



Voyager

Fall 2009

Vol. 2 - 2009

Inside this issue:

President's Message	1
Prepare Thyself	1
Salmonella Vaccine	2
Food Recalls At Schools	2
Fall Meeting Recap	3
New Commissioner	3
Upcoming CASA Events	4
CASA History	4

2009-2010 NENY-CASA Officers and Executive Board

President - Dominick DiCarlo; Schenectady County Health Dept.

Vice President - Dawn Breault, Renns. Co Health Dept.

Secretary-Treasurer - Marianne Stone; Albany County Health Dept.

Executive Board Rep. - Erin Sawyer; NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets

Past President - Clarence Davis; NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets

Executive Board Members

Tara Becker; Columbia County Health
Amy Mears; NYS Health Dept.

Mary Finn; Food & Drug Admin.

Cory Skier; NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets

Andrew Suflita; Schenectady County Health
Darby Greco; NYS Health Dept.

Associate Board Representative

Nigar Hale; Grant Sales & Marketing, Inc.

President's Message - by Dominick DiCarlo

It is my pleasure to welcome both old and new members alike to read the fall issue of CASA membership newsletter. The NENY CASA executive board and I will work hard during the following year to see that your involvement in CASA meets all your expectations.

CASA is an organization consisting of many different members from both industry and regulatory agencies, from the Northeastern New York region, dealing with food, drug/medical devices, and cosmetics. The purpose of the organization is to provide training and professional development as well as networking opportunities with other affiliates in the aforementioned fields.

Any professional organization

is only as good as its membership involvement. I would encourage members to come forth with any wants or needs involving current or upcoming issues and/or professional training needs. If there's a timely subject out there that you would like some professional information on, chances are CASA can see to it that a professional involved in that field can be made available as a speaker at an upcoming meeting and address all your questions.

The 2009 Annual Conference was held in Philadelphia Pennsylvania and again was a great success and very informative. The 2010 Annual Conference will be hosted by the New York Conference and will be held on Long Island in May of 2010. I urge

you to visit the CASA website for details.

Membership is a constant struggle with any professional organization and lack of funding by various employers puts a damper on new membership. I would like to thank all current members for "riding out the storm" and staying on and ask you all to pass the word on to co-workers, associates and supervisors regarding the many positive aspects of CASA and urge them to become members.

If you're a current member who regularly attends our training meetings, I look forward to seeing you again. If you're a new or perspective member, welcome aboard. Introduce yourself, and let us know your needs and expectations. CASA is here for you.

If You Want A Rare Steak - Cook It Yourself

If you've ever thought while eating out at a restaurant that you could do a better job making the food, well you might soon get your chance. A new restaurant in Glasgow, Scotland now invites patrons to prepared their own dinners using ingredients from the facility and guidance from a trained chef.

"Cookie" was started by Domenico Del Priore, saying that he hopes the concept,

which he calls "horizontal cooking", will break down the barriers between the chef and the diner.

The owner sees the venture as a community bringing together a cooking club, healthy eating and art. The restaurant is co-owned by Domenico and wife Dr. Melanie McCallum, a public health specialist.

So far the response from the food community has been

positive. Food critics welcome being in the kitchen and cooking with good ingredients and a good chef.

If this new format catches on, it will certainly be a challenge for the public health inspectors. The concept raises a whole host of questions; who's responsible if food poisoning results? More to come.



Vaccine Against Salmonella May Be Possible Due To Space Shuttle Research

Experiments conducted aboard the International Space Station on the food poisoning bacteria *Salmonella* may someday soon lead to a viable vaccine against the illness. Samples of the bacteria brought back for analysis by the Shuttle Discovery crew have shown some interesting characteristics when cultured in the extreme conditions of space.

First, *Salmonella* grown in space are 3-7 times more virulent than when grown on the ground under otherwise identical conditions. The research conducted by Cheryl Nickerson and her

colleagues at Arizona State University found that many of the bacteria's genes react differently in space, triggered by a "master switch" protein that turns on and off a group of genes that may be causing the increased virulence. Information from the research can be used to develop strategies in producing a possible vaccine.

Second, the research shows that bacteria grown in culture media with higher ion concentrations of five specific ions prevented the increase in virulence from occurring.

Both of these "spaced out" discoveries are being studied for ways to change the bacteria's virulence and ultimately to develop a vaccine.

The CDC estimates that 40,000 cases of *Salmonella* are reported annually in the United States and it is among the leading causes of food illness, so the research can surely be put to good



use.

And, the research continues as a second series of four *Salmonella* experiments took flight on the space shuttle last year as well. Results from that research are not public as of yet.

Research like this may sometime in the near future lead to a huge return on the space program investment. Other experiments conducted aboard the space shuttle have so far lead to 162 publications in scientific journals so far.

Timely Foods

Have you ever stopped to think about the foods you eat? Who were the first to eat insects? Where was the potato chip invented? Did Thomas Jefferson make ice cream in colonial America?

Well here's a website that answers those questions and much more by laying out a timeline that traces the origins of foods throughout history.

Check it out at www.foodtimeline.org.

"Given that salmonella is among the leading cause of food-borne pathogens, one of the disappointments of the 21st century is that we don't have a vaccine"
Cheryl Nickerson

GAO Report Critical Of Timing To Report Food Recalls To Schools

The investigative arm of Congress, the Government Accountability Office, issued a report critical of the Department of Agriculture for failing to inform schools of food recalls in a timely manner. The recalled products included salmonella tainted peanuts products that were linked in the deaths of nine people.

The recalled products were served to children after recalls were issued, although

there was no evidence that the recalled products made any children sick.

The reports raises concerns due to the fact that schoolchildren are more likely to suffer complications from foodborne illnesses and generally are less inclined to make informed choices about the foods served in the schools.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack responded to the report by pledging to

"streamline communications among departments, agencies, and State partners to yield a more effective and integrated approach to handling recalls."

New York Senator Kristen Gillibrand, D-NY said "Food items that are being pulled from grocery store shelves across the country are still being served to millions of schoolchildren." She has introduced a bill to insure schools are immediately notified of food recalls. In the peanut butter recall notification did not

come until weeks later.

The report also cites that once issued, there was little or no checks on the effectiveness of the recalls at schools.



NENY-CASA's Fall Meeting Explores Wide Ranging Topics

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets' Pride of New York room played host to NENY-CASA's 2009 fall quarterly meeting. Approximately 55 people attended the training which explored Rapid Detection Techniques for Pathogenic Bacteria, White Nosed Syndrome in Bats, Disinfection Systems for small public water supplies and the Latest Temperature control Technologies.

Nellie Dumas, Associate Director of Bacteriology at NYS Wadsworth Labs talked about technologies currently being used that dramatically decrease the time needed to identify agents responsible for illnesses through the use of molecular assays. Real time polymerase chain reaction assays, pulse field gel electrophoresis and pyrosequencing provide the lab with cutting edge weapons in the fight against illness outbreaks in New York State.

Standards methods of identifying bacteria through culturing are slower and more labor intensive. Molecular

assays can reduce that time from weeks to days and sometimes hours before the culprit is known. This quick turnaround time in the lab leads to a corresponding quick environmental response that can sometimes cut short an outbreak, reducing the number of illnesses and preventing further contamination from reaching the public.

Al Hicks, Mammal Specialist, working with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation gave a presentation on the bleak outlook for northeast bat populations due to white-nosed syndrome (wns). The illness, caused by a fungus, causes the bats to seek food during the winter months when they should be hibernating causing mortality. High mortality rates in the bat populations have alarmed biologists, who have made some dire predictions for the future. Of the 128 NYS caves and mines surveyed in the past many have become affected with the illness.

Theories postulate that the wns may be an exotic import

from Europe. The troubling difference is that bat populations in Europe have not seen such high mortality. Research is ongoing to discover strategies aimed at saving our bat population.

Michael J. Montysko, Design Section Chief for the NYS Bureau of Water Supply Protection discussed the particulars of both chlorine and UV disinfection systems for small public water supply systems.

The water "primer" discussed what inspectors should be looking for when

faced with reviewing and inspecting water systems.

Gary Ratajczak of Andersen Instruments discussed the latest temperature control technologies being used in the food industry today. The systems are undergoing advances that both regulators and food processors and manufacturers are using in today's quality control environment.



CASA MemberSHIP Sets Sail

NENY-CASA needs its members; both old and new. Please take some time to get aboard the Halfmoon and renew your membership for 2009 by going to the CASA website at www.casafdo.org, print out a membership application and mail it in with the appropriate fee.

CASA is a bargain in these hard economic times at just \$15 for regulatory members and \$35 for associate members. You get valuable training and make professional relationships in the deal. We also challenge members to bring a new person into the organization. To sweeten the pot, any member who brings a friend to a NENY-CASA meeting will have their meeting registration fee waived if the friend joins CASA.

Let's all take a voyage on the good ship Halfmoon and help NENY-CASA have a banner year.

New Schenectady County Health Commissioner Hits Ground Running

Dr. David Pratt, M.D.; MPH joined the Schenectady County Public Health Services as it's new Public Health Commissioner in Mid-September. Dr. Pratt is a board certified internist with sub-specialty certification in internal medicine and pulmonary medicine. He has both a medical degree and a master's degree in public health. He received his early training in public health with

the Centers for Disease Control. Dr. Pratt's work experiences include assignments with the World Health Organization, Hawaii Department of Public Health and General Electric Energy.

Dr. Pratt takes over the reins of the Schenectady County Commissioner of Public Health Services at a particular busy time. Much

of his recent work has been preparing and strategizing for the fall 2009 influenza season.

He has given numerous presentations on both seasonal and H1N1 flu to the health-care community, school nurses and superintendents and community organizations advocating for comprehensive vaccination plans designed to interrupt the

spread of the H1N1 pandemic within Schenectady County.



Dr. David Pratt, M.D.; MPH

NORTHEAST NEW YORK CONFERENCE OF CASA

Voyager Editor - Andrew Suflita
andrew.suflita@schenectadycounty.com

Have ideas for the Voyager ?
Please e-mail your suggestions, articles,
and NENY-CASA news to the editor.

New York Conference To Host CASA Annual Educa- tion Seminar

The Hyatt Regency Hotel in Hauppauge, New York will play host to CASA members and friends this coming May 17-20, 2010 for the Annual Education and Training Seminar. This is the 94th year for the event which promises an ambitious and informative agenda.

CASA's Annual Education and Training Seminar is a must, so plan on including it in your annual training budget. It will provide quality training and networking opportunities for a very reasonable price. Here's a small sample of the topics that will be presented:

Update of food safety issues in Canada; Modifying food worker behaviors; Hold the mustard/the generation gap; CDC food safety projects; a presentation on food safety legislation and the International Food Protection Institute; Rodent control; Pasteurization of shell eggs; the FDA egg rule; a presentation on CIFOR; Posting of calorie counts in New York City restaurants; Feeding our military in a combat zone; Safeguards in fish and shellfish processing; Tobacco control and prevention and the Food Emergency Response Network.

Keep watching the CASA website for seminar information as it is posted.



What is CASA? How does it fit into the food and drug safety picture? CASA is one of 6 regional affiliates of the Association of Food and Drug Officials and the largest affiliate. Below is a brief history of CASA and why it continues to exist and remain viable for 92 years and counting.....

In 1916, Food and Drug Officials, and interested affiliates in the Central Atlantic area organized themselves for the purpose of improving coordination of their respective programs at the local, state and federal jurisdictional levels – thus CASA.

The current objectives of this growing professional association, as written in its Constitution, are as follows:

1. Promote and foster uniformity of laws affecting foods, drugs cosmetics and devices.
2. Encourage and promote enforcement of said laws.
3. Encourage and support programs which will contribute to consumer protection consistent with broad purpose and laws.
4. Assist members in their technical work and development.
5. Cooperate with other professional groups in advancing consumer protection under said laws.
6. Encourage and promote cooperative enforcement programs with federal agencies and between related enforcement agencies in each state.
7. Cooperate with the Association of Food and Drug Officials and other organizations having similar objectives.
8. Foster and promote modernization of laws, procedures and inspectional and analytical techniques in the light of developing technological improvements relating to the production and processing of foods, drugs, cosmetics and devices.
9. Encourage and promote improvement communications between and among consumers, enforcement and related producers and industry groups.

Through the active participation of Regular and Associate Members, CASA works to achieve these goals, and thus, improve the effectiveness of existing consumer protection programs.

NENY-CASA's Next Meeting Set For December 4th

NENY-CASA will presents a quarterly meeting on Friday December 4, 2009 at the New York State Department of Ag & Markets; The Pride of New York Room; 10 B Airline Drive; Albany, NY 12205

8:30 – 9:30am - Registration; A light menu of coffee, bagels and pastries is provided

9:30 – 10:30 pm - "Listeria monocytogenes in retail establishments - prevalence, persistence, and relevance to human disease"
Dr. Brian D. Sauders, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets; Food Laboratory Division

10:30 – 11:30 pm - "A Paradigm Shift: NYS use of PFGE in National Foodborne Outbreaks, 1998-2008" and "EIP vs. non-EIP for 2007 in NYS"
David C. Nicholas, MPH; New York State Health Department; Environmental Health Specialist Network Coordinator

11:30 – 12:00 pm - "Open Forum – An Update on CASA Business"
Share your interesting work anec-

dotes, suggest topics you would like to see in the future, meet and greet fellow NENY-CASA members.

To register for this training seminar please send your contact information to: Marianne Stone
Albany County Health Department
P. O. Box 678
Albany, NY 12201
(518) 447-4625 Fax (518) 447 – 4501
email: mstone@albanycounty.com

Meeting Registration fees: NENY-CASA Members \$7.00; Non Members \$10.00

NENY-CASA sponsors quarterly trainings given by experts from both government and industry. Become a new member of NENY-CASA and get a reduced meeting registration. You pay \$5.00 instead of the \$10.00 registration.

Regulatory Membership	\$15.00
Associate Membership	\$35.00
Academic, Student, Retired	\$10.00

Set sail with
NENY-CASA;
you'll enjoy the ride.

