thank her for her contribution).

SQF® FLASH (Quick News You Can Use)

By Dr. Tatiana Lorca, Manager Food Supply Quality Assurance Training, Ecolab

What Is Safe Quality Food—SQF?

SQF is a food safety and quality management program for your entire food supply chain. It lays out the requirements that a food supplier must follow to control both the safety and quality of a product.

SQF—one of the four food safety standards included in the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) - offers two formats: SQF 1000 for on-farm programs and SQF 2000 for food manufacturing. Once a facility is audited and verified to comply with the SQF code through a third party certification process, the facility is certified for one year.

What Are The Benefits of SQF?

SQF can help reduce the number of audits each supplier plant must execute as well as the costs associated with audits. It allows suppliers to:

- ❖ Manage food safety and quality simultaneously and effectively
- ❖ Demonstrate ongoing responsibility to meet their customers' requirements

The Safe Quality Food Institute (SQFI) has a dynamic online database (SQF Quickfire, www.sqfi.com) to host supplier certification details and audit reports, and also offers communication support 24/7 between suppliers.

SQF Questions from The Field:

Q: How do I validate chemical interventions for pathogen inactivation?

A: Products used to sanitize hard food contact surfaces such as food processing equipment are required to be registered with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA). EPA requires the use of specific test methods to demonstrate and validate efficacy. Manufacturers of EPA registered sanitizers are required to submit a label, formula and efficacy data for review and approval by EPA prior to the product's use. Suppliers should be prepared to show proof the product is EPA registered for use on hard food contact surfaces against the organisms of concern.

Check to ensure the sanitizer is being used correctly by carefully reading and following the directions for use on the EPA registered label. Also, carefully read the label for any conditions to avoid. By following the EPA registered label directions, you can ensure that the product will work effectively within your process. If necessary, the supplier should be able to supply a summary of efficacy data provided to US EPA for the purposes of registering the sanitizer.

March 2009

SEMINAR AGENDA

Wednesday, October 13, 2010

Douglass Student Center, Rutgers, New Brunswick, NJ

Please register by October 6. See page 9.

8:30 – 9:00	Registration – Continental breakfast
9:00 – 9:15	Welcoming Remarks
9:15 – 10:15	Critical Paths to an Effective Allergen Control Program Kevin Byrne – Food Safety Manager, American Almond
10:15 – 10:30	Break
10:30 – 11:30	Sampling Techniques Joe Priore – Supervisory Investigator, USDA
11:30 – 12:30	GFSI: An In Depth Review of the “New” Food Safety Standard Rich Gibson – Director of Food Safety, RK Environmental Services
12:30 – 1:30	Lunch – Hot Buffet

1:30 – 2:30	KEYNOTE SPEAKER Salmonella Prevention and Control Stan Bailey – President, IAFP
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2:30 – 3:30	HACCP in the Changing Landscape of Food Safety Regulations Donna Schaffner – Associate Director, Food Safety, Quality Assurance and Training, Rutgers Food Innovation Center
3 :30	Evaluations and Adjournment

ATTENTION!

New Jersey Licensed Health Officers and Registered Environmental Health Specialists

This program has been submitted for approval by the NJ Department of Health & Senior Services for 5.0 continuing education (CE) contact hours towards renewal of a New Jersey Health Officer license and/or Registered Environmental Health Specialist license. Please check our website www.metrofoodprotection.org for updated credit information.

Please don't print more than you need. Just print page 8.

REGISTRATION FORM – 2010 MAFP FALL SEMINAR 10-13-10

REGISTRATION DEADLINE 10-6-10

NO REGISTRATION BY TELEPHONE

Name _____ Title _____

Company _____

Mailing Address (Please use the address at which you wish to receive future mailings).

Phone (day) _____ Fax _____

E-mail _____
(In case we need to reach you regarding payment, etc.)

PLEASE CHECK REGISTRATION TYPE:

- Member Registration \$40 (\$50 after 10-6-10)
- Registration and ½ Year Membership \$55 (\$65 after 10-6-10) Become a member now and get the member rate. Memberships run from January 1 through December 31.
- Non-member Registration \$75 (\$85 after 10-6-10)

PLEASE CHECK PAYMENT METHOD:

- Check _____
- Voucher / Purchase Order _____
- Other _____

- Please make checks, vouchers, and purchase orders payable to **MAFP** and mail to Carol Schwar, MAFP, c/o Warren County Health Dept., 700 Oxford Rd., Oxford, NJ 07863.
- Directions to the Douglass Student Center are on page 9. Note: parking passes are no longer needed but you must park in the parking deck.
- Questions? Contact Carol Schwar at cschwar@co.warren.nj.us, phone (908) 475-7960, or fax (908) 475-7964. Sorry, but we cannot provide registration confirmation.

Registration Information

You will only be registered by returning this registration form. This can be done by mail or fax. Please do not send more than one copy. Please indicate the method of payment (i.e. check, purchase order, etc.) **Checks, vouchers and purchase orders must be payable to MAFP.**

Sorry, but we cannot provide registration confirmation.

DIRECTIONS To Douglass College Student Center

From New Jersey Turnpike (North or South) – Turn off at Exit 9, bear right after the toll booths and follow signs for "Route 18 North - New Brunswick." Stay to the left to continue on Route 18 North. Proceed along Route 18 North. Follow directions below **From Route 18**.

From Garden State Parkway Southbound (from northern points) – Turn off at Exit 129 for the New Jersey Turnpike and head south. Turn off the Turnpike at Exit 9, bear right after the tollbooths and follow signs for "Route 18 North - New Brunswick." Stay to the left to continue on Route 18 North. Follow the directions below **From Route 18**.

From Garden State Parkway Northbound (from southern points) – Turn off at Exit 105 and follow signs for Route 18 North. After approximately 24 miles, you will pass the entrance for the New Jersey Turnpike. Continue on Route 18 North. Follow the directions below **From Route 18**.

From Route 1 (North or South) – From Route 1 Southbound, proceed past the turn for Route 18 to College Farm Road. Turn right onto College Farm Road. Turn left at four-way stop onto Dudley Rd. Turn right onto Nichol Ave. Turn right onto Lipman Dr. Lot 70 and parking deck are on left.

From Route 1 Northbound, proceed to the "Squibb Dr./College Farm Rd." exit and follow above directions.

From Route 287 (North or South) – Turn off at Exit 9 "River Road, Bound Brook, Highland Park." Proceed East on River Road toward Highland Park. Make a right onto Route 18 South (exit after the traffic light at Landing Lane). Cross the Raritan River on the John Lynch Memorial Bridge. Continue on Route 18 South. Follow signs for the New Brunswick exits, and make a right at the Commercial Avenue exit. Proceed to the second light, and make a left onto George Street. Proceed on George Street to the first traffic light and make a right onto Nichol Avenue. Turn left onto Lipman Dr. Lot 70 and parking deck are on the left.

From Route 18 – About 500 feet after the traffic light at Paulus Blvd. stay to the right and follow the signs for "All New Brunswick Exits". At the first light make a left onto Commercial Avenue. At the second light, make a left onto George Street. Turn right at the first traffic light onto Nichol Avenue. Turn left onto Lipman Dr. Lot 70 and parking deck are on the left.

NOTE: You must park in the parking deck. The exit from the deck is near the building. Walk past tables with umbrellas. Building entrance is on the right.

MAFP is an affiliate of the **International Association for Food Protection (IAFP)**, a non-profit association of foodsafety professionals. Comprised of a diverse membership of over 3,000 members from 50 nations, the Association is dedicated to the education and service of its members, as well as industry personnel. For more information, and a membership application, you may visit the IAFP website: www.foodprotection.org or call 800-369-6337.



Please visit our website at www.metrofoodprotection.org



MAFP EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

2010

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