

Voyager

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President's Message - by Amy Mears

Greetings to you all. Welcome to this edition of the Voyager. One of my goals as President, along with the other committee board members, is to provide dynamic speakers for our quarterly meetings. I am pleased to say that this goal was accomplished as demonstrated by the wonderful turn out of members that we had at our last training in Albany. The theme of the meeting explored egg safety. (See related story on page 4)

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for coming out to

these training sessions. Without you, the members, we do not have a progressive organization. Due to economic and budgetary restrictions I do understand the challenges some of you are experiencing, especially at work. In spite of these challenges, you still make an effort to support your CASA organization. So again, we say thank you to each and every one of you.

CASA is committed to providing the training you need to maintain your credits and licensure. Because of this commit-

ment, we would like to hear your suggestions for topics and speakers. I look forward to meeting with you and hearing your suggestions at future CASA events. Please also remember to renew your memberships for 2011.

As the holiday season approaches, I would like to wish you and your families a healthy and wonderful time.

Sincerely,

Amy Mears
NENY-CASA President

Food and Drug Administration Seeks Input on Menu Labeling

Calorie labeling on menus of chain restaurants became law with the passage of the health care reform bill in March and the Food and Drug Administration wants your opinion. The government agency is seeking input from interested parties in preparation for the implementation of the new federal law requiring calorie content and other nutritional information be posted on menus of certain chain restaurants,

retail operations and vending machines.

The law requires chains with 20 or more outlets to post calorie information on menus, menu boards in standard formats throughout the nation.

The FDA encourages those interested in commenting on menu labeling regulations in docket number FDA-2010-N-0298 and www.regulations.gov.

Several local jurisdictions in the NENY-CASA geographical area already have local laws governing menu labeling of calorie content, namely Albany and Schenectady counties.

Next time you dine out check the menu before you choose.



Troubling Use of Antibiotics in Livestock - Recipe for Bacterial Resistance

It is common knowledge that the agriculture community uses antibiotics to promote growth in feed animals. What seems to be unknown is the massive amounts of antibiotics used and the direct link to antibiotic resistance in humans.

Researchers at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health estimate that as much as 70 percent of the antimicrobial drugs used annually in the US are used to promote growth and pre-

vent pathogen spread in livestock and poultry populations, not to treat disease.

It is becoming increasingly clear that there are direct links between antibiotic use in animals and antibiotic resistance in humans. Dr. Ali Kahn, Assistant Surgeon General, recently testified before the House Energy and Commerce Committee that, "there is unequivocal evidence and relationship between [the] use of antibiotics in animals and [the] transmission of antibiotic resistant bacteria causing adverse effects in humans."

Resistant bacteria that develop in feedlots can be transferred to the human population via food coming directly from your grocery store. Resistant strains of *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* are causing concern.

Efforts are now underway to place limits on the non-therapeutic use of certain antibiotics in the livestock



production. The Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (PAMTA) endeavors to accomplish just that. Sponsored by Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-NY) and Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), PAMTA addresses the usage of seven antibiotics critical in human medicine for non-therapeutic use in feed animals. In limiting their use experts believe that bacterial resistance can be minimized.

The amounts of antibiotics used in animal feed are low and not intended to kill bac-

teria. This fact promotes the formation of bacterial resistant strains.

Reducing antibiotic use to promote animal growth, seen as a straightforward solution to the problem of resistance, will pose serious challenges. The livestock industry will need to make radical changes in their operations, but those operations are only part of the problem. The battle against resistance will need to be fought in hospitals, at the doctors' and vet's office as well as on the farms.

"there is unequivocal evidence and relationship between [the] use of antibiotics in animals and [the] transmission of antibiotic resistant bacteria causing adverse effects in humans and animals"
Dr. Ali Kahn

How Safe Are Color Additives?

Read the label of almost any product on the grocery store shelf and there they are. Color additives like FD&C Yellow, caramel color or color added. Color additives, dyes and pigments are used to add color to everything from fruit punch to toothpaste. So are these substances safe?

According to Linda Katz, MD, MPH, the Director of the Office of Cosmetics and Colors of the FDA, "color

additives are very safe when used properly." The FDA is the agency that determines if there is "a reasonable certainty of no harm" when an additive is used in food, drugs, cosmetics and medical devices.

The FDA has two main categories for permitted color additives; certifiable and exempt.

Certifiable color additives are man-made substances primar-

ily made from petroleum and coal sources. These additives are tested by the FDA for composition and purity and then certifies the batch.

The second category are "exempt" from batch certification. These additives are generally obtained from plant, animal or mineral sources.

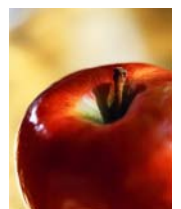
Both categories of additives are approved by the FDA for their intended uses only. Although often cited as FDA approved,

dyes used in tattooing are not approved for injection into the skin.

According to the FDA allergic reactions to color additives are rare. However, if the substance is being used improperly, the agency can take steps to

detain, seize

or prohibit their use..



Food Safety and the Gulf Oil Spill **Practicing What We Preach**

Assessing the safety of Gulf seafood in the aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon disaster has become the shared responsibility of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Representatives of those agencies have continually met with state fisheries directors from Gulf states to implement a protocol for sampling and reopening federal and state fisheries. The aim is to let consumers know their food is safe to eat and give fisherman the information they need to be able to sell safe products to their customers.

“No single agency could adequately ensure the safety of seafood coming from the Gulf following this tragedy, but working together, we can be sure that tainted waters are closed....” said Eric Schwaab of the National Marine Fisheries Service.

NOAA and the FDA are monitoring fish caught just outside areas closed to fishing for petroleum compounds and dispersants by

sensory and chemical analysis.

Oil and other petroleum products can contaminated seafood products through the presence of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), which have been linked to cancer in humans. Oil can also “taint” the seafood with petroleum smells.

Dispersants may have a low potential to bioaccumulate in seafood, however, this risk is low. They are more likely to “taint” the seafood with a chemical smell.

Given these contamination sources, protocols sampling, testing and re-opening Gulf harvest waters have been established. Gulf area that have not been exposed to oil based on testing and satellite imagery can be reopened to fishing without testing of samples. Those areas definitely exposed to oil must first be free from oil residues and then undergo species by species testing from a sensory standpoint and by chemical analysis.

However, the acid test is how consumers will accept Gulf seafood.

As public health professionals we give food safety advice to food operators daily. But how well do we take those safety measures to heart. With Thanksgiving around the bend here’s some food safety tips to remember when cooking the bird.

Safe Thawing: When thawing a large item like a turkey the preferred way is under refrigeration.

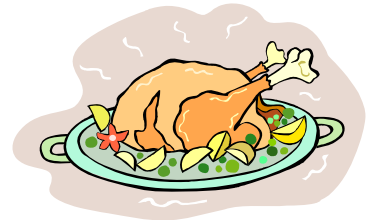
Safe Preparation: Bacteria are mostly likely on the raw bird and can contaminate hands, other food and surfaces. Be careful not to cross-contaminate.

Safe Stuffing: The best way to insure proper doneness is to cook the stuffing outside

the bird and cook to 165F if you used turkey parts in the stuffing recipe.

Safe Cooking: Turkey is generally cooked in a 325F oven for multiple hours. Be sure the bird is completely thawed and use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of the meaty portion of the breast. Cook to a final temperature of 165F.

These guidelines will lead to a safe, happy and delicious holiday,



CASA MemberSHIP Sets Sail

Please take some time to get aboard the Halfmoon, NENY’s flagship, and renew your membership for 2010 by going to the CASA website at www.casafdo.org.

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.

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

Food Inspection Agencies In New York Undergo Retirement Shake-Up

Economic hard times have many consequences. Here’s are the latest NYS Health and Ag & Markets colleagues who have retired.

Two longtime NENY members recently retired from the New York State Department of Health. After 38 years in public health, Richard (Dick) Svenson retired as the Department’s Director of the Division of Environmental Health Pro-

tection. During his career Dick also worked for the Albany County Department of Health. Victor Pisani was appointed as Dick’s successor. Barbara Gerzonich also retired after forty years of service to the Department of Health. Barb is proud to have been one of the first women working for the Department in the field of environmental health. Through-

out her career, she held various positions in the field, regional and central office levels of the Department. She retired as Chief of the Food Protection Section within the Bureau of Community Environmental Health and Food Protection. Darby Greco has served as Acting Chief since Barb’s retirement.

In the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, longtime NENY member, Susan Bishop retired after 25 years in food safety. Sue held the position of a Food Inspector 2 and helped organize many CASA functions.

Also from the agency, Product Inspector Bernie DiBattista retired after 36 years.

NORTHEAST NEW YORK CONFERENCE OF CASA

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

Egg Safety Theme of NENY-CASA's Fall Meeting

NENY-CASA's fall quarterly meeting explored the theme of egg safety with presentations from three different speakers. The training meeting, at which approximately forty people attended, was held September 17, 2010 at the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets "Pride of New York" room.

George Zameska of Paster Training and former CASA President spoke on egg safety and the pasteurization of raw shell eggs. Mr. Zameska discussed the relative level of Salmonella contamination in the current supply of eggs and information on food illness outbreaks caused by eggs. Statistics gathered from the CDC, FDA and FSIS estimate that as many as 4 million contaminated eggs reach the food supply chain every year. Normal cooking temperatures for different types of egg preparations made it clear that safe cooking temperatures are reached only for hard cooked eggs. This fact makes the pasteurization of in shell raw eggs both viable and desirable for raw or lightly cooked egg dishes.

Zameska explained, within limits of the proprietary patent used, the process of raw shell pasteurization employed by Davidson's Safest Choice. The eggs are sent through a water bath with tightly controlled parameters of time and temperature. The egg shells are then sealed with a food

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.

grade wax to prevent further contamination. The result, according to Zameska, is not only an egg that is pathogen free but also has increased shelf life.

For more information on Davidson's eggs visit www.safeeggs.com.

The second speaker was Mr. Bernie DiBattista of the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. DiBattista spoke on Egg Inspection and Egg Sale on the Farm in New York State. He explained the egg grading process and labeling requirements for shell eggs.

New York State requires egg producers to label the name and address on their eggs containers as well as the words "keep refrigerated". Additionally, eggs must bear the warning that eggs must be cooked thoroughly to prevent food illness. DiBattista, who was within weeks of retiring, was able to explain what the difference is between different grades of eggs and how that effects egg quality. Eggs that are leakers, have blood or meat spots of a certain size are not allowed to be sold for human consumption.

After a delicious buffet lunch, graciously prepared by NENY-CASA President Amy Mears, Nancy Bufano of the Food and Drug Administration spoke on the FDA's new rule to ensure egg safety. The "egg rule's" first compliance date, said Ms. Bufano, was July 10, 2010 and

pertains to egg producers with 3,000 or more laying hens on a farm.

The regulations focus on five strategies that the FDA believes can reduce the pathogen level of Salmonella contaminated shell eggs in this country. The first is a plan to monitor pullets (young laying hens) for the presence of Salmonella enteridits. The obvious advantage is to start with a laying hen population that is not contaminated.

Second is to employ strict bio-security measures in the laying houses to prevent cross-contamination issues.

Pest control would make up the third strategy preventing the reintroduction of pathogens in the laying house environment.

The fourth strategy relies on the cleaning and disinfection of the laying houses between flocks. Laying hens have a set lifespan when they can produce marketable eggs and the new rule breaks the chain of infection between one flock and the next.

Lastly, shell eggs must be refrigerated no less than 36 hours after laying.

With these strategies in place the FDA hopes to obtain a 5-log reduction for SE, the standard for any "treatment" of shell eggs.

