

THE BELL RINGER

The Newsletter of the Philadelphia Conference of the Central Atlantic States
Association of Food and Drug Officials

Winter 2013



THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we are preparing for the holiday and other seasonal festivities, I want to remind all of our members to be mindful of the changes and challenges that occur throughout this season. While we may approach doing routine public health regulatory work in similar fashion as any other time of year many of our homes, offices and work locations may have a different attention and focus due to the season.

Many of the firms and businesses we engage with may be conducting special events for customers and colleagues that will often include seasonal fare and specialty items being prepared and served. This is a great time to learn more about products, culture and tradition of foods related to this season. I hope as you have opportunity that you will try and add such experiences to your personal memory banks as well as to your professional development.

We will all be challenged in the midst of seasonal activities to get certain things done by years' end, whether they are projects, assignments or other priorities; remember the public and consumers continue to expect us to complete our duties with our best efforts and with their interests always at the forefront of our endeavors.

Our upcoming training meeting is the final one for 2013, so please remind your colleagues of the value that our conference provides through the varied training presentations that are offered throughout the year. Your Philadelphia Conference board works very hard to provide the best possible training on the issues that you, our members, have requested. This past year we have had nothing but excellent training provided by experts from as far away as Washington State (Water Activity)

and Florida (Meat Grading). Our quarterly training meetings provide all of us the opportunity to have greater competence, and enhance our knowledge and understanding of the important public health principles and concepts needed to fulfill our public health and food safety missions.

I would like to extend my holiday greetings to all of you with the wish that during this festive season your experience will prove that this is a pleasant and joyful time of the year for you, your families and all that are important in your life. Remember that many of the people we interact with daily maybe in need. Just a smile and good word to them will help as well as whatever else we can provide to them during this time and season.

Remember that we will sooner or later have the winter weather to contend with, so please be safe and use good judgment when this occurs. We all want to see each other at the spring meeting.



Looking forward to seeing you at the winter meeting and bring a friend.

Sincerely,

Jack Welte
President
Philadelphia Conference of CASA

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Conference News & Updates

Save the date for next year's annual conference
2014 CASA Annual Conference May 12-15, 2014
Holiday Inn Harrisburg-Hershey Hotel
604 Station Road
Grantville, PA 17028

Philadelphia Conference Upcoming Training Dates:

March 2014
June 2014

Conference Officers

Jack Welte, PA Department of Agriculture	President
Howard Rabinovitch, Retired, FDA	Vice President
Dennis Bauer, Bucks County Health Department	Executive Officer
Megan Lauff, U.S. Food & Drug Administration	Treasurer
Danielle Clemons, NJ Department of Health	Member-At-Large
Holly Madamba, Atlantic County Health Department	Member-At-Large
Danielle Bytheway, NJ Department of Health	CASA Representative
Caroline Friel, Wawa	Associate Representative

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The Fall CASA meeting presentations included:

"Requirements For Food Labeling & The Importance Of Allergen Disclosure"

Caroline Friel, Senior Regulatory Compliance Specialist

Wawa

The Fall Seminar started off with Caroline Friel, Senior Regulatory Compliance Specialist for Wawa speaking about "Requirements for Food Labeling and the Importance of Allergen Disclosure." She gave a brief background of the history of Wawa and provided some interesting numbers about the company. Wawa sells over 195 million cups of coffee a year and has about 200 Wawa branded products. The numbers of customers they serve and the amount of products they produce can create many challenges, one of which is allergies. Allergen



disclosures vary in different countries. The "Big 8" in the United States is less than then 14 allergies the UK must disclose and the 12 in Canada. Ms. Friel also spoke about customer trends, and their increased awareness and interest in label information, organic and natural products, and their growing concern with additives and preservatives.

"Recent Hepatitis & Norwalk Virus Outbreaks"

Michelle Malavet, Foodborne Disease Surveillance Coordinator

New Jersey Department of Health

Michelle Malavet, Foodborne Disease Surveillance Coordinator for the New Jersey Department of Health, gave a wonderful presentation about some recent outbreaks. Ms. Malavet talked about Cyclosporiasis and Hepatitis A, about their symptoms, treatments, and how they can spread. The recent Cyclosporiasis outbreak source was identified as coming from mixed salad bags, but there is still an ongoing investigation to determine any other sources. From June 2013- Sept 6, 2013 the CDC indentified 646 ill people in 24 states. There were two peaks in the epi curve, so the CDC holds that it is possible that the outbreak may have come from two different products.

Ms. Malavet then spoke about the 2013 Hepatitis A outbreak that resulted in finding pomegranate seeds testing positive for the Hepatitis A virus. This outbreak associated 89 people ill from Hepatitis A contaminated pomegranate seeds, and involved individuals from 6 different states. The epidemiological investigation also identified that this illness had a secondary spread due to sick individuals engaged in travel that resulted in the broader spread of the virus.

“Raw Milk Compliance”

Richard Cherry, Compliance Officer
U.S. Food & Drug Administration/Philadelphia District



Richard Cherry, Compliance Officer for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, then talked about the very interesting Raw Milk Compliance issues in our area. The FDA considers raw milk to be dangerous because of the many pathogens found, including Listeria, E-coli, Campylobacter, and more. From 2000-2005 there were 19 events associated with raw milk, leading to 473 illnesses and 7 deaths (including infants). But there are many people that believe unpasteurized milk will help build immunity. Dairy farmers may participate in the illegal selling of raw milk because of the money it can bring them. Mr. Cherry shared some stories about the extreme efforts people go through to get their hands on raw milk.

“Salvaging Food After A Disaster”

Judith Paterson, Emergency Response Coordinator
U.S. Food & Drug Administration/Philadelphia District

After lunch Judith Paterson, Emergency Response Coordinator for the U.S Food and Drug Administration, spoke about salvaging after a disaster. There are many factors that can lead to damage in products, and equipment, because of disasters, from water contamination, to loss of power and time/temperature abuse concerns; there is a lot of work that must be done after these events. Even when establishments go through all the proper procedures for monitoring their food, they must be sure to properly dispose of contaminated products. There is a risk of people scavenging after disasters, so operators must do things like remove product from casing, pour bleach over products, or use a compactor. Ms. Paterson did a wonderful job explaining the risks and precautions when it comes to salvaging products after a disaster.

“Allergens In Bakery Production”

Janine Ballato, Quality Assurance Product Manager
Wawa

The last presentation of the day was given by Janine Ballato, Quality Assurance Product Manager at Wawa. Ms. Ballato spoke about allergens in bakeries and provided insight on how different bakeries handle these concerns. Allergens in a bakery can be any of the Big 8 allergens recognized by the US, which can be a



concern for the customer. An allergen and intolerance was also defined to show the differences between them when it comes to foods. As wheat is the major allergen concern in a bakery, this was the major topic for the talk. The two proteins, gliadin and glutenin, are functional components of wheat that are important for forming dough and are the sources of wheat allergen and intolerance properties. While wheat is the most common allergen in baked goods, there are many bakeries that don't even include wheat in their allergy plans. This is because when evaluating bakery production ingredients, there are common ingredients that may be in contact with or in all products. This is commonly the case with wheat so allergen control programs will often just focus on other less commonly used or specialty ingredients not found in all products such as peanuts and tree nuts. This approach is acceptable if documented properly. When implementing allergen control programs within a bakery, operations will institute a swabbing program to test for the presence of protein from any allergens found in the plant. This type of evaluation program can help validate sanitation program procedures and influence production scheduling.

Commercially, there are allergen free products that are available for purchase. Ms. Ballato spoke of a local company as an example; Sweet Freedom, in Philadelphia, that does create products that are gluten, dairy, egg, soy, corn, and peanut free, along with being vegan and kosher. Small bakeries are popping up to help provide products on a daily basis to anyone who may need an allergen free product. Udi's is a company that provides a large line of gluten free products to cater to those same customers, but available in a grocery store setting. Wawa does different tests to verify that their products are allergen free.

The Fall Seminar had the best turn out
CASA Philadelphia has had in years!
Thanks to everyone for coming!



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SAVE THE DATE- SEE YOU IN HERSHEY
2014 CASA Annual Conference May 12-15, 2014
Holiday Inn Harrisburg-Hershey Hotel

PHILADELPHIA CONFERENCE

FOUNDED AUGUST 3, 1923

OF THE CENTRAL ATLANTIC STATES ASSOCIATION OF FOOD AND DRUG OFFICIALS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH A.F.D.O.

Friday, December 6, 2013

WINTER/EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR

IMPORTING FOOD PRODUCTS NJ CEU's (Approximately 5 Pending)

TREVOSE FIRE HOUSE
MEI CATERING/TWINING HALL
4900 Street Road
Trevose, Pa 19053

***** We have a full agenda and will be starting promptly at 9am*****

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| 08:00 – 09:00 | Registration & Introduction |
| 09:00 – 9:30 | “FDA’s Import Entry/Inspection Process”
Ottavio “Oats” Parenti/Supervisory Investigator/Import Operations
U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Philadelphia District |
| 09:30-10:00 | “FDA’s Import Compliance Process”
Tonya Corbin/Compliance Officer/Compliance Branch
U.S. Food and Drug Administration/Philadelphia District |
| 10:00 – 10:15 | Break |
| 10:15 – 11:15 | "USDA Import Inspection from the Import House to In-Commerce
Facilities- Meat, Poultry & Eggs"
James Kirkbride /FSIS, Regional Import Field Supervisor
Donald Russell/ FSIS, Compliance Investigator
U.S. Department of Agriculture Eastern Region |
| 11:15-12:15 | “Imported Food Issues-What is THIS!!!”
Virginia Wheatley/Food & Drug Safety Program/Research Scientist 2
New Jersey Department of Health |
| 12:30-1:30 | LUNCH (Catered by MEI Catering-\$10.00) |
| 1:30 – 2:30 | “Recent Trends in International Food and Agriculture”
Thomas Kennedy/Director, Military & Veterans Affairs
Delaware Valley College |
| 2:30-2:45 | Break |
| 2:45 – 4:00 | “Importing Food Products” - Panel Discussion |

NOTE: *Pre-Registration is required no later than close of business, Wednesday – November 27, 2013. Everyone must register with Lynn Bonner at Lynn.Bonner@fda.hhs.gov or you may call her at (215) 717-3074.*

COST: *The following fees apply:*

Current 2013 Members – Registration Fee of \$5.00

Non-members/Delinquent Members–Dues plus Registration Fee of \$5.00

Dues: Regulator - \$15.00

Associate - \$35.00

Academic - \$10.00

Student - \$10.00

Retired - \$10.00

CEUs: *A New Jersey continuing education credit application will be submitted to NJLMN for this course. The total number of credits expected for this agenda is pending (approx 4.50 to 5.0 expected). This course will be listed on NJLMN web site upon approval of the credits and you may register for the CEU's at that time. (www.NJLMN.rutgers.edu).*

Don't forget to bring items for donation for our quarterly CASA food drive to help the needy. Items needed: juice/drink mixes, tuna, peanut butter & jelly, jello/pudding, hamburger helper, rice, pancake mix & syrup, paper products – toilet paper, paper towels & tissues, condiments – ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, toiletries – soap, toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant

Editor's Note: Share your interests, information and announcements with your fellow professionals. If you take great notes contribute to the Bell Ringer and recount your training or meeting adventures. Please email to: George.Zameska@pastertraining.com. Space is available for advertising in the Bell Ringer.

I look forward to your feedback and participation.