

International Foods Protection Issues PDG

Attendees: Ian Jenson (Chair), DeAnn Benesh (Vice Chair), Amarat (Amy) Simonne, Andrea Etter, Anne-Marie Perchec, Ashley Peterson, Bob Brackett, Brad Taylor, Caroline Smith DeWaal, Don Schaffner, Elisabetta Lambertini, Elizabeth Williams, Ewen Todd, James Cook, Jeff Farber, Jiin Jung, Jong Kim, Kevin Edwards, Les Bourquin, Lisa Benjamin, Lisa Weddig, Mariza Landgraf, Mary Anne Amalaradjou, Muhammad Shahbaz, Peter K. Ben Embarek, Raj Rajagopal, Robert Buchanan, Rosetta Newsome, Samuel Godefroy, and Sarah Cahill.

Board/Staff Present: Emilio Esteban, Didi Loynachan, Dina Siedenburg, and David Tharp.

Number of Attendees: 34.

Meeting Called to Order: 3:04 p.m. Eastern Time, Tuesday, September 1, 2020.

Minutes Recording Secretary: DeAnn Benesh, Vice Chairperson.

Ian opened the meeting, welcoming PDG members and guests and made general introductions of himself and the Vice Chair, DeAnn Benesh. Ian reminded the participants of the purpose of the meeting and reviewed the anti-trust guidelines and the proposed agenda. **Old Business:** 2019 PDG Meeting Minutes. The minutes of the 2019 PDG meeting were accepted as printed in *FPT* and posted on IAFP Connect July 2019. (Motion to accept Ewen Todd, seconded by Jeff Farber.) Accepted.

New Business:

Update from the IAFP Board: David Tharp welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting, saying he hopes these virtual meetings will benefit the group. The Board looks forward to the Annual Meeting and hopes to “see” everyone there. The Program is now available on the Annual Meeting page. All sessions will be recorded and posted on the IAFP website for 6 months for viewing.

Review of Symposia / Roundtables submitted for the 2020 Annual Meeting by the PDG. Twelve proposals were submitted with the IFPI PDG as the primary sponsor for 6 of these. Nine submissions were accepted: 2 full symposia, 6 short symposia and 1 roundtable. The 1 roundtable has since been cancelled (decision of speakers) and will be resubmitted for next year’s meeting.

Activities between meetings:

IAFP Connect – All members are encouraged to get themselves set up to use this communication platform. Ian mentioned that he has received more response when he uses the site to send information via direct email vs listing directly on the IFPI PDG Connect page. He suggested setting your “Preferences” to receive emails, so you don’t have to go to the IAFP Connect page to check for communications. It will be critical to use IAFP Connect this year so we can work at development of ideas for roundtable/symposium submissions for the 2021 program. Using this format to allows for response and discussion among members.

Food Safety Systems – high-level 2-page summary by country: Ian reiterated what he had suggested on this topic at last year’s meeting, and asked for a response from the PDG to complete and collect 2-page high-level overviews of the structure of the government agency system(s) and key laws for food safety in your country. The objective would be to create a small library of these and house them on the IFPI PDG IAFP Connect site. Ian had posted one such summary last year that he had created in collaboration with a few other Australians; and in addition, someone in the PDG had posted a link on IAFP Connect to FAO and food laws within countries (which was a bit more detailed than preferred).

Sarah Cahill said this FAO version is FAOLEX, go to <http://fao.org/faolex/en/>. She also provided a link in the chat for CODEX, suggesting to check under each member country to get a regulatory overviews/per country, go to <http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/about-codex/members/en/>.

Ian asked if there were members of the PDG who would be willing to take this project on for their countries.

Muhammad Shahbaz from Pakistan, currently working in Riyadh Saudi Arabia said he would like to participate to represent Pakistan and/or Saudi Arabia. **Jeff Farber** thought this was a good idea for the PDG to take on to get to know each other and work with each other, and he would be willing to take this on for Canada. **Amarat (Amy) Simonne** said she would be willing to help to create one for Thailand and some selected Asian countries. **Bob Buchanan** suggested we work with the Food Law PDG on this project and said International Product Liability Laws – Jones Day provide a really good website. **Caroline Smith DeWaal** suggested this might also be a good thing to turn into a series of articles for *Food Protection Trends*, such as was done by the Food Law PDG a few years

ago with the introduction of the FSMA Rules. **Ian** suggested this might also be an idea for creation of future symposia.

Ian will update and re-post the 2-pager he created for Australia so members can use as an example to get started.

Proposal suggestions for 2021:

Ian reminded everyone that proposals can originate either in our PDG or we can support those originating from other PDGs. He again encouraged members to use IAFP Connect to work together to develop submissions. The deadline for submission is 10 November 2020 – just a couple of weeks post completion of the 2020 Annual Meeting.

Ian received email from several members on topics under development: **Marcel Zwietering** and **Arie Havelaar** (also members of the Microbial Modeling and Risk Assessment PDG) sent in their suggestion for a symposium and an associated roundtable on quantitative microbial risk assessment in low- and middle-income countries; and **Kevin Edwards** and other members of the Seafoods PDG will be developing a symposium with an international view and will likely come to the PDG for support.

During the meeting, Ewen Todd suggested that since a survey is being published on the change of Knowledge Attitudes and Practices (KAP) in food purchases and food preparation for Middle Eastern North Africa (MENA) countries, a symposium or round table could be created to share this information and include other countries or regions. **Don Schaffner** suggested that perhaps the roundtable that was pulled from this year’s meeting, could be “repurposed” as a webinar, sponsored by our PDG – to which the organizer **Amy Simonne** said she would take the idea back to the team to consider.

Election of new PDG Vice Chair will need to take place before next PDG meeting. PDG members were asked to please send in your nominations to Ian or DeAnn for consideration (self-nomination is acceptable). Ian will post the request for nominations and closing date for submission on IAFP Connect site AFTER the 10 November (the 2021 proposals submission due date), and a poll will be initiated shortly thereafter.

Journal of Food Protection wants to publish more regular reviews and has produced a list of topics. Some of these planned reviews have been assigned and are in preparation and some are still potential reviews. Two questions were posed by Ian to the PDG: Do we have any other suggestions for review topics? Do we know of someone who would be willing to prepare the reviews that are currently listed as potential reviews? Ian will post this request on IAFP Connect to gather response.

Five presenters provided different perspectives on the topic of Covid-19 & safe food supplies around the world:

Peter Ben Embarek – WHO and Food Safety: In April, WHO /FAO developed and published guidance documents (available online) for food businesses and for food safety authorities, to address the concerns being experienced. These guidance documents focused on risk-based food inspection, stress and changes for food laboratories and risk to the integrity of the food chain (food fraud). More guidance documents are underway to address management of traditional food markets during the COVID-19 pandemic and reducing public health risks associated with the sale of live wild animals in traditional food markets. Peter provided a high-level overview of a project between WHO/FAO/OIE to develop a joint research and development project (R&DBlueprint), go to <https://www.who.int/teams/blueprint/covid-19> on a series of topics around COVID-19 and the impact on public health (vaccine) and the animal-human interface and issues around transmission.

Don Schaffner – Science and Risk of COVID-19: Don has spent much of the last 6 months speaking with the media (TV, print media, radio, podcast, social media, etc.) about COVID-19, discussing risks and risk mitigations. He narrated discussions he has had with people via Twitter – which mirror the discussions he has experienced in all media outlets covering: *Soap* – it will *not* “pop” viruses. *Lysol* your takeout food – if it makes you “feel” better, do it, but there is no science that supports doing this (and there have been spikes at poison control centers due to toxic reactions). Use *soap* to wash your produce – *no!* The material safety data sheets for these soaps say *no*, they can make you sick. *Groceries*: There was a YouTube video of aseptic technique for sanitizing groceries by a doctor wearing scrubs (so it must be true?). No wash your hands when you get home, but other precautions aren’t scientifically warranted. Don suggested this website for good information about food risk, go to <https://mia.co.nz/covid-19-response/effectiveness-of-ppe-nzfsr/potential-for-foodborne-transmission-covid-19>. There is very little supportive evidence regarding contacting COVID-19 from fomites (inanimate objects).

Ashley Peterson – Keep Poultry Plants Operating: Beginning in March a change in food habits occurred when people began eating more food and protein (meat) at home, versus outside the home. Product that was packaged and labelled for retail, was rerouted and sold for home use to try meet demand. There was a lot of hoarding at first, with “truck sales” selling meat out of trucks with people waiting in line for hours to be able to get access to poultry product. The number of employees working per 1000 sq ft of space in meat processing facilities is MUCH higher than most other manufacturing industries. The meat industry collaborated on ideas to keep employees safe. CDC and OSHA interim guidance for Meat & Poultry Processing Workers & Employees released in April was very helpful and the industry is now planning discussions to update this guidance based on all that has been learned since. Ashley shared a National Chicken Council video, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iKRX-0FLY2-k&feature=youtu.be> outlining how the chicken industry has enhanced safety measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sammy Godefroy – Activities in MEA: MEA relies heavily on import of foods and regulatory agencies are very stringent, but not necessarily risk based. Some of the main food regulatory functions during the pandemic included: addressing emerging risks; determining the risk is not a food safety risk, but rather a food security risk; and maintaining the integrity of food regulatory functions. Three key concerns/actions were identified: (1) Risk communication: to review scientific information and issue scientific opinions tailored to audiences and deliver in the several languages (FAO/WHO INFOSAN guidance was helpful – Arabic, English and French). Go to <http://www.fao.org/policy-support/coronavirus-pandemic/en/>. 2) Maintain food safety and supply by creating guidance (based on WHO/FAO guidance) to help the food production sector adapt and prevent / mitigate interruption in food production. 3) Maintain integrity of Food regulatory functions. Countries maintaining things as usual, were now forced to focus on risk-based thinking, interventions and learned how to use and rely on technology (distance inspection, digitalization)

Tim Ryan – International Trade Implications: The meat trade market was already complicated pre-COVID-19, with a sharp rise in China meat imports in 2019, disruptions in trade policies and trade wars. Disruption to supply chains, channel and trade occurred as COVID hit and work forces were impacted. causing production of U.S. beef to drop drastically. Animals have “life cycles” that define their use for food production, so many animals had to be euthanized. Marketing channels were also strongly affected: hotel/restaurant use of meat drastically dropped as meat sales shifted to retail meat purchases. Disruption to trade via extra inspection services due to COVID-19, and when a COVID case is found in an employee in a plant, shipments are suspended for export. Tim provided some comments about how COVID will shape trade policy: recession leading to reduced budgets to drive policies; global multilateralism becoming weaker as a result; evaluation of global supply chains, with global air and sea freight in a state of flux; and countries beginning to promote more self-sufficiency vs relying on imports (leading to food security issues for some countries).

Recommendations to the Executive Board: None.

Next Meeting Date: July 17, 2021, Phoenix, Arizona.

Meeting Adjourned: 5:13 p.m. Eastern Time.

Chairperson: Ian Jenson.