



Central Atlantic States Association of Food and Drug Officials

# SUSQI NEWS

Susquehanna Conference

January 2005

## President's Message

Happy New Year to everyone! I hope your upcoming year will be fulfilling in every way. It is hard to believe it is 2005 already! This will be my last 5 months serving as your President. V.P. Lynn Roche is ready to pick up the reins in June! How fast time flies.

Sorry I missed you in December, as luck would have it, our annual Sanitarian training in September was moved to December due to the floods in September and the need to do sanitation inspections of food facilities affected by the floods. I heard that the meeting was very good. I wish I could have been there. **Thanks to Barb and Sue for organizing the day, and to Lynn for taking over in my absence.** I appreciate all of your efforts.

Combined effort is what makes our Susquehanna Conference so strong and effective. Soon we will begin actively planning for our turn at hosting the **2006 Annual CASA Conference**. If you have not heard already, we will be holding the conference in the Gettysburg area. We will need help in planning the event and especially during the week of the event. If you could arrange your schedule to help, it would be greatly appreciated. Keep your ears open for further details.

In light of the election year, **February's meeting** will focus on food safety and security at the State and Federal Levels. I hope you will take the time to come and meet Governor Rendell's Executive Chef, Barry Crumlich, and hear him discuss the food safety needs, concerns and safety of cooking for the Governor. Additionally, learn about what is involved in inspection for food safety and security at large events for the President, such as Conventions and the Inauguration, for two FDA Regional Retail Food Specialists. I think this day will prove to be both educational and interesting. Keep your eye on your email, as any decisions to cancel or change meeting dates due to inclement weather will be made 24 hours ahead of time via email. Think SUNSHINE!

I look forward to seeing you in February, until then safe travels and health!

*Melissa Vaccaro*

### 2005 meeting dates, tentative locations and topics:

**Next meeting - February 17 @ Hamburg – see next page**

**April 13 and 14 –Harrisburg, "Cultural Diversity"**

**May 17-20 - Annual CASA Conference in Niagara Falls, NY**

**July 21 - State College, "Nutrition, Fad Diets, Obesity"**

**October 6 - Sunbury, "Retail Food Issues"**

**December 8 - Elizabethtown area, "Dealing with Highly Susceptible Populations"**



## **FDA ISSUES FINAL RULE ON THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS TO ENHANCE THE SECURITY OF THE U.S. FOOD SUPPLY UNDER THE BIOTERRORISM ACT**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) today issued final regulations on the establishment and maintenance of records to protect the U.S. human food and animal feed supply in the event of credible threats of serious adverse health consequences or death to humans or animals. FDA also issued draft guidance to FDA staff and industry, which details the internal procedures the agency will follow before requesting access to records. This final regulation implements section 306 of the Bioterrorism Act, which directs the HHS Secretary to issue regulations requiring persons who manufacture, process, pack, transport, distribute, receive, hold, or import food to establish and maintain records. These records identify the immediate previous source of all food received, as well as, the immediate subsequent recipient of all food released. The ability to trace back will enable FDA to get to the source of contamination. The records also enable the agency to trace forward to remove adulterated food that poses a significant health threat in the food supply.

The final regulation is the fourth regulation designed to increase the safety and security of the U.S. human and animal food supply under the authority of the "Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002" (the Bioterrorism Act). The record retention period for human foods ranges from six months to two years depending on the shelf life of the food. Records for animal food, including pet food, must be retained for one year. The maximum record retention requirement for transporters of all types of food is one year.

Records must be retained at the establishment where the activities covered in the records occurred or at a reasonable accessible location. To minimize the burden on food companies affected by the final rule, companies may keep the required information in any format, paper or electronic. All businesses covered by this rule must comply within 12 months from the date the rule is published in the Federal Register, except small and very small businesses. Small businesses (11-499 full-time equivalent employees (FTEs)) must comply within 18 months from this date and very small businesses (10 or fewer FTEs) have to comply within 24 months from this date.

When FDA has a reasonable belief that an article of food is adulterated and presents a threat of serious adverse health consequences or death to humans or animals, any records or other information to which FDA has access must be available for inspection and copying as soon as possible, not to exceed 24 hours from time of receipt of the official request. The records access authority applies both to records required to be established and maintained by the final rule, or any other records a covered entity may keep to comply with federal, state, or local law or as a matter of business practice.

The Bioterrorism Act allows FDA to bring a civil action in federal court to enjoin the persons who fail to comply with this rule. FDA also can seek criminal actions in federal court to prosecute persons who fail to establish and maintain records, as required by the final rule. FDA has already issued three other final regulations under the Bioterrorism Act, which are in effect. They cover: Registration foreign and domestic food facilities; Prior notice of food shipments imported or offered for import into the U.S.; and Administrative detention, so that food products that might pose a threat of serious adverse health consequences or death may be detained.

## **DEP SECRETARY URGES PENNSYLVANIANS TO TEST THEIR HOMES FOR RADON**

*Citizens Encouraged to Protect Health During Radon Action Month*

On behalf of Governor Edward G. Rendell, Environmental Protection Secretary Kathleen A. McGinty urged Pennsylvanians to have their homes tested for radon, a colorless and odorless gas that is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. January is Radon Action Month in Pennsylvania.

“Radon causes more cases of lung cancer in America than anything but cigarette smoking,” Secretary McGinty said. “The good news is that we can reduce our exposure to this gas. But the only way to know whether the level of radon in the home is higher than recommended by the federal Environmental Protection Agency is to test it. Even though it’s inexpensive and easy, many people simply are not aware that they should be testing their homes.”

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that results from the decay of uranium in the soil. It enters homes through cracks in basements and foundations. DEP estimates as many as 40 percent of Pennsylvania homes statewide have radon levels greater than the EPA guidelines of 4 pico curies per liter.

Homeowners themselves can do radon tests, and test kits are available at most home improvement and hardware stores. The tests also can be ordered through a Pennsylvania certified radon laboratory. These tests take only a few days and cost around \$25. Homeowners can also hire a professional to perform radon tests. All individuals and companies performing radon services must be certified and registered by DEP.

Radon tests should be done on the lowest home level on which people live, and during the cooler months of the year, when windows and doors are closed. If radon levels exceed the federal guidance of 4 pico curies per liter, follow-up action may be needed. Radon gas can be vented to the outside of a home by any of several means. Homeowners can install radon mitigation systems themselves, but this is a more extensive process, and many homeowners may want to have such a system installed by a certified radio-mitigation contractor registered with the Department. Many new homes today can be built with radon resistant construction techniques. State law requires a seller to disclose the result if a radon test has been done on the home.

“Radon detection and remediation is relatively easy,” Secretary McGinty said. “Raising awareness about radon and encouraging families to test their houses can literally save lives.”

Information on radon is available by calling the radon hotline at 1-800-23-RADON, or by visiting the DEP Web site at [www.dep.state.pa.us](http://www.dep.state.pa.us), Keyword: “DEP Radon.”

# ***FDA Report on the Occurrence of Foodborne Illness Risk Factors in Selected Institutional Foodservice, Restaurant, and Retail Food Store Facility Types (2004)***

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In 1998, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) National Retail Food Team initiated a study to measure the occurrence of food preparation practices and employee behaviors most commonly reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as contributing factors in foodborne illness outbreaks. Specifically, this study called for conducting data collection inspections of various types of foodservice and retail food establishments at five-year intervals to observe and document the occurrence of the following contributing factors:

- Food from Unsafe Sources
- Improper Holding/Time and Temperature
- Inadequate Cooking
- Poor Personal Hygiene
- Contaminated Equipment/Prevention of Contamination

For the purposes of this long-term study, FDA designates these contributing factors as "foodborne illness risk factors."

The first report in the study was issued in August 2000 and presented data collected in 1998. This 2004 report is the second report in the series and presents data collected in 2003. A third data collection is scheduled for 2008.

The 2000 report called attention to the need for greater active managerial control of foodborne illness risk factors. It suggested that more innovative and effective strategies to improve food safety practices in retail and foodservice establishments were needed. The report highlighted operational areas most in need of improvement including employee handwashing, cold holding of potentially hazardous foods, date marking of ready-to-eat foods, and cleaning and sanitizing of food contact surfaces.

In 2003, FDA Regional Retail Food Specialists collected data during site-visits of over 900 establishments representing nine distinct facility types. Direct observations, supplemented with information gained from discussions with management and food workers, were used to document the establishments' compliance status for forty-two individual data items based on provisions in the 1997 FDA Food Code. In each establishment, the compliance status for each data item was recorded in terms of IN Compliance, Out of Compliance, Not Observed (meaning the behavior or practice was not observed during the visit), or Not Applicable (meaning the behavior or practice did not apply to the establishment).

For each of the nine facility types, the percentage of observations recorded as Out of Compliance is presented for each risk factor and for the individual data items related to those risk factors most in need of priority attention. The Percent Out of Compliance value for each risk factor was calculated by dividing the total number of Out of Compliance observations of data items in the risk factor by the total number of observations

FDA Report, continued (In compliance and Out of Compliance) of data items in the risk factor. The Percent Out of Compliance for an individual data item is the proportion of establishments where that data item was Out of Compliance when the practice or procedure could be observed.

The data presented in this report indicate that the same risk factors and data items identified as problem areas in the 2000 report remain in need of priority attention. This indicates that industry and regulatory efforts to promote active managerial control of these risk factors must be strengthened. In all facility types, the Out of Compliance percentages remained high for data items related to the following risk factors:

- Improper Holding/Time and Temperature
- Poor Personal Hygiene
- Contaminated Equipment/Prevention of Contamination

For the improper holding/time and temperature risk factor, the high Percent Out of Compliance values were most commonly associated with improper cold holding of potentially hazardous food (PHF) and inadequate date marking of refrigerated ready-to-eat PHF.

Within the poor personal hygiene risk factor, the proper, adequate handwashing data item had the highest Percent Out of Compliance value for every facility type. Percent Out of Compliance values for proper, adequate handwashing ranged from approximately 34% for hospital foodservice to approximately 73% for full service restaurants.

Of the data items related to the contaminated equipment/protection from contamination risk factor, improper cleaning and sanitizing of food contact surfaces before use was the item most commonly observed to be Out of Compliance in each facility type. Percent Out of Compliance values for this data item ranged from 25% in elementary schools to 58% in deli departments.

This report also includes a comparison between the data collected from food establishments that had a Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM) from a program recognized by the Conference for Food Protection and those that did not. The data suggests that the presence of a certified manager has a positive effect on the control of certain risk factors, especially in fast food restaurants, full service restaurants, meat and poultry departments, and produce departments. Poor personal hygiene appears to be the risk factor for which the presence of a certified manager had the most positive effect.

The 2003 data collection effort included several supplemental data items that were not included in the 1998 data collection. While the forty-two primary data items in the study remained the same from 1998 to 2003, the supplemental data items addressed changes made to the FDA Food Code since 1998. These items related to the cooking temperature for pork, minimum hot holding temperatures, employee health, juice, eggs, and highly susceptible populations. Data gathered for the supplemental data items suggest that reducing the minimum hot holding temperature for potentially hazardous foods from 140 °F (60 °C) to 135 °F (57 °C) and reducing the minimum cooking temperature for pork from

FDA Report, continued. 155 °F (68 °C) to 145 °F (63 °C) had minimal effect on the industry's control of these risk factors.

Results from the 2003 data collection indicate that the recommendations made to foodservice and retail food operators and regulators in the 2000 Report need to be reemphasized. Foodservice and retail food operators must ensure that their management systems are designed to achieve active managerial control over the risk factors. Likewise, regulators must ensure that their inspection, education, and enforcement efforts are geared toward the control of the risk factors commonly found to be Out of Compliance.

Recently released report, Questions and Answers on the FDA Report on the Occurrence of Foodborne Illness Risk Factors in Selected Institutional Foodservice, Restaurant, and Retail Food Store Facility Types (2004), is available at:

<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/retrsk2q.html>

## **Starbucks to begin using recycled content cup**

In an important step to further integrate leading environmental practices into its business, Starbucks Coffee Company announced recently that the FDA has granted Starbucks supply chain member, Mississippi River Corporation, the first-ever approval to use recycled content in food packaging, specifically Starbucks hot beverage cups.

**MEMBERSHIP:** By now you should have received your **renewal notices** for CASA membership for the year **2005**. Please renew promptly. **Your cooperation will be appreciated.** Any membership updates, including e-mail address, should be forwarded to Ted Veresink at either: FAX: 610 250-6607 or e-mail at: [tveresink@easton-pa.gov](mailto:tveresink@easton-pa.gov)

**Environmental Tip of the Week** is courtesy of the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality. If you purchased a live Christmas tree this year, all you have to do is plant it or give it to someone who will. Dead trees are most often shredded into mulch to be used for re-vegetation projects to prevent erosion or in community parks. Many communities have tree collection programs where you take your tree for recycling, and then return in the spring to get free mulch. Fishermen in some areas volunteer to take the trees to area lakes and streams for fish habitat. You also can shake the trees hard over an opened sheet until the needles drop. The needles can then be used to make fresheners for drawers, closets, car trunks, etc.

Have questions about ISO 14001?

**What is ISO 14001 and What are the Benefits?** is a newly published booklet by DNV Certification that can answer the tough question. In today's ever-changing market companies need to keep their competitive edge, and ISO 14001 can be the answer. To learn more, download your complimentary copy today at <http://www.dnvcert.com/epe6> <<http://www.ProcessRequest.com/apps/redir.asp?link=XbjbccbjCF,ZcgegijfgaEH&o>

## **New Dietary Guidelines Will Help Americans Make Better Food Choices, Live Healthier Lives**

HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson and Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman recently announced the release of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*, the federal government's science-based advice to promote health and reduce risk of chronic diseases through nutrition and physical activity. The sixth edition of *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* places stronger emphasis on reducing calorie consumption and increasing physical activity. This joint project of the Departments of Health and Human Services and Agriculture is the latest of the five-year reviews required by federal law. It is the basis of federal food programs and nutrition education programs and supports the nutrition and physical fitness pillars of President Bush's *HealthierUS* Initiative.

Eating a healthy balance of nutritious foods continues as a central point in the *Dietary Guidelines*, but balancing nutrients is not enough for health. Total calories also count, especially as more Americans are gaining weight. Because almost two-thirds of Americans are overweight or obese, and more than half get too little physical activity, the 2005 *Dietary Guidelines* place a stronger emphasis on calorie control and physical activity.

The *Dietary Guidelines*, based on the latest scientific information including medical knowledge, provides authoritative advice for people two years and older about how proper dietary habits can promote health and reduce risk for major chronic diseases. The 2005 *Dietary Guidelines* were prepared in three stages. In the first, a 13-member Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee prepared a report based on the best available science. In the second stage, government scientists and officials developed the *Dietary Guidelines* after reviewing the advisory committee's report and agency and public comments. In the third stage, experts worked to translate the *Dietary Guidelines* into meaningful messages for the public and educators. The report identifies 41 key recommendations, of which 23 are for the general public and 18 for special populations. They are grouped into nine general topics:

- Adequate Nutrients Within Calorie Needs
- Weight Management
- Physical Activity
- Food Groups to Encourage
- Fats
- Carbohydrates
- Sodium and Potassium
- Alcoholic Beverages
- Food Safety

The *Dietary Guidelines* provide health education experts, such as doctors and nutritionists, with a compilation of the latest science-based recommendations. Consumer-friendly materials such as brochures and Web sites will assist the general public in understanding the scientific language of the 2005 *Dietary Guidelines* and the key points that they can apply in their lives. To highlight those points, a consumer-oriented brochure accompanies the 2005 *Dietary Guidelines*. USDA's Food Guidance System also will serve as a tool to educate consumers on the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. The Food Guidance System, currently called the Food Guide Pyramid, is undergoing revision and will be released in the spring of 2005. The 2005 *Dietary Guidelines* and consumer brochure are available at [www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines](http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines).

## **CONGRATULATIONS:**

Past President, **DAVE MALLOY** has been promoted to Sanitarian Supervisor with PA DEP for the Water Supply Management Program in the Bethlehem District Office. *Good luck in your new position !!*

The following CASA members have retired: **Tom McGraw** – DEP; **Marcia Nuver** – DEP; **Ted Veresink** – DEP; **Patricia Crawford** – PA Department of Health. On behalf of all Susquehanna Conference members, *best wishes in retirement and thank you for your dedicated service in the field of public health !!*

## **WELCOME:**

At our last Quarterly Training Meeting we welcomed 5 new CASA members to the Susquehanna Conference. Thank you for joining our professional organization and a special thank you to their sponsors for bringing new members aboard. The new members are:

**Michelle Clarke** – Sanitarian, PA Dept. of Health, Harrisburg

**Michele Marcus** – Community Health Nurse, PA Dept. of Health, Harrisburg

**Nancy Rising** – Sanitarian, PA Dept. of Health, Harrisburg

**Pauline Risser-Clemens** – Envl Health Spec, PA Dept. of Health, Harrisburg

**Chris Sanderson** – Envl Health Spec, PA Dept. of Health, Harrisburg

## **REMINDER:**

Guests and potential new members are always welcome at any of our Quarterly Training Meetings. Since 1916, **CASA** has been providing excellent training opportunities at an exceptionally reasonable cost. **CASA** has been responsible for improved coordination among local, state, and federal agencies, and with academia and associated industry representatives. The Susquehanna Conference is one of eight local conferences of **CASA**. For membership information, please contact our Secretary-Treasurer, Ted Veresink, at: [tveresink@easton-pa.gov](mailto:tveresink@easton-pa.gov).

If you would like to serve on any of our standing committees or would like to be considered for the Executive Board, please contact any Conference officer.