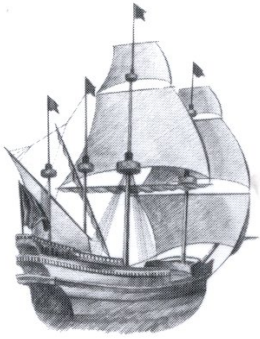


NORTHEAST NEW YORK CONFERENCE OF CASA



Voyager

Fall 2008

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President's Message - by Clarence Davis

Greetings NENY Members!
Thanks for your continued and active participation in NENY. The Executive Board journeys on in its task of providing effective and useful training for regulators and industry. On behalf of the NENY Executive Board, I extend sincere gratitude to Marcia Lenahan, Albany County Health Department, and Kendell Dunham, NYS Health Department, who have stepped down from the board after several dedicated terms of service. Both will remain active members with NENY benefiting from their inspiration and wide range of knowledge and expertise. Amy Mears, NYS Health Department, and Dawn Breault, Rensselaer County Health Department, were nominated and appointed the Executive Board, filling the vacated positions. Amy Mears and Dawn Breault

bring to the board the knowledge, dedication and desire to continue NENY's training goals. Our summer training seminar was successful with 45 individuals attending. Thanks to our speakers, Linda A. Comstock, Northeast Regional Food Bank, and Bill Miller, Bernie DiBattista, Bill Fredericks, Department of Agriculture and Markets who presented timely topics that are beneficial in our professional and personal lives. NENY's commitment to fostering open communications between state, local and federal agencies, and industry was instrumental in the co-sponsorship of the FDA Northeast Region Food Seminar; and promoting leadership and goodwill. The seminar was held at the Albany Crowne Plaza Hotel August 20-22, 2008. The seminar presented topics of interest to FDA inspection officers, re-

tail food protection program managers, investigators in retail food sanitation, and interested parties from industry. Darby Greco, Past President and local arrangements committee chairman, coordinated with NYS Departments of Health, Agriculture and Markets and the FDA for a successful training seminar. Kudos go out to Mr. Greco.

As NENY continues to sail on calm waters in its training endeavors, I am reminded that the training seminars are possible only with your continued membership and participation. In this economic climate with training funds at a premium, we will continue to provide training in areas that are useful for public health professionals, food safety professionals and industry at the lowest cost possible. Please renew your membership for the coming year.

Is Eating Healthy On A Tight Budget Possible?

Do you know what food products sold in supermarkets today are the most expensive? Several studies have clearly shown that "healthy" foods, such as fruits and vegetables, are much more expensive than highly processed, less nutritious foods.

What does that mean to a family on a tight budget? It means that energy dense,

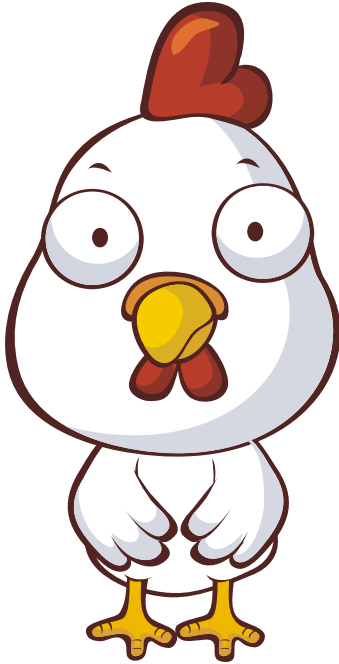
high calorie junk foods, which are less expensive, are frequently the choice for families dealing with the realities of the fiscal crisis. Families receiving food stamps generally are budgeted only a few dollars a day. Because of that, proper nutrition can take a back seat to cheaper junk foods.

Recently a family in California tried to eat for a full

month a \$1/day — restaurant meals were a thing of the past, but so were fruits and vegetables.

For more information on the hidden cost of food production in this country, the editor recommends "The Omnivore's Dilemma" by Micheal Pollan.





Frozen Chicken Entrees Implicated In Outbreak

Food safety experts and the USDA have investigated several Salmonella outbreaks associated with frozen chicken entrees. Federal officials are considering if current label directions on the products adequately inform the consumer that the product is raw and requires proper cooking to 165 degrees Fahrenheit.

The latest outbreak in Minnesota in March happened even though the entrees were labeled as uncooked. However, the breaded and

pre-browned product looks cooked.

“They look precooked and are marketed as convenience foods” says Carlota Medus, an epidemiologist with the Minnesota Department of Health, possibly leading consumers to think the chicken only needs reheating, which may not kill Salmonella bacteria. Several people that became ill in the most recent outbreak stated in interviews that they believed that the chicken entrees they purchased were

precooked and used microwave ovens to heat the food even though the product label says not to.

“(Chicken entrees) look precooked and are marketed as convenience foods”

The outbreak necessitated a recall of chicken cordon bleu and chicken breast stuffed with cheese from Serenade Foods. More than 75,800 pounds of product was recalled in 2006 according to the USDA.

Labeling on the chicken products clearly identifies the product as “uncooked poultry”. To prevent this confusion, Serenade added a line of cooked chicken entrees in 2006 but dropped the line because of weak demand.

Company spokesperson Janelle Deatsman stated that, “We think it’s important consumers follow label directions”.

bers. Your 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 grow NENY-CASA.

CASA Needs You & A Friend

NENY-CASA needs its members; both old and new. Please take some time to 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 mem-

**“Only two things are infinite; the universe and human stupidity, and I’m not sure about the former”
Albert Einstein**

GAO Urges President-Elect To Address Health Preparedness & Food Safety

The Government Accountability Office (GAO), in an online statement, listed public health emergency preparedness and food safety as two of 13 “urgent issues” that should be addressed by the President-Elect and Congress for the coming year.

The GAO called on the new government to takes steps to strengthen public health preparedness, specifically

citing pandemic flu, and the improvement of coordination of food safety efforts in the United States.

Among the steps relating to public health preparedness, the agency advocates for joint testing and training exercises for the Homeland Security and Health and Human Services departments.

In the area of food safety, the GAO contends that the food safety system in the USA is fragmented between 15 different agencies leading to inconsistent oversight and ineffective coordination. The agency recommends reconvening the Presidents Council of Food Safety and for Congress to pass “comprehensive, uniform, and risk-based food safety legislation. See GAO press releases.



Barak Obama Image—U.S. Senate

New York State Agriculture and Markets News

Food Safety Education Law Amended

Article 20-C, §251-z-12, of the Agriculture & Markets Law establishing the requirement for food safety education certification for certain retail food stores was recently amended. The law was amended to state, in part, that food safety education programs shall consist of not less than 8 hours of training within the TWO YEARS prior to the commencement of the license period, or if the program required the passing of a test, within FIVE YEARS prior to the commencement of the license period. The amendment further states that certifications of completion of an approved food safety education program that DOES NOT require the passing of a test shall be valid for two years from the date of issuance. Food safety education programs awarding either two year or five year certifications must be approved by the Department every two years.

New Ag & Markets Director Named

Joseph Ferrara has been appointed Interim Director of Food Safety and Inspection. Joe started with the De-

partment in 1961 in Farm Products Inspection. He was Director of Food Safety from 1994 until his appointment as Deputy Commissioner in 1999. Joe retired as Deputy Commissioner in 2001. In 2002, Joe returned to serve as a Food Safety Specialist with Health Research Incorporated on the Bio-security Project.

Stephen D. Stich was appointed Assistant Director of Food Safety and Inspection in June 2008. Following 5 years in the private food industry, he started his career with the Department of Agriculture and Markets, Division of Food Safety & Inspection in 1987 as a Food Inspector. He moved to Albany in 1992 serving as a Sr. Food Inspector, then Supervisor. Stephen is a current active member of AFDO, Conference for Food Protection, Northeast Food & Drug Officials Association (Executive Board Member, President), Northeast NY CASA (Past President) and the New York State Association of Food Protection.

John M. Luker has been appointed Director of Field Operations, Division of Food Safety and Inspection. John was a Quality Control Supervisor in private industry prior to his appointment as Food Inspector

in the Division's Syracuse Office, where he also served as a Senior Inspector and Supervisor. John is currently a member and Food Committee Chairman of the NYS Association of Food Protection, AFDO, North East Food & Drug Officials (NEFDOA), and Northeast NY CASA.

Slaughterhouse Law Amended

The NYS Legislature passed and enacted three amendments to Article 5-A of the Agriculture and Markets Law (AML) relating to slaughterhouse licensing.

AML §96-b (2), effective August 5, 2008, states that "in a city with a population of one million or more, the commissioner of Agriculture and Markets shall not license any person, firm, partnership or corporation to operate any establishment where animals and/or fowls are slaughtered or butchered for food within a fifteen hundred foot radius of a residential dwelling". The amendment does not apply to slaughterhouses that have been continuously operating at the address prior to August 5, 2008. The amendment is effective until August 12, 2012, unless re-enacted by the legislature. Currently, New York City, (the boroughs of

Manhattan, Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island) is the only urban area within NYS with a population of one million or more.

AML § 96-c, effective November 4, 2008, was amended to require posting of sanitary inspection results at slaughterhouses. It requires each licensed slaughterhouse to post a copy of the date and results of its most recent sanitary inspection in a conspicuous location near the entrance.

Slaughterhouse operators are provided an original copy of the Notice of Inspection at the conclusion of each inspection indicating whether or not the establishment is in compliance with sanitary requirements. The Notice of Inspection must be made available for review by the public upon request.

AML §96-f (2), effective January 2, 2009, relates to the denial, revocation and suspension of licenses. This amendment, dubbed the three strikes law, empowers the Commissioner of Agriculture to revoke the slaughterhouse license of an establishment after a hearing if that establishment fails three consecutive inspections. A seminar for slaughterhouse operators was held at the Agriculture and Markets Brooklyn's Office on October 30, 2008, for clarification of the amendments and how the amendments would impact the industry.

Federal Food & Drug Administration Going Global

Increasingly, the foods products we eat in this country come from far flung parts of the world; a global food system. In an effort to provide better food safety protections to American consumers, the FDA plans to establish offices in China, India, Europe and Latin America before the end of 2008.

"We're making steady progress to better safeguard our

supply of food and medicines, though much work remains" said HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt.

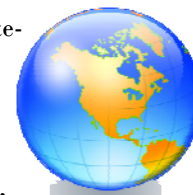
The first overseas office will be in China, establishing offices in Beijing this year and Shanghai and Guangzhou the next. Product safety agreements are hoped to benefit both countries.

FDA personnel will work

with government officials in all the countries, as well as industries, to insure the safety of food and medical products shipped into the U.S. FDA officials will provide technical support, conduct inspections and work to approve certification programs. The effort is all part of the FDA's Import Safety Action Plan. The plan incorporates a number of

safety strategies including border checks, third party inspections,

mandatory recall of food products when voluntary recall are ineffective and partnering with overseas producers to insure quality products. For more info see www.importsafety.gov.



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

The Lighter Side - Food Science Used To Solve Life's Burning Questions

Why don't chocolate chips melt in cookies? Why do hard candies get sticky? What is chocolate bloom and how do I prevent it?

These questions may not be of prime importance to you but are very important to confectioners and are studied by Dr. Richard Hartel, a UW-Madison professor of food engineering and his research team.

Dr. Hartel latest research centers on when and why a white webbed film sometimes forms on chocolate called chocolate bloom. Answers to this question would be a huge step for the candy industry and they've recently put their money where their mouth is. The Pennsylvania Manufacturer's Confectioner Association gave him \$64,000 to study the issue.

Although the research may be looked at by some as "silly" it may have applications elsewhere as a similar phenomenon occurs to book bindings, statues and lipstick. The research findings seem to point to the amount of fat in oils used in the items and is still underway.

Dr. Hartel make good use of his food engineering knowledge and has organized a yearly candy course at the university for the past 46 years. Students learn how to make hard candies of all different flavors. SWEET!

We're on the web
www.casafdo.org

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.

FDA Launches Food Defense Awareness Program

The United States Food and Drug Administration recently launched a new food defense training kit targeting those in the food industry instrumental in keeping our food supply safe—the first line employee. In cooperation with the CDC and USDA the program was designed to provide safeguards of our food from the farm to table.

The FIRST training program focuses on five key points to educate the first line worker about the risks of food contamination and is an acronym for actions they can take to mitigate risks.

F - Follow company food defense plans,
I - Inspect your work and surrounding area,
R - Recognize things out of the ordinary,
S - Secure all ingredients,

supplies and finished products and T - Tell management about anything suspicious.

The DVD, Poster and other training materials are available free on charge and can be ordered from www.cfsan.fda.gov/fooddefense.

The key to the program is prevention, a shift in emphasis that is the core of the FDA's Food Protection Plan. The plan seeks to protect the food supply from the threats of both unintentional contamination and deliberate attack.

FIRST is a second generation in food defense awareness materials put out by the FDA. The ALERT training, which came out in 2006 is targeted more toward super-



visors and managers.

For more information on both these food defense awareness training programs, checkout the FDA's website at www.fda.gov.

Employees, working together with their supervisors can stand on the forefront of protecting the American consumers. The payoff will hopefully be a reduction in the risks from tampering and other malicious, criminal or terrorist actions affecting our food supply.