



Central Atlantic States Association of Food and Drug Officials

# SUSQI NEWS

Susquehanna Conference

March 2008

Greetings!

The **92<sup>nd</sup> Annual CASA Conference** will soon be here! It will take place on May 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> at the Holiday Inn in beautiful Saratoga Springs, NY. If you haven't been to an annual conference, it is a great venue for learning the latest science and technology. Also, it is a great way to meet colleagues who deal with similar challenges and share innovative solutions. For more information visit our website at: [www.casafdo.org](http://www.casafdo.org) I hope to see you there!

We are pleased to have Dr Cathy Cutter and Martin Bucknavage with the Penn State University as speakers at our March 27<sup>th</sup> Training Program. They will be presenting on the “**Control of Listeria monocytogenes in Retail Establishments**”. The program is designed to help regulators understand the topic and assist in implementing and maintaining listeria monocytogenes control programs in retail establishments. Concepts from the course can be used as a training resource for employees.

I'd like to thank everyone who presented, hosted, and participated in the February 7<sup>th</sup> **Quarterly Training Session on Environmental Issues**. In addition to the regular program, it was my honor to present **lifetime memberships to Marty Sams and Moses Brown**. Marty served as an associate member for many years while she worked at the Hershey Resorts and Entertainment Company. She often helped to arrange for training facilities and speakers at our quarterly training sessions. Moses Brown served as a member while he was employed with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (PADER which was later known as the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection). While he was employed with the PADER, Marty was responsible for food safety throughout the Commonwealth. He served in various positions of leadership in the Susquehanna Conference of CASA. These lifetime memberships are our way to express our appreciation for their many years of service to our organization.

Speaking of membership...if you haven't already done so, please renew your CASA membership so you continue to receive the many benefits of membership to our organization!

See you in Sarasota Springs!

Barbara Allerton, President

## **Retail Listeria Workshop**

### **Control of Listeria monocytogenes (LM) in Retail Establishments**

Presented by

Dr Cathy Cutter, Associate Professor, Penn State University

and

Martin Bucknavage, Food Safety Extension Associate

**March 27, 2008**

Giant Super Food Store

3301 Trindle Road

Camp Hill, PA

Directions are available at:

<http://www.giantsuperfoodstores.com/custinfoserv.cfm>

#### WHO CAN BENEFIT?

Federal, State & Local Regulators: This workshop and other resources available through this program are targeted to federal, state, and local regulators that have responsibility for food safety in retail establishments. The resources are designed to help regulators understand the topic and assist in implementing and maintaining Listeria monocytogenes control programs in retail establishments.

Management and Supervisors: Management and supervisors of retail establishments also can benefit from the workshop as a guide in designing, implementing, and maintaining a Listeria monocytogenes control program. Concepts from the course can also be used as a training resource for employees.

Retail establishments play a key role in the control of LM in foods they sell. The use of an effective LM control program is essential to protect both consumers and the retailer.

The training and the resources available through "Control of Listeria monocytogenes in Retail Establishments" were developed by the Penn State University Department of Food Science in collaboration with the Penn State Cooperative Extension, AFDO, and the US Department of Agriculture-Food Safety Inspection Service.

**REGISTRATION FEE: \$25 - ADVANCE REGISTRATION REQUIRED TO INSURE EACH REGISTRANT RECEIVES A TRAINING NOTEBOOK, LIMITED CLASS SIZE.**

#### Schedule:

8:30 am	Registration and Welcome – Barbara Allerton, Susquehanna Conference President
9:00 am	Introductions and Pre-Test
9:30 am	Overview of Listeria monocytogenes & listeriosis
10:00 am	LM in the retail environment
10:30 am	Break
10:45 am	Prevention of LM in the retail environment - Personal hygiene
11:15 am	Personal Hygiene Activity
11:30 am	Prevention of LM in the retail environment – Sanitation
12:00 noon	LUNCH-on your own
1:00 pm	Preventing Introduction, Growth & Cross-contamination
1:30 pm	Breakout Session – Identifying hazards or case studies
2:00 pm	Records and Verification for a LM Control Program
2:30 pm	Breakout Session – Getting started on records & verification
3:00 pm	Implementation & Maintenance of a LM Control Program
3:30 pm	Post-test, Wrap-up, & Evaluations
4:00 PM	Adjourn

Registration Deadline: **March 17, 2008** - YOUR COOPERATION IS SINCERELY REQUESTED.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Agency/Firm \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE BRING A FRIEND OR ASSOCIATE WITH YOU!!**

Registration fee: \$25, payable in advance, to: "CASA, Susquehanna Conference"

**PRE-REGISTRATION CHOICES:**

Email to: [tveresink@easton-pa.gov](mailto:tveresink@easton-pa.gov) or Fax to: 610-250-6607, then follow-up by mail

Mail to: CASA, Susq Conference, c/o Easton Health Bureau, 1 S Third Street, Easton, PA 18042

Questions – contact Ted Veresink @ 610 250-6765

## **AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT PROVIDES UPDATE ON NATIONAL BEEF RECALL**

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture continues working with Pennsylvania schools that received recalled beef to ensure the affected products are not served and are properly discarded. said

Agriculture Secretary Dennis Wolff stated that after reviewing the list of impacted schools, two of the schools previously identified had not received products affected by the recall: Bangor Area and Mount Lebanon.

The Department of Agriculture is contacting schools in Pennsylvania to make sure they have identified any recalled food they have, and that proper disposal procedures are followed. Some of the schools on the preliminary list distributed have, in fact, not received the recalled product. The list was based on schools we knew received meat products from affected distributors, and we are working to refine that list by contacting the schools.

There is very little risk associated with the recalled products, but the department is working to make sure the recall is followed correctly. There have been no health risks identified with this recall.

On Feb. 17, Hallmark/Westland Meat Packaging Co. of Chino, Calif., voluntarily recalled 143 million pounds of raw and frozen beef products. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has deemed the recall a “Class Two” recall, meaning it has only a remote probability of causing adverse health consequences.

For more information of the recall, visit the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Services Web site at [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov).

## SUSQUEHANNA CONFERENCE BALLOT

As Chairman of the Nominations and Elections Committee, it is again time for the members of the Susquehanna Conference of the Central Atlantic States Association (CASA) of Food and Drug Officials to hold an election of officers.

Barbara Allerton's term of President and Garry Ritter's term of Vice-President will continue for another year. Because of a recent change to our Constitution and By-laws, we will be electing a person to serve as Secretary of the Susquehanna Conference. Since we split the designation of Secretary/Treasurer, we will also be electing a person to fill the Treasurer's position. Suzanne Yeager has agreed to be on the ballot for the Secretary's position, and Ted Veresink has agreed to run for re-election for the Treasurer's position.

Melissa Vaccaro is currently serving as the Susquehanna Conference's Representative to the CASA Board. She will again be listed as the candidate for this position.

Please cast your ballot by marking an X in the appropriate box or you may write in a name on the line provided. All ballots must be returned by the close of business on May 2, 2008. Please send your ballot to:

Kenneth W. Hohe  
4731 Count Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17109-3039

### **Secretary**

Suzanne Yeager [ ]  
Health Officer, Paxtang Boro

Write In \_\_\_\_\_ [ ]

### **Treasurer**

Ted Veresink [ ]  
Health Officer, Wilson Boro

Write In \_\_\_\_\_ [ ]

### **Representative to the CASA Executive Board**

Melissa Vaccaro [ ]  
Program Specialist, PA Dept. of Agriculture

Write In \_\_\_\_\_ [ ]

FDA issued two draft guidances:

[Draft Guidance for Industry: Control of \*Listeria monocytogenes\* in Refrigerated or Frozen Ready-To-Eat \(RTE\) Foods](#) and  
[Draft Compliance Policy Guide, Sec. 555.320, \*Listeria monocytogenes\*](#)

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is issuing for public comment two draft guidances regarding *L. monocytogenes* in ready-to-eat (RTE) foods. FDA is also announcing a public meeting to be held on March 28, 2008, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Harvey W. Wiley Federal Building in College Park, MD to discuss one of the draft guidances (i.e., the draft Compliance Policy Guide (CPG)).

One of the draft guidances is directed to the food processing industry and, when finalized, would provide guidance on how to control the food processing environment to prevent foodborne illness from the consumption of refrigerated or frozen RTE foods contaminated with *L. monocytogenes*. The second is a draft CPG directed to FDA staff and, when finalized, would establish FDA's enforcement policy regarding *L. monocytogenes* in food.

For the purpose of the two guidances, FDA considers a RTE food as one that is typically consumed without cooking by the consumer, or that appears suitable for consumption without cooking by the consumer. Some examples of food that we consider RTE food are milk, cheese, smoked fish, deli salads, and most fruits and vegetables. These are described in more detail in the draft guidance documents.

FDA may consider a food to be suitable for consumption without cooking by the consumer even though cooking instructions are provided on the label. Some consumers eat products such as fresh crabmeat, frozen crabmeat, and individually quick frozen (IQF) peas and corn without cooking, because these foods appear to be RTE.

FDA prepared both guidances in follow-up to a scientific risk assessment, which showed that the risk to consumers from the consumption of foods contaminated with *L. monocytogenes* varies depending on whether the characteristics of the food support growth of the microorganism (high risk) or do not support growth (low risk). The FDA conducted this risk assessment in collaboration with the United States Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), and in consultation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The purpose of this assessment was to systematically examine available scientific data and information in order to estimate the relative risk of serious illness and death that may be associated with consumption of different types of RTE foods that may be contaminated with *L. monocytogenes*. The objective of the guidance document to industry is to describe factors, technologies, procedures, and practices that have been identified as providing control of *L. monocytogenes* during the manufacture, distribution, marketing, and use of RTE foods.

The draft guidance for food processors provides recommendations for controlling the food processing environment to prevent foodborne illness from the consumption of refrigerated or frozen RTE foods contaminated with *L. monocytogenes*. It complements the enforcement policy outlined in the draft Compliance Policy Guide (CPG). The draft CPG emphasizes that the enforcement policy does not establish an acceptable level of *L. monocytogenes* in food. The enforcement strategy in the draft CPG does not supersede existing legal requirements, e.g., it is still a prohibited act to prepare, pack, or hold foods under insanitary conditions and food processors are still required to comply with the FDA's regulation governing current good manufacturing practices for human food.

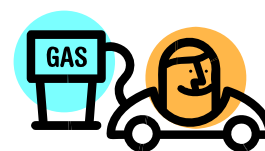
The draft CPG is intended to provide a clear enforcement policy and regulatory guidance regarding the presence of *L. monocytogenes* in certain foods. In particular, the draft CPG sets forth an enforcement policy that would direct FDA staff to consider legal action if high-risk RTE foods contain detectable *L. monocytogenes* or if low-risk foods contain 100 or more cells of *L. monocytogenes* per gram of food.

*L. monocytogenes* is a pathogen that is widespread in the environment and may be introduced into a food processing facility. It can contaminate foods and cause a severe, life-threatening illness called invasive listeriosis, particularly in fetuses and neonates who are infected after the mother is exposed to *L. monocytogenes* during pregnancy. *L. monocytogenes* can also cause a severe, life-threatening illness in the elderly, or individuals with decreased immune function.

Listeriosis, a serious infection caused by eating food contaminated with the bacterium *L. monocytogenes*, has been recognized as an important public health problem in the United States. A person with listeriosis will experience fever, muscle aches, and sometimes gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea or diarrhea. If infection spreads to the nervous system, symptoms such as headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance, or convulsions can occur. Infected pregnant women may experience only a mild, flu-like illness; however, infections during pregnancy can lead to miscarriage or stillbirth, premature delivery, or infection of the newborn.

Most outbreaks and sporadic cases of listeriosis are foodborne and overwhelmingly associated with RTE foods. Cases and outbreaks have been associated with RTE foods that contain high numbers of *L. monocytogenes* due to the ability of the food to support the growth of this microorganism during refrigerated storage.

## ***Driving around to find the cheapest gas prices?***



Just enter your zip code in the site below, and it tells you which gas stations have the cheapest prices (and the highest) on gas in your zip code area. It's updated every evening.

<http://autos.msn.com/everyday/gasstations.aspx?zip=&src=Netx>