



# WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF FOOD AND DRUG OFFICIALS

## THE FLASH!

Alaska, Arizona, British Columbia, California, Colorado, Guam  
Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

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Spring 1999

### Message From The President

Spring is here and the **BEST OF THE WEST** WAFDO Annual Conference, September 11 - 15th, agenda is beginning to take shape. The following is a quick summary of what topics will be covered and several speakers are already committed. This is still early in the game and some of what follows may be subject to change.

**Saturday, September 11th:** Medical Device Workshop. Topics will include: Government Reinvention, Harmonization and Results of Quality Systems Requirements, New Inspectional Strategy, HACCP, Medical Devices and Quality Systems Inspection Techniques from FDA and Industry Perspectives.

**Sunday, September 12th:** Registration will Kick Off, and Executive Board Meeting will be held. There will be a Welcoming Reception in the evening.

**Monday, September 13th:** Keynote Addresses, Emerging Pathogens and Antibiotic Resistance, National Food Safety Program Update, Southwest Region Initiatives, and Border Initiative/Inspections.

**Tuesday, September 14th:** Bob Howard from CDC will present Media Relations, Coca-Cola and the Bottled Water Business, BSE / TSE, State Reports, and Orlen Weiman Awards Banquet.

**Wednesday, September 15th:** Dietary Supplements / Herbs / Botanicals, State Reports (cont.), WAFDO Business Meeting / Election of 99/00 Officers, and Afternoon Golf Tourney.

As a reminder, a **Silent Auction** is held during the conference. WAFDO awards a \$2,000.00 scholarship each year to a well deserving college student. The money raised from the auction is used for the scholarship fund. Start thinking about what you might want to donate to be auctioned. Ideas would be anything which comes from your State, Province, organization or industry. This can include handcrafted items, food and or drink, gift packages of all kinds, clothing, toys, or anything else you can envision. **Use Your Imagination!** Your donations will be greatly appreciated.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the WAFDO Flash and I hope you have a great summer.

Sincerely,

Patricia Klocker

## Letter From the Editor

I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the 1999 AFDO Annual Educational Conference on June 5-9, 1999 in San Antonio, TX. The WAFDO Board of Directors is proposing two resolutions for consideration at the annual conference.

As the personal care products industry has grown to a multi billion dollar industry, WAFDO proposes that AFDO and its affiliates develop guidelines and training programs to promote uniform regulations of this industry.

The second resolution concerns the role of USDA conducting food safety activities in retail food establishments. Since State and local regulatory officials have traditionally conducted food safety activities in retail food establishments, WAFDO will propose that the AFDO Board of Directors request that USDA:

- .. Discontinue regulatory activities within retail food establishments; and
- .. Assign the resources that were intended for use in retail food establishments to the State agencies that are currently responsible for food safety oversight of retail food establishments.

Thanks again for submitting articles to the FLASH!

*Sincerely,*

*Candace Jacobs, DVM, MPH*

### The FLASH! Publication Schedule and Timelines for Submitting Articles:

Articles Due at WSDA	The FLASH! Publication Date
July 30, 1999 .....	August 20, 1999
October 30, 1999 .....	November 20, 1999
January 30, 2000 .....	February 20, 2000
April 30, 2000 .....	May 20, 2000
July 30, 2000 .....	August 20, 2000

#### Spring '99 FLASH! Highlights

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## Seafood Alliance Update

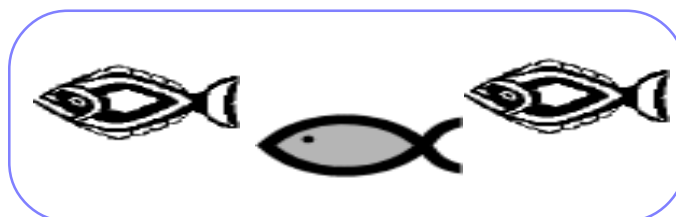
Submitted by Maurice Tamura

Effective April 20, 1999, I will no longer be coordinating the training initiatives of the Seafood Alliance in the WAFDO region. Chris Wogee, California Food and Drug Branch, has graciously agreed to act as WAFDO's coordinator until a permanent replacement is named. My deepest gratitude to all who have participated in this endeavor. WAFDO has a large cadre of trained individuals because of your hard work!

Please give Chris the same outstanding support that you have given me. Chris may be reached at:

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The Seafood Alliance, FDA and AFDO are planning to conduct a series of Encore HACCP Courses. The purpose of the courses will be to help industry improve the level of compliance with the seafood HACCP regulations, plus improve the understanding by regulators of the minimum requirements of the regulations. The primary target for the training is firms that have received untitled or warning letters; however, any industry representative may attend. The courses are expected to be one day in length and began in April 1999 (see back page for schedule of upcoming courses).



The Seafood Alliance is also planning to schedule SSOP Training Courses this summer. The courses will focus on the sanitation aspects of the seafood HACCP regulations. The format will be similar to the Alliance's Basic Training Courses in that there will be a series of train-the-trainer courses followed by the SSOP Basic Training Courses. Students will receive a certificate of course completion from AFDO / WAFDO.

## Canadian Food Safety and Inspection Laws to Change

Submitted by Jennifer Price

A Bill entitled the Canada Food Safety and Inspection Act was introduced in the Canadian House of Commons on April 22 by the Honorable Lyle Vanclief, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Health Canada, in consultation with consumers, industry, provinces and other government partners, had identified the need for a review of the federal food and agricultural inputs legislation. They agreed that modernizing and consolidating this legislation could provide a more consistent and comprehensive approach to safety and quality standards.

"This review has resulted in a Bill that provides an efficient and effective modern legislative framework to meet current and future food safety needs as we move into the 21st century," said Mr. Vanclief. "It will enhance the overall integrity and safety of our food inspection system while increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery."

The new Bill represents a consolidation and modernization of the existing food and agricultural input statutes currently administered and/or enforced by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. It is a joint undertaking led by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency in partnership with Health Canada.

"Food safety and the highest nutritional standards for Canadians are a top priority for the federal government," said Health Minister Allan Rock. "This single Bill clearly retains the current division of responsibility and accountability. My responsibilities continue in the area of health, safety and nutritional standards for food and Minister Vanclief continues to be responsible for agricultural inputs, plant and animal health and food-related inspection."

"The tabling of this legislation is an important step toward continuing to fulfill the Government's commitment to better serve the needs of Canadians," added Minister Vanclief. "The Canada Food Safety and Inspection Bill covers all commodities in the food chain, from production through to the consumer purchase. I am confident that the results will benefit consumers and industry." The creation of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency in April 1997 was a result of the Government's decision that all federally-mandated food inspection and animal and plant health services be consolidated into a single food inspection agency.

The Bill and other background material are available on the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's web site at: [www.cfia-acia.agr.ca](http://www.cfia-acia.agr.ca). Material on the related review of the federal health protection legislation, including the Food and Drugs Act, can be found on the Health Canada web site at <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca>.

## 27<sup>th</sup> National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments

Submitted by Claudia Coles

All of WAFDO's western states (except Nevada and Hawaii) were represented at the National Conference of Interstate Milk Shippers (NCIMS) that was held earlier this month in Atlanta. Dennis Baker, Commission of Office of Regulatory Affairs and Janice Oliver, Center for Food Safety and Nutrition, participated at the NCIMS conference and helped to promote federal, state and industry cooperation that ultimately lead to a successful conference. Some of the proposals that were approved by the NCIMS delegates include:

- .. Moving forward on the voluntary HACCP pilot project;
- .. Allowing the imposition of civil penalties to address violations to the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance (PMO);
- .. Implementing the procedures document developed by the 402 Committee; and
- .. Including a consumer representative, National Milk Producers representative, and International Dairy Food Association representative on the executive board as non-voting members.



The HACCP committee will be fleshing out some of the details for the pilot project over the next few months. Meanwhile, the committee is actively seeking volunteers to participate in this pilot project. All interested parties are encouraged to contact Claudia Coles, HACCP Committee Chair, (360) 902-1905.

State regulators were pleased to learn the monetary civil penalty proposal, though modified at the conference, was unanimously approved by the NCIMS and supported by FDA. In many states, enforcement actions are required to follow the Administrative Procedures Act which includes providing an opportunity for a fair hearing in contested cases. The time requirements of this due process have been in conflict with the PMO permit suspension process. The civil penalty alternative allows state regulators to address violations to the PMO and also provide an opportunity to meet their respective Administrative Procedures Act.

The approval of the procedures document developed by the 402 Committee was also unanimously approved by NCIMS delegates. These procedures describe how ratings and check ratings are implemented to be in concert with Resolution 5 of the PMO.

## **When you're HOT, you're HOT, and when you're NOT, well. . .**

*Submitted by Cory Willis*

...Consumers and operators can find out what problems temperature abuse of food may cause at the State of Alaska's Environmental Sanitation and Food Safety Program's web site: <http://www.state.ak.us/dec/deh/sanitat/homesan.htm>.

In addition to information about safe temperatures and food, you can test yourself on some common food-safety MYTH-information. The site also offers a Kid's Page for use by educators and a list of food recalls and alerts that affect Alaska. The Recall Page is updated daily and is used as a resource by consumers and the press. Residents can check up on their favorite restaurants by checking out the statewide food service scores.

Want to cook your goose? Seasonal information is posted so that consumers can cook a safe goose or boil a safe Easter egg. Operators can get information on food safety class schedules and safety tips for employees. Coming soon: Top Ten on the F.B.I. List. Listeria seems to be currently topping the list.

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's Environmental Health Division finds the Internet an economical and effective method of passing on information to the public and to operators. With 50% of Alaskans online, it is fast becoming a useful tool in getting the word out about food safety.

## **Alaska Legislation: Non rBST Labeling**

*Submitted by Janice Adair*

We have only one bill that we are actively working on right now. HB 110 will allow dairy processors to voluntarily label their milk as not from cows treated with rBST along with another statement that the FDA requires regarding the fact that there is no known differences between milk from cows treated with rBST and cows that haven't been so treated. rBST is a synthetic bovine growth hormone that results in increased milk production. Extensive tests in the US haven't pointed to any problems though many people remain concerned and skeptical. rBST is not allowed to be used in Canada or Europe.

We've been told the bill that would have moved all the food programs to Department of Natural Resources (SB 132) is dead. A lot of processors and others were very opposed to the legislation. Regulations: The recently noticed changes to both the Food Code (18 AAC 31) and Seafood Processing (18 AAC 34) have both been adopted and sent to the Lt. Governor's office.

## **California FDB Holds Hearing for Sprouting Firm**

*Submitted by Jim Waddell*

The Food and Drug Branch (FDB) conducted an administrative office hearing with a San Diego County organic sprouter on May 4, 1999. The office hearing was a show cause hearing to determine mitigation actions to be taken by the firm to correct GMP violations uncovered during inspections of the sprouting facility. The firm was advised in a letter notifying them to appear for the hearing, to voluntarily shut down operations to limit their liability from consumers' lawsuits until they can operate in substantial compliance with Health and Safety Code, and are no longer associated with confirmed cases of Salmonellosis.

The firm does not monitor well water bacteriological quality; they use no seed disinfection methods, and recently had an embargo imposed on Salmonella-tainted seeds provided to them by an Imperial County seed supplier. Several confirmed Salmonella cases have been associated through traceback with alfalfa sprouts produced by the firm.

## **Vibrio vulnificus Cases in Los Angeles County**

*Submitted by Jim Waddell*

The California Food and Drug Branch (FDB) recently became aware of a confirmed *Vibrio vulnificus* illness in Los Angeles. The patient was a 44-year-old Hispanic male who consumed raw oysters on 4/7/99. The patient was admitted to UCLA hospital on 4/18 and discharged 4/24 and is recovering. The oysters were purchased at a Santa Monica restaurant who received the oysters from a Los Angeles distributor (an uncertified dealer). The oysters were supplied by two Texas harvesters. Texas Health and FDA have been alerted, and FDB followed up at the uncertified dealer.

The second reported *V. vulnificus* illness of 1999 has occurred in Los Angeles County. The victim was a Hispanic male who ate oysters at his brother's house in Compton on 5/2/99. He was admitted to the hospital on 5/4 and died on 5/6. Samples of the oysters and a blood sample from the victim have been obtained and are being submitted to the Microbial Diseases Laboratory. FDB is attempting to identify the local distributor, so that traceback to the source can be conducted. The brother only recalls that they were purchased from a small retail store in Lynwood, CA.

## **FDB Holds Water Vending Machine Workshops**

*Submitted by Jim Waddell*

Four one day workshops with the water vending machine (WVM) industry were held between April 13 and 23, 1999 in Santa Ana, Los Angeles, Fresno and San Jose, respectively. Local environmental health departments were also invited to participate. The purpose of the workshops was to:

- (1) Discuss the results of the "Statewide WVM Testing and Inspection" which FDB conducted between November 2, 1998 and January 8, 1999; and
- (2) Obtain input from the industry and the counties with respect to strategies for effectively addressing the three areas that were identified during the testing and inspection as deserving more attention from WVM operators.

There were a total of 43 participants: 33 from the industry representing 29 licensed WVM firms (31% of 95 licensed WVM operators statewide), and 11 local health officials from 9 Counties (Orange, San Diego, Riverside, Stanislaus, Fresno, Monterey, Merced, Contra Costa and Santa Clara). Their response to the "Statewide WVM Testing and Inspection" was quite favorable. Participants provided input on the three areas identified as needing attention during FDB's survey: Heterotrophic Plate Counts (HPC), self-closing doors on machines, and purified water and other labeling on machines.

## **S. thompson Cluster Linked to Condiments**

*Submitted by Jim Waddell*

Clusters of *Salmonella thompson* have occurred in Los Angeles and in Riverside Counties. LA County became aware of a large cluster of *S. thompson* during March 15-31, 10 illnesses after eating at a Mexican restaurant on March 17, with a total of 42 cases. An analysis of the foods consumed by cases indicated that a condiment mixture containing cabbage, cilantro, onions, and tomatoes explained about 95% of the illnesses. Approximately 32 "sporadic cases" of *S. thompson* were confirmed statewide.

The results of a case control study by DCDC indicate that the *S. thompson* outbreak appears to begin around March 7th and continued through March 21st. Two restaurants (one in Riverside County and a second restaurant in LA) did have more than one case who ate there in the week preceding illness. Cases reported consuming salsa. A traceback of the ingredients in the condiment mixture and salsas is being conducted by FDB.

## **Beware of Health Fraud**

*Submitted by Patricia Klocker*

The Colorado HIV / AIDS Consumer Information Task Force has developed a new educational pamphlet which contains consumer tips related to potential fraud. The information is associated with HIV / AIDS treatments but certainly applies to all types of health fraud. Copies of the pamphlet are available from the Consumer Protection Division and contains the message:

*"False Products. False Treatments. False Hope.  
Protect Yourself!"*

## **Colorado Hantavirus Update**

*Submitted by Patricia Klocker*

Two hantavirus cases have been reported for the winter. Both cases were fatal. The first was reported on December 3, 1998 and involved a La Plata county resident. The environmental assessment found the homesite in a relatively rural location in the Animas River Valley. The second case involved a Delta County woman. The suspect exposure site was the patient's ranch, which was a working cattle ranch. Evidence of substantial rodent activity was present in the out buildings.

Hantavirus appears to follow distinct seasonal trends and is most prevalent during the spring, summer, and fall, but cases in December and February are not unusual. Spring exposure goes up because people are entering cabins, etc. that have been closed up for the winter; summer because of the increased activity in areas where *P. maniculatus* inhabit; and fall because rodents are trying to get indoors. These are not the only factors relative to exposure; others involve rodent breeding cycles, and territorial considerations that bring transmission from rodent to rodent, etc.

The unusual aspect of the disease is the age group it strikes that being the ages of 11 to 69 years. Toddlers would seem to have the greatest risk of exposure because they crawl on the floor and mouth many things they see. But no victims less than 11 years and none older than 69 years of age have been reported. A relationship with the victims' immune system and virus has been postulated by researchers, however, supporting data has not been obtained.

Well developed immune systems may over react to the presence of the virus creating the pulmonary edema, while those less well developed immune systems do not react as severely to the virus; hence, no pulmonary edema. There could also be a generic pre-disposition that causes some to develop HPS (hantavirus pulmonary syndrome) while others do not.

## **Salmonella braenderup Cluster in Colorado**

*Submitted by Patricia Klocker*

During January and early February 1999, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Laboratory identified five isolates of *Salmonella braenderup*. Interviews with all five cases indicated a possible epidemiologic connection with the same restaurant. Three of the five cases had eaten at the restaurant during the same weekend. An environmental investigation was conducted at the restaurant. The vehicle could have been pooled whole eggs, although insufficient information was available to confirm this hypothesis.

In absence of additional cases, there is insufficient epidemiologic and environmental data at this time to confirm a particular food product or food handling practice as the cause of the *Salmonella* cluster. CDC was notified, and only two other isolates of the same serotype had been reported recently from other states.

## **New Carissa Update**

*Submitted by Mike Govro*

The New Carissa ship wreck and oil spill continues, but environmental problems are mostly over. The New Carissa ran aground near Coos Bay on the Southern Oregon Coast where it eventually broke in two pieces and spilled fuel oil. The oil contaminated several shellfish growing areas, prompting the department to close harvesting. The closure remained in effect until analysis of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) showed that there were no oil related health concerns.

The bow section was eventually hauled away, but the towline broke fifty miles off shore and the ship quickly drifted east and grounded 14 miles south of Newport. Shellfish harvesting was closed briefly and then reopened when it was confirmed that oil had not reached the growing areas. The department is continuing to monitor PAHs and there is some concern because the levels are continuing to rise. However, it is not known if the increases are due to spilled New Carissa oil. Oyster growers are also experiencing a high level of oyster mortality in some areas. It is not known if this problem is related to spillage from the New Carissa. The stern section remains on the beach near Coos Bay, and plans are being made to remove it, beginning this summer.

## **Oregon Completes Peanut Allergen Testing**

*Submitted by Mike Govro*

The Oregon Department of Agriculture has finished its initial collection and analysis of candy samples for peanut contamination. Twenty-eight samples were analyzed. After three of the first five samples were found to be above the level of concern (10 ppm), the Department suspended sampling to notify the industry that the sampling was taking place and the consequences that could occur from producing contaminated product.

Sampling then resumed with somewhat improved results. Seven of the final 23 samples had levels over 2.5 ppm, but only two were near or above the level of concern. The five highest samples all were produced by one company, indicating the need for some work on GMPs by this processor. The Department plans to resume candy sampling next quarter.

## **Oregon Legislation**

*Submitted by Mike Govro*

The Oregon dairy industry introduced a bill this session banning the sale of raw milk and dairy products. The bill passed on April 26 and is expected to be signed by the Governor. The Department of Agriculture submitted a rewritten version of the Oregon dairy law which has passed in committees in both chambers and expected to pass the full house and senate. During committee hearings, the legislature deleted the requirements for retail frozen dessert licensing and bacteria standards. The Department had not recommended this change, but did not oppose it. A bill of interest that is not expected to pass is a bill that requires state agencies to obtain written permission from business owners prior to making an inspection.



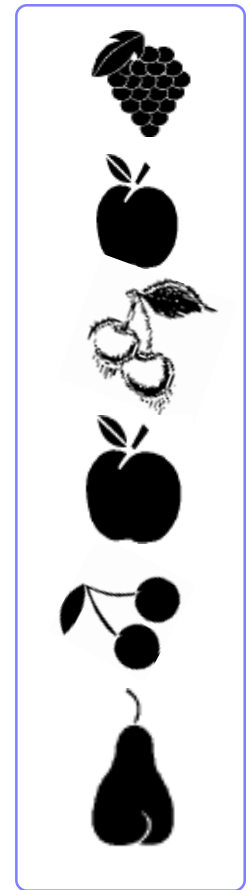
## **Regulators and Fresh Packer Industry Discuss Inspection Criteria**

*Submitted by Mike Donovan*

On March 15, Mike Donovan met with Dave Reed of the Yakima Shippers and Growers Association and Dr. Wally Ewert of the Washington Horticulture Commission to discuss the inspection criteria that WSDA will use when conducting food safety inspection of fresh fruit packers.

The industry representatives were presented with a list of the criteria that was recently compiled by members of the WSDA Food Safety Program Special Projects Team (SPT). The SPT did a good job compiling the criteria which is based on the Good Manufacturing Practices for Human Food (GMPs) and the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and yet tailored specifically for fresh packer operations.

The criteria provide a solid, but flexible, base of the critical and significant items pertaining to these operations. The 33 items reflect about half of those violations pertaining to processing operations. Many of the food processor criteria were eliminated as not being applicable to fresh produce packing facilities.



## **Washington State Proposes Warning Label for Intrastate Unpasteurized Fruit and Vegetable Juice**

*Submitted by Verne Hedlund*

To prevent illness, packaged unpasteurized fruit and vegetable juices produced and sold in Washington may be required to carry a label warning consumers of potential danger from bacteria and other microorganisms. The label is the same as that already required for unpasteurized juices sold across state lines. Public comments on the proposal were heard at a hearing held on May 3 in Olympia. The Washington State Department of Agriculture did not receive any opposing comments to the proposed labeling rule and Director Jim Jesernig is expected to approve the rule.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has required a label on all unpasteurized juices sold in interstate commerce since Nov. 5, 1998. Locations where juice is made and consumed on premises, such as a child's lemonade stand, juice bar or a restaurant would not be affected. Although the risks are small, they can be devastating to those who are most susceptible to foodborne illness, such as children, the elderly and persons with weakened immune systems. The proposed labels would make consumers aware of the danger so they can make informed decisions about the juice they drink.

Nationwide, unpasteurized juices have been linked to about 16,000 to 48,000 foodborne illnesses each year, according to the FDA. In Washington there were two outbreaks related to unpasteurized juice in 1996. Maintaining consistency with federal regulations not only allows our food products to move freely across state lines, it also puts them in a better position to compete in international markets.

*Although the risks are small, they can be devastating to those who are most susceptible to foodborne illness, such as children, the elderly and persons with weakened immune systems.*



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## ***Seafood HACCP Courses and Working Conferences***

June 2, 1999	HACCP Encore Course, Bothell, WA.	
June 7, 1999	HACCP Encore Course, Olympia, WA	Contact Julie Sharp
June 9, 1999	HACCP Encore Course, Astoria, OR	Phone: 425-483-4961
June 16, 1999	HACCP Encore Course, Salem, OR	

June 14-16, 1999    HACCP A Working Conference  
Chapman University, Orange, CA  
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June 17-18, 1999    HACCP Verification and Validation  
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