



Central Atlantic States Association of Food and Drug Officials

SUSQI NEWS

Susquehanna Conference

April 2009

Greetings!

I'd like to thank Garry Ritter and others who worked to provide an interesting program last month on several issues including urban deer herds, lyme disease, west nile virus, public health issues at the inauguration ceremonies, and general food code updates.

In addition to the upcoming annual meeting in May, please mark your calendar for the following tentative dates and programs:

April 16 in Montoursville, topics include: Digital Health Department Communication Center and Emergency Response, Do's and Don'ts of Raw Milk, Water Quality Impacts from Natural Gas Drilling, Salmonella Peanut Butter Outbreak Investigation Update, and Sushi and Sashimi.

July 23 at Cabela's in Hamburg, topics include: Chloramines in Drinking Water, Community Acquired Infections, Food Inspection Issues Related to Summer Fairs and Festivals, and an update on recent changes to Drinking Water Boil Advisories.

September 30 and October 1 at Sysco's in Harrisburg, topics TBD.

My term as president is winding down and it has been an honor to serve in a small way and assist the Susquehanna Conference of CASA in conducting training to promote food and consumer safety. It has been a pleasure working with dedicated public health professionals. Please join me in welcoming Garry Ritter of the Allentown Bureau of Health as he will begin his term as President following the Annual Conference in May. Thanks!

Barbara Allerton, President

Did you renew your 2009 CASA membership? Are you looking for information on the Annual Conference and Drug Seminar? Everything is available on the web site: www.casafdo.org

The Silent Auction, held in memory of Gordon K. Brown, is an annual event at the Annual Conference and benefits the H. Thompson Price Scholarship Fund. Please support this event with your donations of items. Contact Ken Hohe, KenHohe@aol.com if you have any contributions or questions concerning the silent auction.

SUSQUEHANNA CONFERENCE BALLOT

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

Barbara Allerton's term of President will end prior to the Annual Educational Conference in May. Garry Ritter, the current Vice-President, will automatically assume the office of President for a two year term. Therefore we will have to elect a person to serve as Vice-President for a two year term. The offices of Secretary and Treasurer were filled in 2008 and will continue to serve for two more years.

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

We will also be electing two candidates to serve as Members-at-Large for our Conference. Their duties will include welcoming attendees at our training sessions, assisting the speaker with a-v set up and distribution of handouts, and with "clean up" after the program ends. This will be a one year term.

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 April 14, 2009. Please send your ballot to: Ken Hohe, 4731 Count Street, Harrisburg, PA 17109-3039. Also, you may bring your ballot to the quarterly meeting on April 16, 2009.

Vice President

Michelle Clarke []
PA Department of Health

Write In _____ []

Representative to the CASA Board

Melissa Vaccaro, Program Specialist []
PA Department of Agriculture

Write In _____ []

Member-at-Large

Russel Dorm, III []
York City Health Department

Kimberly A. Warren, MPH []
PA Department of Health

Write In _____ []

Write In _____ []

Earth Day is a day that was founded by Senator Gaylord Nelson and focuses on environmental awareness. Earth Day is Wednesday, **April 22, 2009** this year.



10 Easy Ways to Go Green

1. **Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle:** Look for a recycling center near you.
2. **Lighten up:** Use energy efficient light bulbs.
3. **One click for man, one giant leap for the planet.** Adjust your thermostat up one degree in the summer and down one in the winter to drastically reduce emissions.
4. **Use your off switch.** Turn off electronic devices, lights, and appliances when you are not using them.
5. **Get dirty.** Plant a tree. Don't have a green thumb? That's no excuse.
6. **Take your foot off the gas.** Carpooling and using public transportation reduces emissions and is cost effective. Find a carpool near you.
7. **Out with the old, in with the new.** Replace old appliances with energy efficient ones. There are many to choose from and they're not too pricey.
8. **Go local.** Farmers markets and independent stores are less likely to ship products or use harmful pesticides. You use less gas shopping locally too!
9. **Organic is your friend.** Don't be afraid to try organic products. They taste, feel, and smell the same but they are natural instead of processed. Price differences are minimal but the nutritional benefits are massive.
10. **And this little baggie went to market...** Bring your own bags to the market. An average American family acquires 60 plastic bags per week and rarely reuses them. Try ECOBAGS® Shopping System or Classic String Bag and help us save the planet, one bag at a time.

The planet's climate is changing and these changes are likely to affect human health. Individuals, families, and communities can make adjustments to prepare for these changes. Taking these steps can help you stay healthy today and in the future.

- **Eat Differently** Pre-packaged foods, fast food, and soft drinks are fast and convenient, but the production of these highly processed foods uses large amounts of materials and energy. These foods also tend to be high in fat, sugar, and calories. Choosing many foods from these areas, and consuming any food in excessive portions, contributes to overweight and obesity. Healthier options include decreasing the amount of meat and other animal products you eat while increasing your consumption of vegetables and fruits. This is commonly referred to as eating lower on the food chain. These changes in eating habits help to decrease the amount of energy used to provide your food.
- **Travel Differently** Walking, bike riding, and mass transportation are alternatives to driving cars that run on gasoline and contribute to air emissions. Like cars, planes burn large quantities of gasoline as fuel; consider flying less to save energy and reduce emissions. Some frequent flyers choose to buy carbon offset credits, which fund energy saving efforts to reduce the total impact of the greenhouse gases produced by their flights.
- **Go Green at Home and Work** Going green leads to a healthier environment and a healthier environment leads to a healthier you. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is urging everyone to shift to a "green culture," in which environmental responsibility is everyone's responsibility. EPA recommends making small changes at [home](#) and at [work](#) to create a greener world.

Many of the benefits of going green have indirect effects that can your health. Driving less reduces car emissions that contribute to air pollution. Air pollution can worsen the symptoms and severity of respiratory diseases such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Recycling and using energy efficiently and wisely conserves limited resources so that they can be used where most needed. These uses include efforts to provide food, shelter and healthcare.

**Thursday, April 16, 2009
Pennsylvania Dept. of Agriculture
542 County Farm Road, Suite #102
Montoursville, PA 17754-9685
Phone: (570) 433-2640**

8:30-

Registration and Welcome

Barbara Allerton, Susquehanna Conference President

Digital Health Department Communication Center & Emergency Response

Bobby McLean, Program Specialist - PDA

Do's and Don'ts of Raw Milk at Retail

Dave Lundy, Milk Sanitarian Region 2 - PDA

Water Quality Impacts from Natural Gas Drilling

Bryan Swistock, Water Resources Extension Associate- Penn State

Salmonella Peanut Butter Outbreak Investigation/Update

Dr. Andre Weltman, Epidemiologist - Pa Dept. of Health

Sushi and Sashimi at Retail

Melissa Vaccaro, Program Specialist - PDA

-3:30 CRITIQUES/CLOSURE

The below directions are for general information only. Please adapt for your starting point. Please verify using mapquest, yahoo, etc., or use a GPS unit. For specific travel questions, please call Leon Napolitano at the phone number at the top of the announcement. His office is at the meeting site.

Coming from East of Montoursville (From Harrisburg) follow I-81 S to US-22W /US-322W. Take the exit onto US-11N/US-15N toward Selinsgrove/Williamsport Continue to follow US-11/US-15 then turn right at US-11 Turn left at PA-147/US-11 (Duke St) Continue to I-80W Take I-180W/220S to Warrensville Road Exit. Follow signs to Warrensville Road (must do a U-turn to LEFT). Come to 2nd traffic light and turn LEFT onto Warrensville Road Go 1.8 miles and turn RIGHT onto County Farm Road. Follow road as it takes a "hair-pin" turn to the left past cow pasture. Office is in red brick building with white pillars, 1st office in the door

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Pre-registration CASA Quarterly Training Meeting

Deadline: April 14, 2009 - to arrange for adequate seats and refreshments. Please register early. YOUR COOPERATION IS SINCERELY REQUESTED.

NAME _____ Agency/Firm _____
Address _____
Email _____ Phone _____

PLEASE BRING A FRIEND OR ASSOCIATE WITH YOU!!
MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS CAN BE PAID AT TRAINING.

Registration fee: \$5, payable at training, to: CASA, Susquehanna Conference

REGISTRATION CHOICES:

Email to: tveresink@easton-pa.gov or Fax to: 610 250-6607 or
Mail to: CASA, Susq Conference, c/o Easton Health Bureau, 1 S Third Street, Easton, PA 18042 Questions – contact Ted Veresink @ 610 250-6765

Win the War on Germs: The Common Germ Strongholds You Might Be Missing

ABC News: 3/10/09

You may scrub your toilet and countertops until they shine, but these scary new bacteria breeding grounds require just as much attention.

Germs (the catchall name for bacteria, viruses, and other microorganisms) are everywhere -- at home, in the office, even in your car. Luckily, about 99 percent of them can't harm us. But the other 1 percent can be annoying, uncomfortable, or downright scary: Most of these pathogens are either viral or bacterial and can cause everything from a runny nose to a potentially life-threatening infection.

You may think you know the obvious places that germs propagate -- the doctor's office, the soles of your shoes -- but many more germ-friendly locales are completely unexpected yet no less dangerous.

Kitchen Faucet That metal aeration screen at the end of the faucet is a total germ magnet. Running water keeps the screen moist, an ideal condition for bacteria growth. Because tap water is far from sterile, if you accidentally touch the screen with dirty fingers or food, bacteria can grow on the faucet. Over time, bacteria build up and form a wall of pathogens called biofilm that sticks to the screen. **Keep It Clean:** Once a week, remove the screen and soak it in a diluted bleach solution -- follow the directions on the label. Replace the screen, and let the water run a few minutes before using.

Garbage Disposal Bacteria from last night's dinner could end up on today's food and utensils if you're not careful. That raw chicken or spinach you're rinsing for dinner is often loaded with harmful bacteria, which can make the young, the elderly, or anyone with a compromised immune system seriously ill. In fact, there are often more than 500,000 bacteria in the kitchen sink -- about 1,000 times more than the average toilet has. Although the metal part of the disposal produces ions that can help kill germs, they still love to grow on the crevices in and around the slimy rubber stopper. That means your disposal can become party central for bacteria, contaminating whatever touches it -- dishes, utensils, even your hands. **Keep It Clean:** At least once a week, clean the disposal's rubber stopper with a diluted bleach solution -- soap and water aren't enough.

Welcome Mat It serves to greet not only your guests but also all the bugs on the bottoms of their shoes. In fact, one study found that nearly 96 percent of shoe soles had traces of coliform, which includes fecal bacteria. "The area near your front door is one of the dirtiest in the house," says Reynolds. Once bacteria plant their stakes in your mat, anytime you walk on it, you give them a free ride into your home. **Keep It Clean:** Spray the doormat once a week with a fabric-safe disinfectant (such as Lysol Disinfectant Spray). Leave shoes at the door, and avoid resting bags and groceries on the mat, too

Vacuum Cleaner It's all in the bag -- including spreadable germs. Vacuums -- including the brushes and bags -- are like meals-on-wheels for bacteria. You suck in all this bacteria and food, creating an atmosphere for growth. **Keep It Clean:** Change your vacuum bag frequently, and do so outdoors to avoid the cloud of bacteria that filters into the air. (Vacuum bags that feature antibacterial linings are best, and are available for many major brands.) Clean the cavity of a bagless vacuum with diluted bleach and let it air-dry.

Dish Towel: You know a sponge can harbor nasty germs, but dish towels are just as dangerous. A recent study of hundreds of homes across the United States found that about 7 percent of kitchen towels were contaminated with MRSA (methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus), the difficult-to-treat staph bacteria that can cause life-threatening skin infections. Dish towels also rated tops for dangerous strains of E. coli and other bacteria.

Keep It Clean: Stick to paper towels to clean countertops, and save the dishrag to dry just-washed pots and plates. Change towels or launder at least twice a week in hot water and bleach.

Car Dashboard: This is your vehicle's second-most-common spot for bacteria and mold. Here's why: When air -- which carries mold spores and bacteria -- gets sucked in through the vents, it's often drawn to the dashboard, where it can deposit the spores and germs. Because the dashboard receives the most sun and tends to stay warm, it's prime for growth. (The number one germ zone? Food spills.)

Keep It Clean: Regularly swipe the inside of your car with disinfecting wipes. Be more vigilant during allergy season -- about 20 million Americans are affected by asthma, which is caused in part by an allergic reaction to mold.

Soap Dispensers: About 25 percent of public restroom dispensers are contaminated by fecal bacteria. Soap that harbors bacteria may sound ironic, but that's exactly what a recent study found. Most of these containers are never cleaned, so bacteria grows as the soap scum builds up.

Keep It Clean: Be sure to scrub hands thoroughly for 15 to 20 seconds with plenty of hot water--and if you have an alcohol gel disinfectant, use that, too.

Restaurant Ketchup Bottle: Those condiments on the tabletop are grimmer than you think. It's the rare eatery that regularly bleaches down condiment containers. And the reality is that many people don't wash their hands before eating. So while you may be diligent, the guy who poured the ketchup before you may not have been, which means his germs are now on your fries.

Keep It Clean: Squirt hand sanitizer on the outside of the bottle or use a disinfectant wipe before you grab it.

Do you scrub the inside of your fridge? It's not enough. A University of Arizona survey of 160 homes in three US cities found that the seal around the fridge tested positive 83 percent of the time for common molds. The mold can spread every time the refrigerator door opens--exposing anyone who's susceptible to allergies and potentially contaminating the food.

Keep It Clean: Wipe fridge seals at least once a week with a diluted bleach solution or disinfectant.

Cell Phone: Drop your cell any place that's convenient? Read this first.

Several studies on cell phones and PDAs found that they carry tons of bacteria, including staph (which can cause skin infections), pseudomonas (eye infections), and salmonella (stomach ailments). Many electronic devices are sheathed in leather or vinyl cases, which provide plenty of creases and crevices for germs to hide.

Keep It Clean: Use a disinfecting wipe a few times a week, and be conscious of where you rest personal items

*Barbara Allerton, MPH, RN | Epidemiology Research Associate
Division of Environmental Health Epidemiology
Pennsylvania Department of Health*

**FDA Alerts Consumers to Recall of Certain Pistachios
- FDA and California Inspectors Identify Salmonella**



The FDA and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) are investigating Salmonella contamination in pistachio products sold by Setton Pistachio of Terra Bella Inc, Calif. The company has stopped all distribution of processed pistachios and will issue a voluntary recall involving approximately 1 million pounds of its products. Because the pistachios were used as ingredients in a variety of foods, it is likely this recall will impact many products. In addition, the investigation at the company is ongoing and may lead to additional pistachio product recalls.

The contamination involves multiple strains of Salmonella. Salmonella can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. Thus far, several illnesses have been reported by consumers that may be associated with the pistachios. It is not yet known whether any of the Salmonella strains found in the pistachio products are linked to an outbreak. The FDA is conducting genetic testing of the samples to pursue all links.

FDA is working closely with the pistachio industry and recommends that consumers avoid eating pistachio products until further information is available about the scope of affected products. FDA will provide a searchable database of affected products at <http://www.fda.gov/pistachios/> and will continue to update the public. FDA first learned of the problem on March 24, when it was informed by Kraft Foods that its Back To Nature Trail Mix was found to be contaminated with Salmonella. Kraft had identified the source of the contamination to be pistachios from Setton and conducted a recall.

The **SUSQINews** is provided quarterly to the Susquehanna Conference members. Any articles of interest that you would like to share with our members can be forwarded to:

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Contributions are greatly appreciated!