

AFSAC Meeting/Teleconference April 5, 2011

Participants

Ron Klein
Michel Villon
Jo Dawson
Kristine Rogers
Dale Yamnik
Dr. Brian Himmelbloom
Dr. Bob Gerlach
Herb Everett
Huitte Taylor
___?_ Martin, ANMC
Major Gwen Boleware w/ staff
Lorinda Lhotka
Kimberly Stryker
Randall Pfeuffer
Candice Brady
Tony Barrett
Shane Erickson
Jeri Fleagle

Program Overview – Ron Klein

Staffing

Pretty much full, but 4 vacancies in Anchorage

- Seafood Permit Coordinator
- Inspector/Supervisor with Focus on Standards
- EHO III QA/QC
- EHO IV working supervisor

Funding

- Have resources to finish FY work
- FDA contract inspection obligations are focus

Staff Training

- March 7 – 11 in Anchorage, all staff attended FDA Plan Review, Smoked Fish, and Sensory Training for Fish
- LA State University Coordinated Emergency Response – possibility of bringing back to Alaska (Anchorage, SE, Fairbanks)
- Ron Klein & Jeri Fleagle (Soldotna EHO/Retail Food Specialist) provided training at the Governor’s Health and Safety Conference. Jeri presented “No One Gets Sick” and Ron presented on Food Defense
- August 9, 2011 in Anchorage – Alaska Environmental Health Association (AEHA) will offer a pre-conference workshop on Investigating Foodborne Illness Outbreaks in Alaska. The format is based upon work that the Council

for Improvement in Foodborne Illness Outbreak Response (CIFOR) has done and planners are using the CIFOR Toolkit to develop the course. Funding is provided by a grant from the Council for State and Territorial Epidemiology. AEHA membership and conference information is found at:

<http://www.aeha.net>

National Food Safety

- FDA, Departments of Agriculture, Cornell University, and others have formed a Produce Safety Alliance, similar to the Seafood HACCP Alliance, to provide education and support for produce operations.
- The Seafood HACCP Alliance is providing training to the upcoming new Hazard Guide June 8-9, 2011 in San Francisco (for this region). More information is at: <http://afdo.org/Training/HACCP/2011Update.cfm>

State Food Defense Task Force

- Ron would like to see AFSAC's food defense role strengthened and would like to see AFSAC form a subcommittee that can focus on defense, emergency planning with a focus on developing relationships so that, in the event of an emergency, folks know who to contact. Although Alaska did not apply for a \$10,000/year grant (due to high costs associated with administering a small grant), it is an activity that can be addressed with core program funding.

Small Producers

- FSS is working to promote food safety and capacity building to support increased interest in "cottage food processing" operations. We plan to start engaging with farmers to provide more technical assistance so they may have more successful businesses and has asked FSS staff throughout Alaska to participate in Farm Bureau meetings
- Dr. Bob Gerlach, Office of the State Veterinarian (OSV) on the call. OSV regulates production of cheese, milk & other dairy products, and reindeer slaughter/processing in Alaska.
- FSS is an active participant in a group funded through the Department of Health and Social Services called the Alaska Food Policy Council.

Japan Radiation

- Ron has participated in several regional and national calls with FDA, EPA, and NOAA on food safety-related concerns that have been raised due to the radiation emissions from Japan. The issue is one of risk communication and there are no indications of risk to the food supply for Americans at this time. There have been some indications of elevated levels of radiation in milk and in the air, but officials are not concerned about the levels because they are at levels far below levels which pose a health risk. Alaska seafood is safe to consume and FDA and NOAA will work with the state if situation changes. More information is at: <http://www.hss.state.ak.us> and <http://www.epa.gov> and <http://www.fda.gov>

Personnel Changes

- Ron is planning to retire at the end of September. Meantime, he will be continuing to strengthen the program and facilitate a smooth transition.

Risk Factor Survey – Kim Stryker

- Lorinda Lhotka and Jeri Fleagle are leading the program’s work in conducting its second Risk Factor Survey. The first was completed several years ago. This survey is conducted to determine facilities’ compliance with the 1999 FDA Model Food Code (used for a consistent survey) for risk factors that, if uncontrolled, are known to lead to foodborne illness. The FDA has conducted a similar survey and now has enough data points to analyze the data. Their report and additional information is at:
<http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/RetailFoodProtection/FoodbornellnessandRiskFactorReduction/RetailFoodRiskFactorStudies/default.htm>
- FSS is now able to pull data from its information database that can help in identifying trends and other valuable information that can help guide the direction and focus of the program. Stay tuned for more information.

Exemptions in 18 AAC 31 – Kim Stryker

- Internal work has begun to overhaul provisions of 18 AAC 31.012, the section of the Alaska Food Code dealing with exemptions. We hope to broaden the scope of activities that are exempt (do not require a permit to operate) and make the section easier to read. When ready, a draft will be available for public review and comment and a Notice will be posted on the state’s Online Public Notice page
(<http://notes4.state.ak.us/pn/pubnotic.nsf/PNByCatActive?OpenView&Start=1&Count=30&Expand=15#15>) and provided directly to “interested parties.” In our case, it will be AFSAC members and our permitted food facilities as well as anyone who has expressed interest in being notified.

Self-Assessment for Manufactured Food Regulatory Program Standards – Kim Stryker

- FSS is due for its second self-assessment to determine conformance to national standards that have been developed for manufactured food regulatory programs. Alaska is enrolled in both MFRPS as well as the National Voluntary Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards. Three years ago, we met three standards of ten. The programs focus on continuous improvement. More information on both programs may be found at:
- <http://www.fda.gov/downloads/ForFederalStateandLocalOfficials/UCM191474.pdf> and
- <http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/RetailFoodProtection/ProgramStandards/ucm245409.htm>

Open Comments, Discussion – Group

Tony Barrett, MOA Food Safety & Sanitation Program Manager

- Would like MOA to focus on Retail Food Standards, particularly restandardization of staff and performing a risk factor study.

- Housing complaints, particularly complaints of bed bugs, rodents, and cockroaches in overnight accommodations have required significant resource allocation.
- Working to develop a simple registration as a teaching/learning experience for children who are participating in National Lemonade Day, a fundraiser for charity. This is expected to occur in the early part of May.
- Fielding questions regarding use of locally-produced eggs in farmer's market, particularly from farms that are exempt from FDA/USDA requirements. Lorinda at FSS has been working with University of Alaska, Fairbanks' Cooperative Extension and others to develop guidance and will share with Tony.
- Alaska Environmental Health Association conference in August.

Herb Everett, "Safety Herb" from Westmark Hotels

- Inquired about status of transportation subcommittee. Discussion ensued about national study on Rural Transportation included as part of Food Safety Modernization Act
(<http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/FSMA/default.htm>)
- Thank you to Ron & Jeri for participation in Governor's Health and Safety Conference
- Retiring September 30, 2011 due to merger between Westmark and Princess Cruise Lines.

Jo Dawson, Child Nutrition Services for State of Alaska

- Linda Coate is retiring June 30, 2011

FSS

- Western Association of Food & Drug Officials hosting Annual Educational Conference and Training in Spokane, WA August 9-11, 2011. For membership and other information, see: www.wafdo.org
- Global Food Collaborative is hosting Global Food Alaska in Kenai June 8-10, 2011. This event brings all aspects of the food industry together.
<http://www.gfc-connect.com/?page=GlobalFoodAlaska>

Dr. Brian Himmelbloom, UAF Fishery Industrial Technology Center

- Evaluations are underway to improve communications, website, and gather comments on performance.
- The center is also conducting seminars through June.
- For more information, see <http://www.sfos.uaf.edu/fitc>

Next Meeting August 2, 2011 at 1:30 pm at DEC office on Cordova and via Teleconference.