



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION FOR FOOD PROTECTION NEWSLETTER

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WAFFP.com

Mark Your Calendars

By Helena Barton - WAFFP President

Last year was a banner year for the Washington Association for Food Protection! We enjoyed a phenomenal agenda and record attendance at the conference to help us celebrate 65 years of "Food Safety through Education". The planning committee is already in high gear putting together another great program. This year's conference will be in beautiful Lake Chelan again on September 20th-22nd.

We will continue to regularly provide you with these newsletters as an alternative way to reach our members with food safety information. These newsletters will cover topics important to food safety professionals and provide information on upcoming training opportunities. If you have ideas for content or topics for upcoming newsletters, I urge you to send them to the planning committee. Also, please consider joining the LinkedIn group and follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/waffp. If you are interested in joining the planning committee, just let a board member know and we will get you the necessary

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information. With your help, WAFFP membership and conference participation will continue to increase. So spread the word to others who are interested in food safety.

For additional information, visit: www.waffp.com I am looking forward to this year's conference and hope to see you there.

Sincerely – Helena Barton

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WAFFP celebrates 65 Years - Conference a Success!

By Stephanie Olmsted - WAFFP Secretary

Washington Association for Food Protection held its annual conference in beautiful Lake Chelan September 21st through September 23rd. This year marked the affiliate's 65th anniversary. The event opened with a golf tournament held at Bear Mountain Ranch. The weather was perfect for the 26 golfers playing the stunning 18-hole course above Lake Chelan.

President James White officially welcomed just over 100 attendees and moderated the first session on September 22nd. With FSMA now "official" this month, several of our speakers

focused on this topic, including Charles Breen, former FDA and currently with CMBreen LLC, as well as Miriam Burbach, the current FDA Seattle District Director. We were also honored to have Don Zink speak on Hot Food Safety Topics as part of the IAFP Executive Board Speaker Program. Dan Rice with the FDA Labs in Bothell, WA finished out our morning program, by updating our attendees on Whole Genome Sequencing.

Janet Anderberg with WADOH kicked off the afternoon agenda with her annual update of our states foodborne outbreaks.

Annual WAFFP Conference 2016

(65 Years – Conference Continued from Page 1):

Janet is a favorite, presenting to our affiliate since 2000. She always finds a way to entertain our group with her presentations. Local university professors including Dr. Barbara Rasco, WSU and Dr. Lisbeth Goddik, OSU provided updates from their respective university programs. Our day one program was wrapped up by Jackie Gordon- Nunez with the Tree Fruit Assn with a Fruit Packers Association update.

With such a large attendee turn-out, we ended up holding our Awards banquet on the outside deck under the canopy, but were fortunate that mild weather was on our side. At our banquet, we were inspired by personal updates from our 2 scholarship winners (Matthew Tanoei Husada and Collin Kirk-Patterson) from Washington State University. Each year, our affiliate supports one or more Food Science students as part of the WAFFP/Leudecke endowed Scholarship. In addition to presenting the golf tournament awards, we also celebrated new inductees to

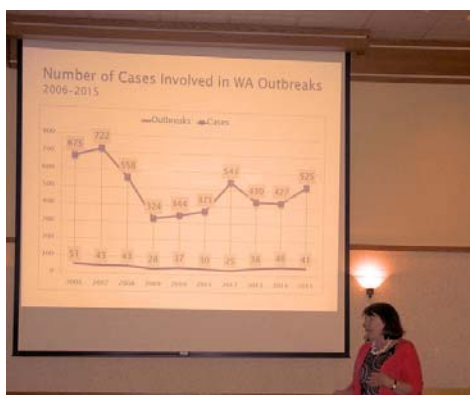


our Hall of Fame – Paul Nelson with Safeway and Don Bredeman with Ecolab. Paul and Don were recognized for their many years of affiliate and industry support. Following our banquet, attendees enjoyed lemon drops and dessert and an opportunity to catch up with other attendees.

Day 2 of the educational portion of the conference was moderated by our President Elect Helena Barton and topics included FSMA and FSPCA Updates from Claudia Coles with WSDA, more FSMA updates by Charles Breen and an update on Animal Welfare by Antone Michelson with Darigold. Our final two speakers piqued the interest of the audience – with Dr. Christine Bruhn presenting on Meat Safety through Irradiation and Rick Garza – Director of The Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board.

After the completion of our meetings, another tradition during lunch as the conference comes to a close at Lake Chelan is to pass the official gavel onto the incoming president. James White with Ecolab passed the gavel over to Helena Barton with the Department of Health. The 2016 WAFFP annual conference was a banner year for our affiliate, with record attendance of just over 100 and a prenominal agenda to help us celebrate our 65th Year in “Food Safety through Education”.

*Mark Your Calendars for the 2017
WAFFP Annual Conference in Chelan,
WA
September 20th – 22nd, 2017*



Why Paying Attention to your Environmental Control Program is so Important (Reprint from TAG-Acheson)

<http://www.achesongroup.com/single-post/2017/01/12/Why-Paying-Attention-to-your-Environmental-Control-Program-is-so-Important>

Over the last year, we have written a number of articles about environmental monitoring and controls, including our recent 2017 predictions that the year would bring continued, or increased, focus on this area by FDA inspectors as they swab facility environments to determine compliance with FSMA's Preventive Controls and incorporate whole genome sequencing (WGS) in sample analysis. From my perspective, this is one of the most critical areas for food plants that make ready-to-eat food. The risks are high and the consequences can be catastrophic to both your brand and to consumers.

While this article will include further insights on FDA inspections (along with a refresher on the FSMA requirement for RTE products), we want to add, at this point, that it's not just about meeting regulations. Rather, one need only review such major recalls of 2016 as those of frozen vegetables, sunflower seeds, ice cream and hummus – all of which resulted from environmental contamination – to realize it's just as much a matter of brand protection. Some of these recalls were linked to serious human illness and some were not. Thus, whether talking regulation, recalls, brand protection or consumer safety, establishing an environmental controls program with regular monitoring and validation is, and will continue to be, critical for all food facilities if you make ready-to-eat food

To jump back to FSMA and FDA inspections, if you produce ready-to-eat (RTE) foods, your hazard analysis required by the PC rule must include an evaluation of "environmental pathogens whenever an RTE food is exposed to the environment prior to packaging and the packaged food does not receive a treatment that would significantly minimize the pathogen."

While that is likely already pretty well known to RTE producers, it also is important for all processors to understand that the rule includes as RTE any food "for which it is reasonably foreseeable that the food would be eaten without further processing that will significantly minimize biological hazards." And the rule then cites raw cookie dough as an example – which puts a lot more food facilities into the RTE category than ever before, and suggests that the FSMA wording to include environmental monitoring "as appropriate to the facility, the food, and the nature of the preventive control" should probably be read, instead, as "appropriate to all facilities and foods.

2016 WAFFP/Leudecke Scholarships



At our 2016 Conference, we were joined by 2 WAFFP/Leudecke Scholarship recipients Matthew Luke Tanoeihusada and Collin R. Kirk-Patterson

Matthew Luke Tanoeihusada:

I am thankful and honored to accept the Washington Assn. for Food Protection L.O. Luedecke Endowed award. I am an international undergraduate student from Indonesia working on Food Science degree in Washington State University. Some achievements I had in WSU recently are: winning 3rd place on IMPA (Idaho Milk Processor Association) milk product development competition in summer 2015 and 1st place in DDW natural coloring competition on summer 2016 where we are invited to attend IFT16 at Chicago. Right now, in WSU, I also got involved in the Food Science Club and the Product Development club where I act as CAHNRS representative and secretary. This scholarship has boost my confidence in my academics life even more and I am planning to keep this moment and this confidences for the rest of my life.

Collin R. Kirk-Patterson: I would like to thank you very much for making this scholarship possible. My college career is about two-thirds of the way from achieving my final objective of receiving a Bachelor's Degree in Food Science along with an option in Fermentation Science and a minor in Viticulture /Enology. Receiving any help for payments to the school are so beneficial for when I am out of college. I hear stories of people paying back loans for quite a while after they finish their college careers. They are usually not good stories. Every dollar will help me, whether this is money for tuition or books. Just know that this scholarship will be used for the pursuit of my college degree and that \$750 does make a huge difference..

WAFFP has been supporting students majoring in Food Science through the distribution of scholarships since 1982. Dr. Lloyd O. Luedecke was an active member of WAFFP for almost 50 years. Dr. Leudecke was honored many times during his career with excellence awards in teaching and advising. His students and advisees genuinely loved him and trusted that he wanted only what was best for them. Through Dr. Luedeckes encouragement, guidance and dedication to educating our future food scientists, many of his students have become leaders in the food industry. Upon his death on June 4, 2014, the scholarship was renamed to honor his memory as a trusted friend, educator, mentor and beloved colleague

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I think we all struggle with a solid definition of ready-to-eat food and the FDA has not come out with a clear explanation of how they see which foods fall into the RTE group. For example some frozen vegetables that are almost never going to be consumed raw can easily fall into the category of needing to be recalled if they are shown to contain a pathogen such as *Listeria monocytogenes* or *Salmonella*.

FDA inspectors are looking ... and swabbing. In fact, I think that the regulators are on a mission to "map" facilities. That is, the regulators will swab your facility and any positive findings for environmental pathogens will be sequenced and placed in the WGS data base.

When subsequent inspections are made of the facility – be it even three, four, or five years later – the new samples are compared to those in the database. If there is a match to prior findings, it's evident that the facility has a resident strain and you can expect that the regulators will be back in force! The same applies if a human isolate is found that matches any of the pathogens found in the past in your facility.

While regulatory compliance is, of course, important, a recently published EU report drives home that fact that it's often necessary to go beyond the word of the law to truly protect customers. Although the U.S. standard for *Listeria monocytogenes* is zero tolerance, the EU is a bit less stringent in this area, having an Lm food safety limit of 100 bacteria per gram. However, the report by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and European Center for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) showed the EU has seen an increasing trend of listeriosis since 2008, particularly of those over 64 years old – with the highest death toll ever, of 270 deaths, occurring in 2015.

Whether or not the EU's food safety limit is viable for protecting the consumer, the study included an interesting note on its data uncertainties/limitations stating: "it is possible that some of the tested products at retail that are able to support the growth of *L. monocytogenes* and which were found to contain less than 100 colony forming units per gram (CFU/g) at the time of testing (and which were therefore classified as compliant) may had not been characterized as compliant, had they been tested at the end of their shelf life." This, alone, could substantiate the need for zero tolerance and robust environmental testing – regardless of the regulatory limit, particularly in facilities producing foods that are able to support the growth of *Listeria*.

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This is indeed an interesting comment from the EU who have been as steadfast in the 100 cfu/g concept as the U.S. has been with the zero tolerance concept. However, there is increasing evidence that if the product will support growth – especially if consumers don't use the product as intended (think of ice cream), then there are clear public health risks.

The fact that the EU saw so many cases of listeriosis – and resulting deaths – holds further significance when it is noted that most healthy individuals are virtually unaffected by *Listeria*. It is the immunocompromised, such as the elderly, along with pregnant women and infants, who are most likely to be affected. So the actual incidence of *Listeria*-contaminated food could be significantly higher than the statistics indicated.

So what does all this mean? As I noted in the opening comment, having a solid environmental control program is critical if you are making foods that could be consumed without a further kill step. We have discussed prior situations where not getting this right leads to criminal investigations and major brand damage. When you look at your environmental control program think broad. Don't just focus on the monitoring part but think about keeping the pathogens where they belong using GMPs, hygienic zoning, good cleaning and sanitation programs, etc. Then when you find either *Salmonella* or *Listeria monocytogenes* in your environment, ask whether you want to know if you have a resident strain before the regulators find out that you have one.

As a final word on this topic, if you are able to show the regulators that you have a solid environmental control program of seek and destroy, it may not keep you out of trouble, but it will go a long way toward avoiding some potentially very stressful times ahead when FDA finds problems that you don't know about.



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