



Western Association of Food & Drug Officials

# WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF FOOD AND DRUG OFFICIALS

## THE FLASH!

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

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### Message From the President *SPRING 2002*

With the weather we are experiencing here in the Northwest, it's hard to accept that spring has arrived, but my calendar says it's official. As an AFDO member, that means it's time to start making plans to attend the combined AFDO/WAFDO annual educational conference in Portland June 15-19.

For those of you who are new to our organization, allow me to explain how our conferences work. Each year the AFDO holds its educational conference in a different affiliate area, with this year being WAFDO's turn. The affiliates hold their own educational conferences each year, and when the AFDO meeting is held in their area, they often combine the meetings as we are doing this year. We hope that more people will be able to attend if it's offered as a two for one deal. The conferences allow us to hear top officials from various food agencies talk about their agencies' activities and leading experts talk about trends, new science and technology. Additionally, AFDO and/or the affiliate conduct some business, such as election of officers, voting on resolutions and committee work, and number of social events are held. All of this adds up to an excellent opportunity to get informed, consider interesting issues, and build a network of government and industry contacts. We try to locate the conferences in interesting locations that allow attendees the opportunity to see some interesting sights or events while they're there.

So why should you come to Portland? Here are a few reasons:

1. The conference. See above. 'Nuff said.
2. Portland, itself. Portland has developed a reputation as a top spot for dining out, microbrews, wine, and jazz. Other attractions include the zoo, Chinese and Japanese Gardens, the Portland rose garden, riverfront parks, and of course, Powell's City of Books.
3. Mount Hood. Ninety minutes from Portland, it has a variety of outdoor activities, including the nation's only year round snow skiing/boarding area.
4. The Oregon Coast. You can get there from Portland in 90 minutes, and the scenery is spectacular.
5. The Columbia River Gorge. It's just minutes from Portland, and at the risk of being repetitive, the scenery is spectacular. Multnomah Falls, Oregon's most popular tourist destination, is about a half an hour from Portland. Another 20 minutes up the gorge will take you to Hood River, the sailboard and parasailboard capitol of the world. On a good wind day (which is almost every day), hundreds of brightly colored boards will be criss-crossing the river.
6. Central Oregon. It's about three to four hours to the volcanic mountain area of the Oregon Cascades, with fantastic fishing (rivers and lakes), golf, hiking, and of course, more spectacular scenery. It's higher, dryer, and generally warmer there.



(continued on page 2)

*President's Message continued*

7. Crater Lake. A day's drive from Portland, this national park is the deepest and clearest lake in the nation, set inside a sunken volcano. More spectacular...
8. Mount St Helens. It's about three to four hours from Portland, and worth the drive. No picture you've ever seen on TV or in a book can allow you to comprehend the magnitude of what happened there. You've got to see it yourself.
9. Gambling. I'm referring to the weather. It has been known to rain in Portland in June, but if it's clear, there's nowhere nicer than Portland in June.
10. Gambling, the real thing. Just over an hour will get you to Spirit Mountain Casino, on your way to the Oregon Coast. Lincoln City on the Coast has Chinook Winds Casino and there are several other gaming facilities on your way to other sight seeing destinations.

Mike

**Spring 2001 FLASH! Highlights**

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**Editor's Note**

I've just read Mike's note and realize that he has left out several of the wonderful attractions of the Northwest. Except for his mention of Mount St. Helens, he totally neglected the fact that the state of Washington is just across the Columbia River from the convention hotel, and that the hotel is right on the river. If you are interested in history, Fort Vancouver National Historic Site is the first exit in Washington. There are also sections of the Lewis and Clark trail nearby. Traveling up the Olympic Peninsula, you can everything from beaches to rain forests to majestic pines. All in all, the sites and scenery will make this one of the most delightful places to have a meeting.

Sue

**FDA EXPANDS ALONG BORDERS\***

*Submitted by Alonnza Cruse  
District Director, Los Angeles District, FDA*

During fiscal year 2002, FDA expects to increase its field force by more than 600 positions. About one third of these new positions will be along the land borders and will be involved in counter terrorism efforts. Currently FDA has about 170 personnel on the borders at 19 locations. This will increase to about 400 personnel at 36 locations.

The new positions will be used to increase food safety and security activities for all FDA regulated products. The plan is for the newly hired personnel to routinely conduct physical exams at the border and at the importer's premises, entry review, sample collections and analyses, domestic and import inspections, filer evaluations and follow up investigations to complaints about regulated products.

FDA expects to process approximately eight million commercial line entries this year. A line entry may be 50 cases of produce or 10 refrigerated containers of cantaloupes. It may range in value from \$2,000 to \$500,000 or more.

**Treasurer's Reminder**

**2001 Membership Directory**

If your membership is not current, you may still renew to remain in good standing for 2001 and receive a copy of the membership directory. Please send the following information and your renewal dues to Chuck Henry, WAFDO Treasurer.

Your Name, Title, Agency/Firm, Address,  
Phone, FAX, Email Address

Member Type:	Regular	\$15.00
	Retired	\$15.00
	Scholastic	\$15.00
	Associate	\$50.00

Please make checks payable to Western Association of Food and Drug Officials and send your membership renewal to:

Western Association of Food and Drug Officials  
c/o Chuck Henry, Secretary/Treasurer  
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To cover these entries, FDA is planning to conduct more than double the physical examinations and sampling of imported shipment this year than last year. To achieve this goal, FDA will seek to increase coordination with other federal agencies including Customs and the U.S. Department of Agriculture/APHIS. FDA will focus this coordination effort in the areas of enforcement, intelligence, and surveillance of imported products and importers.

Import inspectors will emphasize those types of examinations that will increase the likelihood of detecting intentional acts of potential terrorism, such as looking for inconsistencies between shipping documents and the physical product, evidence of tampering, substitution, or counterfeiting, or suspicious or damaged merchandise.

Sample analyses will be performed to detect toxins, poisons, and microorganisms. With regard to detection, FDA is researching rapid testing methods for detecting biological or chemical agents that may be used by a terrorist. Much of this research is being done under contract by research universities and contract laboratories. Once methods are available to screen large volumes of product or simplified tests that can be utilized at the border locations, mobile laboratories are a possibility to assist in reducing some of the time required to conduct the required analyses. Eventually, FDA hopes to be able to screen more products using rapid testing kits, equipment and methods, in order to determine when more extensive sampling, analysis or investigation is warranted.

Every FDA office that has responsibilities for reviewing import entries or conducting investigations related to imported articles maintains good working relationships with its local U.S. Customs office. Whenever feasible, FDA tries to physically co-locate import personnel with Customs. However, due to limited availability of physical space, this is not always possible. FDA is not stationing import personnel at all U.S. border crossings, since this is not feasible or necessarily desirable.

\*Article by Ric Garwood originally published in the March 2002 newsletter of the Border Station Partnership Council

## **The Life and Time of a Bleach Solution**

*Submitted by Therese Pilonetti, Training Coordinator*

How long does bleach water last? Well, as a curious minded environmental health specialist, I set out to find out.

In order to duplicate the most common circumstances likely to be found in a child care center or retail food establishment and for purposes of demonstration, I made up a solution of 100 ppm chlorine in a typical, translucent, one pint (480 mL) spray bottle using Regular Clorox (5.25% sodium hypochl<sup>o</sup>

For two full weeks the concentration maintained strength consistent with the required parameters for sanitizing food contact surfaces and toys. Temperatures and light intensities in food production areas are expected to be elevated in comparison to the conditions of this informal experiment. However, the recipe that is typically used, 3/4 teaspoon of bleach per quart of water, is twice the amount used to prepare our initial solution.

The use of test strips to determine strength and longevity is strongly recommended in the child care setting and is required in areas used for food preparation. The practice of making bleach water solutions fresh daily is not likely to be necessary and may compound the risk of erroneous preparations leading to the use of inadequate or toxic levels of chemical; negate the cost effectiveness of bleach; and add to an increased impact on the environment. Inspectors should recommend test strips were they are not already required, provide information on obtaining test strips, suggest the use of a standard recipe for sanitizer, and use caution when explaining how often to make sanitizing solutions with household bleach.

## **Food Safety Task Force Update**

*Submitted by Chuck Henry, Retail Food Program Manager*

A Food Safety Task Force meeting was convened in Glendale on November 6, 2001. The purpose of this meeting was to provide a forum for regulators, industry, and academia to discuss and promote a mechanism for ensuring safe food production in Colorado. The goal of this Task Force is to improve communication among all stakeholders so that the effectiveness of our food safety efforts is enhanced. The participants included representatives from the Colorado Restaurant Association,

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U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Drug Administration, Colorado Department of Agriculture, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension Service, Disease Control and Epidemiology Division, Consumer Protection Division, and local organized/contract county health departments. The agenda items discussed were: Statewide Computer Standardization/Computer Application Sharing; Foodborne Illness Investigations; Retail Food Manager Certification/Food Safety and Security/Plan Reviews; and Wholesale Food/Shellfish Issues.

The following subcommittees were assigned the task of identifying a statewide issue of concern, proposing a solution to this issue, and preparing a report that would be shared with other Task Force members: Manager Certification; Statewide Computer Standardization/Computer Application Sharing; and Foodborne Illness Investigations. The Manager Certification subcommittee will meet on January 15, 2002 to begin developing a Food Protection Manager Certification Program that conforms to the national standards that were approved by the Conference for Food Protection. These standards were developed with broad-based consensus among representatives from regulatory agencies, industry, academia, certifying organizations and consumer groups. We are looking forward to the challenge of developing a Certification Program in partnership with industry and academia.

For information concerning this effort contact Chuck Henry at 303-692-3629

### **CPD Joins Forces with NCIMS**

*Submitted by Dan Trimberger, Milk and Dairy Program Manager*

Dan Trimberger, Milk and Dairy Program Manager, has been selected to participate on the National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments (NCIMS) Document Review Committee. This committee is responsible for the reviewing and commenting on interpretations or policies issued through FDA memoranda before the publication of the final document. These documents may include memoranda on interpretations of NCIMS documents such as the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance, informational memoranda that may influence the NCIMS

program, and memoranda of equipment reviewed for sanitary and construction standards.

### **Oregon Report**

*Submitted by Mike Govro*

#### **FDA Contract Inspections**

Oregon is nearing completion of its 2001-2002 inspection contract with FDA, and is selecting firms for the 2002-2003 contract. The upcoming contract calls for Oregon to perform 715 inspections for FDA, including 50 seafood HACCP inspections, which represents a 10% increase in total inspections over last year. As with other states that perform contract inspections, 7% of Oregon's contract work will be audited by FDA to determine equivalency with FDA inspections.

#### **GAP inspections**

The Commodity Inspection Division of the Oregon Department of Agriculture has developed a program to conduct third party audits of good agricultural practices. The audits will be provided on a fee-for-service basis to farmers whose buyers require verification of their farming practices. The program, which start this growing season, is designed around a program developed by USDA.

#### **Funding**

The legislature has been in and out of special session trying to decide how to deal with a \$900 million budget shortfall. The Food Safety Division will carry a substantial portion of the 6% cut in general funds that the Department of Agriculture is scheduled to take. At the present time, the division will handle the cut by shifting to a lower reliance on general funds. At the present time, the division does not need to cut any personnel to deal with the fund shift.



## **Field Notes**

### **new feature column**

The Western Association of Food and Drug Officials (WAFDO) Board of Directors wants to find ways to make WAFDO more relevant and useful to people who work in the field.

One way we are attempting to do this is to start this new feature column "Field Notes" in the WAFDO FLASH. We would like to receive articles written by field people that talk about your interesting experiences in the field, new trends you're seeing and how you're dealing with them, the field perspective on regulation, successes you've had, or failures and the lessons learned.

## **Food Service in the Jungle**

*Submitted by Victoria Smith, EPS II*

This December, I had the opportunity to travel to Costa Rica and stay in a nature reserve located deep in the rain forest. As the location was rather remote, almost all meals were consumed in the small restaurant at the resort. Not wanting to spoil my appetite, I decided it was a good idea to stay out of the kitchen. I was slightly concerned about the food because so many organisms grow and live with no effort in the lush humid climate. This includes absolutely amazing plants and animals as well as potentially dangerous bacteria and molds (all of my cotton clothes hung in the closet smelled of mold starting on day one). As the place was small I ended up chatting with the cook, Anna, who invited me into the kitchen to make a Batida de Guanabana, tropical fruit shake. Not wanting to offend her, I reluctantly accepted. Once in the open air kitchen, I tried not to notice the cockroaches (almost impossible as they are huge and walking around in broad daylight), a long line of small ants marching into the kitchen, across the floor, up the table leg and into a container of sugar, or other unidentified but very interesting species of insects around the food. I did feel a little better when I saw a bottle of bleach under the sink. Anna, busy working as we chatted, entered the food storage room, screamed and ran back out. Immediately, I looked into the room to find the large toad that had frightened Anna looking at me. Noting Anna's distress, I tried to chase the toad out with a broom. The toad however was not interested in leaving. It was then that I discovered the use of the bleach. She took the bleach and poured it on the toad making him rush out the door.

## **Welcome New Members of WAFDO**

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## **Budget Proposal will have you Eating at Your Own Risk**

*Submitted by Janice Adair  
Director, Division of Environmental Health  
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation*

There may be no such thing as a free lunch, but in the most advanced county in the world, we have come to take for granted that at least lunch will be free from food poisoning. Not so under a legislative proposal that would shut down the state's retail food safety and sanitation program. The proposal entirely eliminates state oversight of all restaurants, grocery stores, food booths, school kitchens, day care centers, tattoo parlors, and public accommodations. The justification is that communities ought to do this rather than the state government. Right now, only Anchorage provides most of these services.

Oversight of commercially available food is a core governmental function done to protect public health – and is something that Alaska has done since before statehood. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 76 million people are made ill each year from foodborne diseases, some 325,000 people are hospitalized, and 5,200 die. There are more than 250 foodborne diseases, including salmonellosis, botulism, and e. coli.

The food safety program works to prevent those outbreaks from happening here. We look for the conditions that can cause foodborne illnesses. We work with operators to identify food safety hazards and what can be done to control them. We ensure the business's employees are following proper hygienic practices. We check that food comes from approved sources and that it is protected from contamination.

We also investigate complaints. Confirming a business is not the source of an illness can be just as important as confirming that it is. The National Restaurant Association estimates that the average foodborne illness outbreak costs the owner of the establishment \$75,000. Investigations of foodborne illnesses can lead to both short- and long-term improvements in food handling practices and help us understand environmental pathogens so that long term improvements can be made in the food safety system across the state.

And it is a system. Whether you call it from “boat to throat” or “farm to fork,” the concept is the same. Food safety is a partnership that involves the harvester, the processor, the server, the consumer, and government. A failure at any point puts everyone at risk.

Whether the state or local governments should oversee retail food safety and sanitation of public facilities is a legitimate public policy debate. But the debate and the decision need to happen before these essential services are simply eliminated. Right now, there is no system in place for local governments to provide these services, no plan for those that only have a handful of retail food establishments, no assurance for processors who invest in producing a quality product and want to see it served the same way, and no way for the public to protect themselves, their visitors, or their kids.

The path that's being proposed is to eliminate the program and hope that all communities statewide will step up to the plate to provide oversight to some 4,640 food establishments and 4,293 public facilities. Unless and until they do, you'll need to think twice when you or your visitors dine out, buy prepared foods, have your kids eat the school lunch, or jump in your community's public pool. Right now, we take the safety of these places for granted. And if you live in Anchorage, you'll be able to keep that confidence. The rest of us will be on our own.

## **Stu Richardson Retires from California Food and Drug**

*Submitted by Chris Wogee*

After 39 years of dedicated public health service to California, AFDO and WAFDO, Stuart E. Richardson, Jr. has retired.

For the last 16 years, Stu has been Chief of the Food and Drug Branch, California Department of Health Services. Prior to that, he worked for the Department coordinating local environmental health plans

Stu guided California's food, drug, medical device and product safety agency through numerous emergencies and important public health issues. Disasters such as the Whittier, Northridge and Loma Prieta earthquakes, the 1986 and 1997 floods in Northern California and the 1992 Los Angeles Civil Disaster were major challenges and became

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public health successes. Numerous product recalls, food and drug tamperings and foodborne illness were resolved under his leadership. He facilitated the removal from sale of numerous contaminated foods including cheese, fruit juices, cantaloupes, strawberries, watermelons, sprouts, oysters and eggs and then worked with industry and other regulatory agencies to correct practices to prevent future occurrences. He initiated the promulgation of warnings regulations on unsafe uses of certain dietary supplements and the raw ingestion of oysters from the Gulf of Mexico to better protect California consumers.

Stu provided guidance and innovation by founding the California Food Safety Task Force and California Industry Food Safety Training and Education Program. He also pioneered strong work-sharing partnerships with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Department of Defense and local environmental health agencies.

Somehow, Stu found the time to be very active in numerous professional organizations including the Association of Food and Drug Officials and the Western Association of Food and Drug Officials. Stu missed 18 consecutive Father's Days and his own birthday celebrations to attend the AFDO Annual Education Conferences. He served on the AFDO and WAFDO Boards and always came to meetings bristling with issues and ready to work. His influence went far beyond the borders of California.

A retirement dinner was held for Stu on February 21, 2002. Before Stu could leave for Panama, Hawaii and points unknown, he was publicly honored for his dedication and service. AFDO Vice-President Chris Wogee presented Stu with memento from AFDO for his contributions and a letter from AFDO President Doug Saunders. AFDO Board member Jim Waddell presented him with a retirement badge. Stu Richardson was joined at the retirement dinner by his wife Gretchen, his mother Jeanette, his sons Stu III and Kyle and a mob of friends and colleagues. Stu will be missed.



### **FDA's Role in the 2002 Winter Olympic Games**

*Submitted by Virlie Walker, Public Affairs Specialist  
FDA, Denver District*

FDA was part of the Environmental and Public Health Alliance (EPHA) formed four years ago to prepare for the Games. EPHA was made up of representatives from the six counties who hosted venue sites, the State Departments of Health, Environmental Quality, Agriculture & Food, and a few Federal agencies. Susan Miller, former Regional Food Specialist, Paul Teitell, Assistant to the District Director, Cindy Kunkel, Kansas District Regional Food Specialist, and Virlie Walker, Denver's PAS participated in planning meetings for more than a year. The Department of Health & Human Services was the lead agency for health related Emergency Operations, and medical response. EPA and USDA also participated in EPHA. Paul Teitell of Denver District was the Regional Coordinator for FDA's efforts, and Cindy Kunkel, of Kansas District was the Food Inspection Team Leader, with Chet Morris as her back up. Denver's Elvin Smith and Ted Steinke both served as back ups for Paul.

FDA was invited by the State of Utah to conduct the food inspection at the Olympic Village's two dining facilities where meals for the athletes were served. They were also there to support the state and local inspectors should they need assistance with inspection of food served at Park City where most of the ski competitions were held, and at Soldier Hollow (Heber City) where the cross country events were held. A team of 23 Regional Food Specialists and Interstate Travel Specialists represented FDA nationwide as well as several from the Center for Food Safety and Nutrition. Inspections throughout the Winter Games continued 27/7 and were continued on a limited schedule throughout the Paralympics.

It was a well planned and orchestrated event with little or no significant issues that impacted public health. Security measures included safe source inspection. Food was delivered outside the Village once a day between 4:30 and 5:30 a.m. The trucks were inspected, and then sealed by the FBI before they entered the Village.

149,000 meals were served in the two Village dining halls throughout the 28 day span. There was also a McDonald's in the main dining hall.

Denver's PAS, Virlie Walker, was assigned to the Public Information Officer Team for the Department of Health and Human Services, and served on the Media Response Team for the EPHA. Part of her time was spent in the Joint Information Center in the Basement of the Capitol where news releases were coordinated by representatives of FEMA, Secret Service, state and local fire and law enforcement and public health agencies.

Paul, Elvin, Ted and Virlie spent most of their time in the DHHS Regional Emergency Operation Center where daily reports were

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collated and conference calls took place to keep the Department and federal, state and local agencies informed of any pertinent issues during the Games.

Weather created some obstacles by freezing pipes and porta-potties in the Village and the mountain venues. Garbage became a problem when the contract vendor could not transport it to the landfill due to the volume in Park City. A stink-bomb was set off a few days before closing on top of a high rise in downtown Salt Lake City, which caused a stir, but no serious problem.

With the presence of thousands of uniformed and armed military personnel, the safety and security of athletes and visitors alike was unequaled in Olympic history. Salt Lake City seemed to be the safest place in America. We are all thankful for the successful completion of the GAMES.

### **Utah Turns in a “Gold Medal” Performance!**

*Submitted by Kyle R. Stephens*

*Director, Division of Regulatory Services*

*Utah Department of Agriculture and Food*

The Salt Lake 2002 Winter Games are now history, but Utahn's are to be commended for the Gold Medal performance they turned in hosting the Olympic games. The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food played a vital role in the environmental and public health area of responsibility. Their activity and involvement included conducting daily food safety inspections at the primary facilities that provided food to over 25,000 volunteers and support staff. They also conducted daily animal health inspections of the wildlife and animal exhibits that were a part of the 'Western Experience' activities associated with the Winter Games.

This activity and involvement began in earnest way back in 1998, as representatives of the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food became actively involved in the planning process for hosting the games and ensuring that environmental and public health functions were carried out. To accomplish this task, an organization that became known as the Environmental and Public Health Alliance was created. The Alliance consisted of the six local health departments (Summit County Health Dept., Wasatch County Health Dept., Utah County Health Dept., Salt Lake Valley Health Dept., Davis County Health Dept., and Weber/Morgan Health Dept.), where the actual Olympic venue sites were located, and three state agencies (Utah Department of Health, Utah Department of Environmental Quality and Utah Department of Agriculture and Food). These nine entities comprised the steering committee for

the Alliance along with federal partners that included HHS, FDA, CDC, EPA, USDA and others. The Alliance met on a monthly basis to coordinate the various activities that needed to take place. Special Task Forces, with Co-chairs and committee members were then assigned to address the specific areas of concern and develop the game plan for conducting business. These Task Forces and Special Committees addressed areas such as food safety, drinking water, temporary mass gatherings, solid and hazardous waste, wastewater, communicable disease & epidemiology, health promotion, media response, environmental & emergency response and others. A large number of people were involved, but the coordination and cooperation were exceptional as people worked together to accomplish the end goal of providing a safe games. This cooperative effort will be one of the lasting 'Legacies' of the games, because it demonstrated that a diverse group of government entities could come together, set aside their 'turf' issues and pull off a complex task of ensuring that public health and environmental health was properly protected.

Just to give you an idea of the type of activity that took place, here are some of the final numbers: 70,000 daily visitors to downtown Salt Lake City, 25,714 volunteers, 470 metal detectors at Olympic venues, 2,654 athletes, 78 events, 77 national Olympic committees, 477 medals awarded, 12,000 law enforcement personnel, 15,000 national and international media personnel, 1.6 million tickets sold, and it cost \$1.9 billion to host the Winter Games.

As far as the Environmental and Public Health Alliance member activities, the food safety and environmental health inspections can be summarized as follows: 2,126 food safety inspections conducted at Venue sites that involved 1,756 man-hours at 294 facilities; there were 1,352 food safety inspections conducted at non-Venue sites with 858 man-hours at 228 facilities; there were 409 temporary mass gathering inspections conducted at 29 facilities for a total of 1,318 man-hours. These inspection activities were conducted by a cadre of local, state and federal employees. After all was said and done, there were no major food borne illnesses that were attributed to the games time events. This gives you a snapshot of some of the activities that took place, but in no way captures everything that went on.

The entire group of public and environmental health officials from all aspects of local, state, and federal government as

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well as private industry deserve a big pat on the back for a 'job well done'!

### **Allergen labeling compliance**

*Submitted by Claudia Coles, WSDA Food Safety Program Manager*

The Washington State Department of Agriculture, like many other states, is performing a greater number of FDA contract inspections compared to past years. One of the requirements for contract inspections is to collect labels of three different products, which are forwarded to FDA along with the inspection documents. In the past, FDA's main purpose for reviewing the product labels has been to evaluate compliance with the Nutritional Education and Labeling Act (NLEA). Now, FDA is also evaluating the ingredient lists to verify correct labeling of allergen ingredients.

WSDA will be developing guidelines on allergen labeling to assist Food Safety Officers to identify allergen labeling violations in the field. There are a number of possible allergen labeling scenarios that need to be clarified in the guidelines. An enforcement policy and procedure will also be developed to clarify which allergen violations would result in the various enforcement actions: warning letter, request voluntary product recall (Class 1 or 2), issuance of public health notifications, license suspension, civil penalty, or embargo. WSDA discussed allergen labeling enforcement at the spring 2002 Food Safety Advisory Committee.

### **Rice Cakes**

*Submitted by Claudia Coles*

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) is working with Washington State University (WSU) on a study looking at the shelf-stability of Asian rice cake products. Rice cake products are made by a number of Asian food processors that distribute in both wholesale and retail markets and are traditionally sold at room temperature. WSDA and local health departments have had concerns about the shelf-stability of a number of rice cake products after initial tests have shown water activity and pH ranges that indicate a possible need for refrigeration.

Since there is a wide variety of product ingredients, little known background on such products and language barriers that make processing evaluations difficult, WSDA contacted Dr. Richard Dougherty and Dr. Kong both with WSU for assistance. Together, we hope to be able to work with local food processors on evaluating their products and provide scientific review that in turn will help provide the necessary information to public health officials on whether certain products are shelf-stable or would require refrigeration.

### **WAFDO offers scholarships for allergen conference**

The WAFDO Board of Directors is pleased to offer scholarships to the upcoming Managing Food Allergens conference in Costa Mesa, CA. We realize most budgets are getting hit pretty hard these days, and we want to make sure those interested in attending this timely conference have funding options outside their agency / department budgets.

#### **Managing Food Allergens**

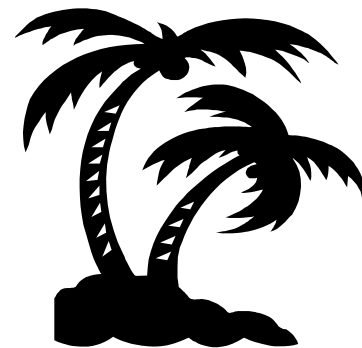
An Update and Review of Proposed Strategies for Managing Food Allergens

April 25, 2002

Hilton Costa Mesa

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WAFDO will offer 10 scholarships up to \$500 each. If you're interested in a scholarship, contact WAFDO President Mike Govro at 503-986-4720 or [mgovro@oda.state.or.us](mailto:mgovro@oda.state.or.us).



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## **An Opinion**

*By Mike Govro*

Since September 11, we have all been busy dealing with issues of bioterrorism and food security. FDA has produced guidance documents to advise industry on how they can better protect their products, and industry has been working to tighten security. It appears that state and local agencies have taken a variety of approaches to preparing for a bioterrorism event. Most of us at the state and local level are not experts in bioterrorism or counterterrorism, and are struggling with how to proceed. I believe that more needs to be done by the federal to coordinate and guide the efforts of all federal, state and local agencies that might deal with a food related bioterrorism event. Such an effort should involve interagency coordination, readiness assessment, and training.

Most state and local governments are prepared to deal with food recalls and foodborne illness investigations. In the event of intentionally caused food contamination or illness, the dynamics of the response may be altered by the involvement of law enforcement agencies whose goals may differ from those of public health agencies. We need clarification about the roles and responsibilities of the different agencies that may be involved in such an event, and contact information for their key personnel.

Training is another subject about which many of us are unsure. What kind of training should we get, where do we get it, and to whom should it be delivered? I have seen several training events offered that deal with bioterrorism prevention for industry, but little for the public health agencies that will be called upon to respond. At a recent multi-agency conference in the Northwest, FDA conducted a short tabletop exercise that revealed much about our readiness to respond to a food bioterrorism event. Because so many different state and federal agencies might respond in such an event, I believe it is the federal government's place to conduct these exercises and call all of the potential players to the table.

I may be expressing these concerns just ahead of the solutions to them. There are several events in the works that may address these concerns. The AFDO food security symposium will already be over by the time this issue of the FLASH is produced. The Pacific region of FDA is holding a 9 state meeting to discuss readiness on April 30 and May 1. WAFDO plans to co-sponsor a

series of food security workshops with the Pacific Region of FDA this summer. I urge those in charge of bioterrorism response to develop a blue print for state and local agencies.

## **Changes at FDA**

In February, HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson named Lester M. Crawford, Jr., D.V.M., Ph.D., to serve as Deputy Commissioner of FDA. As Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Crawford is now the senior official in the agency and will act as Commissioner pending the installment of a permanent commissioner.

The FDA Office of Regulatory Affairs has decided to separate the function of Emergency Operations from the Division of Emergency and Investigational Operations (DEIO). As Emergency Operations is an agency function and, with the creation of a new Emergency Operations Center in FDA Headquarters (expected to be ready within the next two months), this move will increase the visibility and focus of this important function in the Agency.

With the large increase in emergency incidents and increase in investigations operations particularly in the international arena, DEIO will be separated into two entities, the Division of Field Investigations and Emergency Operations.

The Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition has completed its move to the new Harvey W. Wiley Federal Building in College Park, Maryland. The new offices are a delightful change from the old FOB-8 in downtown D.C. and just a short block from the College Park Metro Station. From now on, mail to CFSAN should go to:

5100 Paint Branch Parkway  
College Park, MD  
20740-3835

**And, welcome to.....**

## **New Director for FDA's Los Angeles Investigations Branch**

FDA's Los Angeles District Office announces the selection of Mark Tucker, PhD. for the Director, Investigations Branch position. During his career w/FDA, Dr. Tucker he has worked as microbiologist, investigator and for the past 2.5 years as a compliance officer handling many complex compliance cases.



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## **WAFDO Rejuvenates Committee Work**

The WAFDO Board of Directors updated the roles and responsibilities for their organization's committees in recent months. Now it's time to encourage WAFDO members to join a committee and become involved in shaping our future in food, drug and device regulatory systems. WAFDO committee work is a great way to collaborate with your counterparts in other states and provinces. Ideas generated by these committees can then be shared with respective AFDO committees. Linking affiliate committees with AFDO committees is a great way to grow the AFDO organization!

### **WAFDO Committees:**

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Educational & Annual Educational Conference

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Publications

Food with a Subcommittee on Seafood

Membership

If you're interested in joining a WAFDO committee, contact WAFDO President Mike Govro at 503-986-4720 or [mgovro@oda.state.or.us](mailto:mgovro@oda.state.or.us).