



Voyager

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President's Message - by Amy Mears

Greetings NENY Members! This has been a wonderful year. The overall objectives of this organization have never been more valuable than it is today. Our mission of protecting the public's health has never been taken lightly, yet we have seen how vital our role truly is. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve this organization as president and to promote and foster our overall objectives of education, improved laws and the effective enforcement of all laws for the protection of the public's health within the area of food and drugs.

Both on a local and national level, food and drug safety have captured many headlines. Our challenges of late have allowed us to reflect and also focus on necessary changes needed to insure the public of a safe and secure food and drug environment. We also executed these objectives in challenging budget environments that stretched our resources and made each of us look for new and better ways to provide our services within those constraints.

In closing, let me challenge each of you to continue to

meet our objectives by maintaining an environment that fosters innovation and new ideas. Let us embrace and encourage new people to become involved in our organization and its ideals. Expectations will remain high and I feel confident that we will answer the challenge as we always have. I want to congratulate our new slate of officers and ask that you support them as you have supported me.

Many thanks for the opportunity to serve and learn from all of you.

2010-2011 NENY-CASA Officers and Executive Board

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Vacant

Former Commissioner Dr. Richard Daines Passes Away

Dr. Richard F. Daines, 60, who served as New York State's 14th Commissioner of Health passed away unexpectedly on Feb. 26 at his family's farm.

"This is a tremendous loss for New York State," said State Health Commissioner Nirav Shah, M.D. "Dr. Richard Daines was an extraordinary leader who worked tirelessly to advance health care and public health for all New Yorkers."

Gov. Andrew Cuomo said, "Dr. Daines worked tirelessly to improve the health of all New Yorkers, and his knowledge and deep faith has left a lasting impression

on all those who worked with him. This is a tremendous loss not just for the state, but for the entire medical community."

The son of a physician, Dr. Daines, raised and educated in Utah, was devoted to the art, the practice and the teaching of medicine. He received his medical degree from Cornell University Medical College in 1978 and served a residency in internal medicine at New York Hospital. He was board certified in internal medicine.

As State Health Commissioner, Dr. Daines managed a budget of more than \$50 billion and a staff of 6,000.

His policies increased coverage for uninsured New Yorkers, achieving a efficient health care system.

Dr. Daines focused national attention on childhood obesity as a public health issue, oversaw implementation of the Berger Commission and established a new office in the State Health Department to focus on health information technology.

Dr. Daines took great pride in the skills and professionalism of health department employees, and enjoyed meeting with them and local public health workers at county health departments.

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Raw Milk Controversy Continues - Is It Worth the Risk?

Ask that question and you will likely come away with greatly varied answers depending on who you talk to. As health professionals, supporters of the right to drink raw milk would no doubt consider us biased. The fact is that there is a growing faction that believe private choice trumps public health concerns.

In a recently published article for foodsafety.gov on the subject, Dr. Casey Barton Behravesh, DVM, of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention weighed the risks associated with the consumption of raw, unpas-

teurized milk and milk products. Laying it on the line he explained that raw milk can carry harmful bacteria that can cause illness and sometime death. He explained that if you want to drink raw milk and milk products it is important that one understand the risks.

Those risks include contracting possible serious illnesses such as Salmonella, Listeria and E. coli. The susceptible populations are those we see in our day to day work - infants, young children, older adults and immunocompromised individuals.

Dr. Behravesh went on to explain that raw milk sold under the labels of "certified", "organic" or those sold at "local dairies" hold no guarantee of being safe. The only real safety form harmful pathogens in milk is gained from pasteurization.

However, a quick review of blog comments concerning



raw milk quickly show the other side on the controversy. A very vocal minority paints a different picture of the safety of raw milk. Namely the raw milk is more nutritious and that it has been a safe staple for thousand of years. The fact that raw milk outbreaks are well documented is somehow discounted.

As the popularity of raw milk grows, so will the controversy. Sadly, as public health professionals, we will not doubt be forced to deal with the fallout directly.

Dr. Daines *cont'd*

He traveled to all 62 counties of New York state to promote local public health activities, often accompanied by his father, Newell.

He particularly enjoyed seeing dairy farm operations, efforts to improve migrant worker health, and a memorable visit 400 feet under the Hudson River to check on public water tunnels. He publicly received an annual influenza vaccination to promote public vaccination.

"Their policy certainly is very anti-raw milk. It's always a concern,"
Winton Pitcoff,
Northeast Organic Farming Association
commenting about FDA stance on raw milk

Enzyme Treatment Reduces Peanut Allergens

A new study, first reported in *Food Chemistry*, shows that an enzyme treatment process applied to peanut kernels may effectively reduce allergens by up to 100 percent. Drs. Mohamed Ahmedna and Jianmei Yu from North Carolina A&T State University report that "results from this study indicate the potential for producing peanuts with reduced allergenicity..."

Peanut and peanut contain-

ing products are one of the most highly allergenic foods, capable of causing severe reactions and even death. The authors stated that avoidance of peanuts and peanut containing products is the best way to prevent allergic reactions. However, the ubiquitous use of peanuts in the food industry makes it hard for susceptible individuals to avoid accidental ingestion.

Enzyme processing is not

new, having been used on other food items, such as rice and whey products, to remove allergens. This study reported to effectively reduce two major peanut allergens (Ara h 1 and Ara h 2) completely, becoming non-detectable, under optimal conditions. The enzyme treatment degrades peanut allergens into smaller peptides that do not retain their allergenic properties.

Testing of the peanut kernels was done under laboratory con-

ditions and must be confirmed in *in vivo* testing to confirm the reduction of allergenic properties.

For more information visit www.fn-allergnefree.com.



Research Has Potential Application As Antimicrobial Food Coatings

New research is being conducted all over the world into the antimicrobial properties of coatings which could be used to keep foods safe and extend shelf life.

Research from Spain

Scientists at the Public University of Navarre have developed edible coatings that can extend the self life of fresh meat by 50 percent. The films, which act like a second skin, are made from the essential oils of oregano, clove and rosemary. The coatings are undetectable by consumers and had a bacteriostatic effect reducing the growth of pathogens, thereby enhancing safety and shelf life.

The edible coatings were shown to be effective against *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Salmonella enteritidis* and *Listeria innocua*. The research potentially has a direct application for the food industry, "given its delaying effect on the microflora growth and so extending storage and distribution time for the products."

The oregano based coating increased the shelf life of

chicken breast to 13 days under refrigeration, approximately a fifty percent increase.

Research from Israel

Scientists at the Institute of Nanotechnology and Advanced Materials, Bar-Ilan University are working on a "one step process" to coat or impregnate paper with antimicrobial silver nanoparticles one 50,000 the width of a human hair. The antimicrobial properties of silver are well established and the particles are deposited or anchored on substrate paper through an ultrasonic process making the coatings highly stable minimizing the loss of silver. This makes the coatings suitable for long term applications.

The coated paper showed potent antibacterial properties against *E. coli* and *S. aureus*, killing all the inoculated bacteria in three hours.

Researches see potential applications in the food industry as a packaging material. Silver coated wrappings could be another option to augment other food safety strategies such as ra-

diation, heat treatment, refrigeration or the addition of other antimicrobials.

Research from France

Researchers in France published a study in *Food Control* using Nisin containing films to stop or reduce the growth of *Listeria* in cheeses. To date there has been minimal research on the use of antimicrobial films to inhibit bacterial growth in cheese. *Listeria*, which can survive the cheese making process and grow at refrigeration temperature, is the main target for the use of these films.

Nisin is a peptide produced by certain strains of *Lactococcus lactis* that has bacteriostatic properties. When incorporated into plasticized sodium caseinate films it was evaluated during a seven day storage regimen for cheese. Researchers found that the film resulted in a 1.1 log CFU/g reduction in *Listeria innocua*, which was inoculated on the surface. Films inoculated into the cheese had varying results depending on the depth of the inoculation. The technology has promise in reducing post processing contamination thereby effectively increasing shelf life of the cheese.

CASA MemberSHIP Sets Sail

NENY-CASA needs its members; both old and new. Please get aboard the Halfmoon (pictured in the *Voyager* masthead) and renew your membership for 2011 by going to the CASA website at www.casafdo.org/membership.cfm, 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 members. You 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 all take a voyage on the good ship Halfmoon and help NENY-CASA have a banner year.

CASA's 95th Annual Educational Training Seminar Set For Towson, Maryland

CASA's commitment to providing valuable and affordable training to people working in the food and drug industry has been unmatched for 94 years. Now the 95th Annual Educational and Training Seminar (ETS) promises to carry on that tradition.

This year's ETS will be held from May 16-19, 2011 at the Sheraton Baltimore North Hotel in Towson, Maryland.

The seminar will be jointly sponsored by CASA and the FDA this year and boasts an impressive agenda. Here is just a small preview of the presentation offering:

Employee health and hygiene; Predicting outbreaks from outer space; Changing employee behaviors; Gulf seafood safety; Bed Bugs; Epi 101; Criminal food cases;

Restaurant grading and more...

For a full agenda listing along with registration information, visit the CASA website at www.casafdo.org.

This year CASA is the recipient of a grant that will provide scholarships to first time attendees working in the food or drug regulatory industry. To see if you qual-

ify visit the CASA website or contact your NENY-CASA Executive Board Representative, Erin Sawyer or the Editor of the *Voyager*, Andrew Suflita.

Mark your calendars now to attend this exciting and informative CASA event.

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.

Meat & Poultry To Carry Nutrition Labeling

Health conscious consumers can make use of the nutrition facts panel on thousands of products they buy everyday. Soon there will be a few more food products added; namely meat and poultry.

The U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service recently announced the new rule requiring that Nutrition Facts panels appear on certain meat and poultry products. Providing the nutrition information is part of USDA's ongoing effort to educate consumers about healthy nutrition and diets.

Under the new rule, which goes into effect Jan. 12, 2012, packages of ground or chopped meat and poultry will have Nutrition Facts panels on them, and packages of whole, raw cuts of meat and poultry will feature the Nutrition Facts panels or the panels will be available for consumers at the point-of-purchase. Information will include the number of calories and the grams of total fat and saturated fat that a product contains as well as the fat percentage on packages that list a lean percentage statement, i.e., "76% lean." The rule will apply to 40 cuts of meat and poultry products.



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.

Peat Septic Systems Alternative To Conventional

With more and more development on less and less usable property, disposal of septic waste becomes a critical issue. Additionally, existing properties with previously installed "conventional septic systems" that are in failure may not be able to meet the proper separation distances allowed for in established codes. One relatively new alternative technology to help with this problem is a peat septic system.

Peat filter systems function similarly to conventional systems except the wastewater is filtered through 2-3 feet of peat before final discharge. The peat acts like a sponge providing effluent treatment as the wastewater travels through. Peat filters are efficient in the removal of coliform bacteria and reducing BOD, total dissolved solids and nitrogen.

Early peat designs discharged effluent into peat filters laid out in leaching beds. As the technology developed, modular peat filter systems were assembled with pre-compacted peat and peat fiber in chambers that can be installed onsite with minimal site preparation.

The physical properties of peat make it

suitable for use in septic system applications, acting as a fixed film filtration system similar to those using sand or artificial media.

Effluent treatment is achieved through physical, chemical and biological means. Physically, the peat fibers are highly porous holding large amounts of water allowing for a long residence time in the filter. Chemical treatment of the effluent occurs when exposed to the acidic environment of the peat. The diverse biological community inhabiting the peat filter provides biological treatment. Additionally, total dissolved solids (TSS) are effectively removed by being trapped on the peat fibers allowing the effluent to trickle through the peat.

Test results show tell the story; in treated effluent, 90% to 99% of coliform bacteria is removed, BOD is reduced from 80% to 100%, there is a 85% to 91% reduction in TSS and a 30% to 65% removal of nitrogen.

It is clearly time for the regulatory community to consider these alternative systems when making the hard decisions regarding septic system approval. Peat systems appear here to stay. For more information— www.barnstablecountyhealth.org