



MAFP NEWSLETTER
The Metropolitan Association for Food Protection
 Volume 14, Issue 1
 Spring 2012



Announcing Our Spring 2012 Seminar

May 2, 2012 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM

**Cook Campus Center
Rutgers, New Brunswick, NJ**

The seminar offers 5 CEUs with a variety
of different speakers on the agenda.
Additional information may be found on
page 6.



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



In 2011, the CDC estimates that 3,000 deaths and 48 million illnesses associated with eating contaminated food occurred. 128,000 sick people were hospitalized.

Historically, chicken and dairy products were considered the most dangerous foods in the industry. In the 80's, it was the Salmonella scare with the chicken and the egg, whichever came first, and we conducted inspections in diners and checked for over easy eggs. In the 1990's, ground beef made the headlines and joined the high risk foods list. Nobody wanted to be responsible for killing kids by undercooking hamburgers. Then came produce, starting with the infamous cantaloupes and sprouts. The list of produce items implicated in foodborne illness outbreaks has continued to lengthen in the past decade.

Knowing which specific food caused foodborne illness is important when following up on a suspect case or investigating outbreaks. I recently learned that in most cases, including 42% of outbreak investigations, which account for only 5% of all foodborne illness cases in the US, the causative food remains unknown. It is known that the top four pathogens that cause most hospitalizations and deaths are *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, *Listeria Monocytogenes* and *E. coli* 0157:H7.

We should be concerned with *preventing* foodborne illness, not just decreasing contamination. Safe handling and adherence to critical control points during food preparation will decrease pathogens. Pathogens found in the environment such as *Listeria Monocytogenes* often far outnumber those in the product. Sometimes, different serotypes are responsible. Nonetheless, proper cleaning and sanitizing of equipment is critical.

The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) mentions "high risk" foods, but few data exist to determine which foods pose a higher risk of causing illness. Data collection needs to improve in order to define information on infections caused by the consumption of contaminated food as well as the cause of the illness. Most people with foodborne illness don't seek healthcare, so illnesses are never reported. Also, when medical care is sought, recent food history recall is often poor, and physicians often fail to provide enough detail on reports. The focus of the FDA's Risk Communication Advisory Committee is to improve attribution of data, provide ongoing performance standards, and accurately communicate risks/hazards to the industry and regulators. As food companies increase their ability to rapidly track products, we will be able to improve traceability. However, will high risk foods ever become "low risk" and be removed from the list, or will the list of high risk foods continue to grow? 

Spotlight on Virginia Wheatley



Virginia has been a MAFP board member for two years now. Participation in MAFP allows her to become more active in the field of food safety, which is one of her many passions in life. She is also a board member of NJEHA.

She first learned about food safety and food facility inspections in 1999 when she became a Public Health Technician in the U.S. Air Force. During her military service, she developed a passion for public health. After the Air Force, she enrolled in graduate school. She now holds a Masters in Public Health from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, and successfully attained her REHS license in 2005. She spent two additional years as a commissioned officer in the NJ Air National Guard, separating in 2009 as a Captain.

In 2006, she was thrilled to accept a job offer at the NJ Department of Health. In her current position, Virginia juggles a variety of duties including educational outreach, wholesale food/cosmetics and shellfish HACCP inspections, training, food defense, and special projects in conjunction with local health departments and industry organizations. Her specialties include packaged food labeling and imported dietary supplements.

Virginia aspires to be a food safety trainer at some point in the future. She enjoys public speaking, and has recently become a member of Toastmasters International. She is also finishing up an on-line Masters Degree in Food Safety through Michigan State University.

Prior to her career in this field, Virginia was an English language teacher, and spent 1 year teaching English in Russia. She has three main passions in life - food, travel, and animals. She loves spending time with family, and doing anything associated with food such as cooking/baking, taking food-related classes, or attending food festivals. She jumps at any opportunity to travel - the more exotic the country, the better - and has been all over the world. She adores animals, and enjoys hanging out with her cat, frog, and three chinchillas. 

MAFP Finance Report for 1st Quarter 2012

Starting Balance	\$31,768.06
Income	\$3,487.55
Expenses	\$965.00
Ending Balance	\$34,290.61

The Fight Against Raw Milk in New Jersey

Raw milk has been implicated as the source of numerous outbreaks dating back to before the turn of the 20th century. Pasteurization, the heating of milk to a sufficiently-high enough temperature for a minimum period of time in order to kill all pathogenic bacteria, was considered as early as the 1840's in response to high infant mortality rates attributed to tuberculosis, typhoid, and other pathogens. Milk pasteurization occurred chiefly due to the efforts of Dr. Abraham Jacobi, financed by Nathan Strauss in New York City during the 1890's.

Wide-scale milk pasteurization in the U.S. did not begin until the 1920s. As a result, infant mortality and morbidity rates due to pathogenic infection plummeted with the advent of pasteurization. It is considered one of the cornerstone achievements of public health.

However, New Jersey is in danger of reversing this 100+ years of public health achievement. The NJ Legislature is currently considering a Bill to Permit the Sale of Raw Milk, Assembly Bill Number 518 and Senate Bill Number 279. Currently the sale or distribution of raw milk and milk products (except hard cheese aged 60 days or more) are prohibited, although the consumption of raw milk is not. Fortunately, the Bill only provides for farm side sale. Sale and distribution to retail and wholesale food establishments would not be permitted.

While the bill references the protection of public health, the standards promulgated by it are of little to no impact in doing so. A raw milk permit holder must certify that no growth hormones will be used in the production of raw milk, a conspicuously-posted sign of at least 8" by 11" with at least 1" sized lettering stating that raw milk does not provide the protection of pasteurization, along with a similar warning label on the bottled milk. Also, bimonthly testing of raw milk for somatic cell count, heterotrophic plate count, and coliforms are required to be conducted by permit holders at their expense.

Unsanitary practices such as hand-bottling and access to hand-capping would be permitted. "Cow sharing," which is like holding shares or stock in a cow whereby each shareholder obtains their fraction of the cow's milk output, would be legalized with no licensing, inspection, or testing applicable to such operations. Several other provisions of the bill are inferior to the sanitary requirements applicable to pasteurized milk plants.

In 2011, the bill had advanced through committee and passed by the General Assembly. Because the bill was not yet considered by the Senate, it expired in the last legislative session and was reintroduced by the bill sponsors for the 2012 Legislative Session. As of this writing, the bill has been presented to and passed by the Assembly's Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee and presented to the Senate's Economic Growth Committee.

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Thinking of Food Packaging

I really like new technology. I am just amazed by the way we can communicate and stay in touch with the push of a button. It is truly amazing! Even in the area of food packaging, we are discovering new technologies that increase food processors' ability to extend shelf life and improve the freshness of food products.

For example, one fairly new innovation that has emerged in the past few years is referred to as "active packaging." Passive packaging is primarily focused on the containment of atmosphere within a package to keep the product fresh. On the other hand, active packaging is packaging that actually interacts with the product and the atmosphere within the package to improve the food product after it is packaged.

For instance, there are now packaging films that contain a layer of oxygen scavengers in tiny nano particles that actually absorb residual oxygen remaining in the package as the package makes it way through the distribution cycle. Such technology is still in the infancy stages but research and development is being invested into these types of "active" films to produce fresher food.

There is still a great deal of work to be done, as some of these films have been known to create an odor when combined with certain foods. This is especially true in relation to foods with high fat content such as certain luncheon meats.

Special requirements are also needed for the equipment that applies the film. However, research and development continues to be invested into these types of films and processes because if we can reduce oxygen within a package, we can also reduce microbiological growth.

The growth and development of this type of packaging will only help us to continue to package the safest food in the world. I love new technology! 

Gary Cohen
Food Packaging Specialist
Supply One

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The raw milk special interest groups have successfully convinced the Legislature that this issue is an economic one, rather than a public health issue by the simple fact that the bill was not assigned to both houses' health committees. These interest groups claim that the issue is a matter of choice, but is it so for the children who will be fed this hazardous substance?

Despite the scientific evidence provided by U.S. Food and Drug Administration, U.S. Centers for Disease Control, various public health associations, and retail food associations in opposition to this bill, transcripts of committee meetings indicate that public health concerns were not considered.

We food protection professionals are constituents of the Legislature, too. Make your voice heard by contacting your legislators to vote in opposition of the raw milk bill. You can find the provisions of the bill, as well as legislators' names and contact information, at the Legislature's website at: <http://www.njleg.state.nj.us>.


Alan Talarsky
Environmental Scientist 1
New Jersey Department of Health

Mojitos, Food Safety, and the Longest Cigar in the World

For most Americans who don't have family connections, Cuba is a forbidden destination. So when I was presented with a once in a lifetime opportunity to latch on to a group trip to Cuba with a friend, I jumped! We were able to travel under special educational visas as "delegates" in February of this year.

I could spend hours discussing Cuba's totalitarian police regime and the longest embargo in history, the colorful and lively art that dots the streets of Havana, and the American classic cars that are everywhere. However, all that is beyond the scope of our MAFP newsletter. Instead, I will focus what is most relevant to our members.

Our visit to a Cuban culinary institute included an early morning welcome mojito, a food safety presentation, and a cooking demonstration followed by a prepared lunch. The institute's doctor presented overly basic food safety info to our group of nutrition and food professionals. It was elementary, but his talk gave insight into Cuba's regulatory food system.

Cubans lack the wide variety of foods that Americans are accustomed to having, but I learned that their laws and regulatory system are very similar to ours. Like New Jersey, regulation is a responsibility of the state, but inspections are conducted by local inspectors. I made a point to ask my burning question after the presentation concluded. I said that I understand Cuba has these laws in place, but in reality, how well are they actually followed in food establishments? The doctor laughed rather uncomfortably, then added that the laws are only followed about "50% of the time." I respectfully nodded, thanking him for his honesty, but fully understanding what a challenge food safety is in a country that doesn't have ready access to even the most basic necessities.

Before the culinary demonstration, I visited the restroom and discovered that it had no soap, no running water, and an overflowing toilet. I was not at all surprised, but while reaching into my bag for my hand sanitizer and making a mental note to hold off on drinking liquids for a while, I decided that my basic needs would have to wait.

During the demonstration, I kept wondering exactly how the chefs washed their hands, utensils, cutting boards, etc. But it would have been rude to embarrass them with that question, I'm sure. They did wear disposable gloves though! So we proceeded to sit down for lunch. In a demonstration of manners, we all ate the "ropa vieja," a well-cooked, seasoned and shredded beef dish that is traditional Cuban fare. But no one dared to touch the salad!

We also visited a self-sustaining organic farm on the outskirts of Havana. The farm was impressive, and even had its own entomology lab. However, I couldn't help but

notice a dog wandering through the fields of produce under the non-chalant eyes of a worker. And seeing that there was no soap at the one and only sink, I asked the man in charge what their hygiene policy was. He said that handwashing is definitely expected of field workers, and that they carried their own personal soaps in their pockets. Huh. The farm also sold freshly squeezed fruit juice at an outdoor stand, which I readily bypassed.

Traveling is always a richly educational experience. Such experiences introduce us to the beauty and culture that is unique to each country, as well as the struggles that people around the world must endure on a daily basis. Often, these struggles are closely intertwined with health issues such as food safety. Witnessing this is mind opening, and understanding this is humbling. These observations remind us that although globalization of the food supply has enormous benefits, it also brings a certain level of risk since food safety practices abroad do not always meet U.S. standards. The reasons for sub-standard food safety practices are multi-faceted, but I like to think that if they ever lift the embargo on Cuba, perhaps things will improve.

I fortunately managed to avoid any and all illness in Cuba (except for a wicked sunburn). Feeling adventurous on my last day though, I had a chicken and rice meal served on the beach, with a mojito of course.

Looking back, I relish the unique opportunity I had to indulge in the enthusiasm, passion, and warmth of the Cuban people and culture, learn a bit about Cuban food safety and perspectives, and see what is allegedly the longest cigar in the world! One of my fondest memories is sitting on the beach with a mojito in one hand and a cigar in the other. (The cigar was just for pictures - I have never smoked).



Virginia Wheatley
Research Scientist 2
New Jersey Department of Health



"Ropa vieja," a traditional Cuban beef dish directly translated as "old clothes"

**Congratulations to Our
MAFP 2012 Sustaining Members**

Roka Bioscience, Inc. A. Crispin Philpott West Chester, PA	Readington Farms, Inc. Patrick Boyle Whitehouse, NJ
Weber Scientific Fred Weber Hamilton, NJ	Erik Hernandez Michael Foods Elizabeth, NJ
Elmhurst Dairy, Inc. Robert Giurco Jamaica, NY	WinWam Software Neal J. Nover Mt. Laurel, NJ
Certified Laboratories, Inc. Martin Mitchell Plainview, NY	True World Foods NY, LLC Helder Cabrita Elizabeth, NJ
Ecolab David Garner	UrbanEntomologist.com Richard Rodriguez Brooklyn, NY

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.

SEMINAR AGENDA

Wednesday, May 2, 2012

Cook Campus Center, Rutgers, New Brunswick, NJ

Please register by April 25. See page 7.

8:30 – 9:00	Registration – <i>Continental breakfast</i>
9:00 – 9:15	Welcoming Remarks
9:15 – 10:15	Stan Cherkasky - Change Management Consulting Quality Relationships
10:15 – 10:30	<i>Break</i>
10:30 – 11:30	Alan Talarsky and Michelle Malavet - NJDHSS Raw Milk: Proposed Regulations in NJ and Epidemiology
11:30 - 12:30	John Mulhearn—Chemetall The FDA Big Five Foodborne Pathogens
12:30 - 1:30	<i>Lunch</i>
1:30 – 2:30	Karl Matthews - Rutgers University Microbiology of Fresh Produce
2:30 - 3:30	Mike Pierce - Trecé Stored Products/Mating Disruption
3 :30	Adjournment

PLEASE NOTE: An evaluation form will be given to you at the seminar. We appreciate your feedback and look forward to your suggestions.

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 7.

REGISTRATION FORM – 2012 MAFP SPRING SEMINAR 05-02-12

REGISTRATION DEADLINE - April 25

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 April 25)
- Registration and One Year Membership \$65 (\$75 after April 25) Become a member now and get the member rate. Memberships run from January 1 through December 31.
- Non-member Registration \$75 (\$85 after April 25)

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 Cook College Student Center are on page 8. 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.***

**PLEASE NOTE: PARKING PASSES ARE NO LONGER REQUIRED
BUT YOU MUST PARK IN LOTS 99C OR 99D**

Directions to Cook Campus Student Center (CCSC)

From New Jersey Turnpike (North or South)

Turn off at Exit 9. After tollbooths bear to the right; follow signs for "Route 18 North - New Brunswick." Proceed along Route 18 North and take the exit marked "Route 1 South - Trenton". Proceed along Route 1 South and take the exit marked "College Farm Road." Proceed along College Farm Road onto Cook Campus. At stop sign turn right onto Dudley Road. Make first right onto Biel Road. The CCSC is the first building on your left.

From G.S. Parkway Southbound - coming from northern New Jersey

Turn off at Exit 129 for the NJ Turnpike and head south. Follow directions to campus from Route 18 North, below.

From G.S. Parkway Northbound - coming from southern New Jersey

Turn off at Exit 105 and follow signs for Route 18 North. After approximately 24 miles you will pass the entrance for the NJ Turnpike and continue on Route 18 North. Proceed along **Route 18 North** and take the exit marked "Route 1 South - Trenton." Proceed along Route 1 South and take the exit marked "College Farm Road." Proceed along College Farm Road onto Cook Campus. At stop sign turn right onto Dudley Road. Make first right onto Biel Road. The CCSC is the first building on left.

From Route 1 (North or South)

Turn off at exit marked "College Farm Road" and follow onto Cook Campus. At stop sign turn right onto Dudley Road. Make first right onto Biel Road. The CCSC is the first building on your left.

From Route 287 (North or South)

Turn off at Exit 9 (Formerly Exit 5) "River Road, Bound Brook, Highland Park". Proceed east on River Road toward Highland Park until you reach the fifth traffic light (approximately 3.4 miles) at the intersection of River Road, Metlars Lane, and Route 18. Turn right onto Route 18 and cross the Raritan River on the John Lynch Memorial Bridge. At the first traffic light make a right onto Commercial Avenue. Proceed to the first traffic light and make a left onto George Street. At the first traffic light make a right onto Nichol Avenue. Make the third left onto Dudley Road. Make the second right onto Biel Road. The CCSC is the first building on your left.

Park in Lot 99C or 99D. Parking permits are no longer required.

MAFP is an affiliate of the *International Association for Food Protection (IAFP)*, a non-profit association of food safety 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

2012

President	David Reyda	dreyda@darden.com
1st Vice President	Jessica Albrecht	jessica@rkenvironmental.com
2nd Vice President	Anthony Simas	tony.simas@ecolab.com
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IAFP Affiliate Delegate	Gary Cohen	gcohen@supplyone.com
Past President	Alan Talarsky	alan.talarsky@doh.state.nj.us
Member at Large	Susan Algeo	susan.algeo@pastertraining.com
Member at Large	Alfredo Cortes	alfredo-cortes2011@hotmail.com
Member at Large	Virginia Wheatley	virginia.wheatley@doh.state.nj.us
Member at Large	Don Schaffner	schaffner@aesop.rutgers.edu

WANTED!

If you are employed at a food processor and are involved with QA or QC and food safety is important to you...we want you to join our organization!

MAFP is the foremost food safety organization in NJ. We are the NJ affiliate of the International Association for Food Protection (IAFP), the world's largest association of food safety professionals from industry, government, and academia.

If food safety is a critical component to the success of your company, then you need to be a part of MAFP! We invite you to join us! It's inexpensive (\$25/year) and worth your time. We have two seminars per year in October and May. Please join us on May 2, 2012 for our seminar at Rutgers University, Cook College in New Brunswick, NJ. We will have several speakers that are sure to be of interest to you.

Please contact our MAFP Board member Gary Cohen @ 201-805-8555 or gcohen@supplyone.com for additional information.

The MAFP Executive Board is also looking for a few new members. The Board meets approximately six times per year. Members of the Executive Board are expected to attend all meetings and seminars. If interested, please contact us at cschwar@co.warren.nj.us.

If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please send an e-mail to cschwar@co.warren.nj.us.