

DRAFT 9/2/09

Update on Partnership for Food Protection Workgroup Charges & Activities

The four Workgroups (WGs) - Training, Response, Risk-based Workplanning and Interactive Information Technology - have been working on action items following the face-to-face meeting held in Kansas City in May 2009. In Kansas City, the WGs reviewed all of the recommendations and charges from the “Gateway to Food Protection” national meeting in August 2008, plus suggested action items added by the Coordinating Committee, and were asked to prioritize their projects. Since the May meeting, the WGs have held conference calls and 3 have had small group planning team meetings to clarify and narrow the focus/scope of the projects to ensure they will have accomplishments to report at the next 50 state meeting scheduled for August 2010. This is the deadline for “Phase 1” of the longer term project to establish a fully integrated national food safety system. The following is an update on “what’s been going on” in each WG:

Training Workgroup

The Training WG had 5 charges to review at the meeting in Kansas City and reached agreement to focus on the following 2 charges:

- Establishing competencies and certification for all disciplines. Short term deliverables include performing a job analysis for inspectors involved in food protection (prevention, intervention and response) and to identify current competency assessments and credentials. A third short term deliverable is to develop a framework for credentialing that could be taken back to associations and agencies to share. The long term deliverable is to expand the job analysis and competency assessments to include other disciplines, experienced staff and stakeholders in food protection.
- Assess and review training currently available for all disciplines involved in Food Protection and to use this information to identify training gaps. This information would be used to assess whether the Kellogg Foundation proposal fits needs and goals identified by the WG. The WGs long term goal for this Charge is to compile a comprehensive course catalog.

- A sub-group met at ORA U on July 21-22 to begin planning direction following the Kansas City meeting. The short term focus is to perform a job analysis for food inspectors and identify current competency assessments and credentials. They assessed 120 + job tasks and 24 competencies were evaluated.

- Co-Chair Dave Read presented an overview of work started at the International Food Protection Training Institute Advisory Council meeting in D.C. Steve James presented information on “Certification 101” discussing what it takes to get a course / curriculum / program recognized / validated / accredited.

- The WG has asked a NEHA Credentialing expert for advice so she can eventually provide feedback on the process they went through to certify the retail “Certified Professional-Food Safety” credential.

- A conference call was held on August 27 to discuss next steps.

Response Workgroup

The Response WG had 12 suggested action items and was charged to select one or multiple action items to work on that would improve response to recalls and foodborne outbreak investigations. The WG selected 5 activities and formed 5 subgroups in Kansas City. The following is an update on progress on those tasks.

Recall Effectiveness Check Pilots

Goal A: Develop and implement a secure web-based recall effectiveness tracking system and pilot in six states using Food Shield

Update - Allowed other states to pilot system during the cookie dough recall; continue to improve after each recall and based on ideas from Food Shield pilot

Action - Will send out link for dummy data web entry for cookie dough and link for NC data for effectiveness checks; Working on developing ability to generate FDA 3177 form, to add recall coordinator approval function, and to use barcode scanners linked to database

Goal B: Pilot the use of third parties to conduct recall effectiveness checks

Update - FDA indicated interested in funding and having internal discussions regarding funding mechanism

Action - Continue to work with FDA; will connect with IT work group; other states will provide cost information for 3rd party audit checks, if available

Output for goal: Evaluate the functionality and performance of an electronic recall effectiveness system in pilot projects

State and Local Staff Detail to FDA Emergency Ops Center

Goal: Develop a pilot program for state and local partners who are willing to be detailed for 2-3 weeks to the FDA Emergency Operations Center to improve Federal, state and local collaboration

Output: Evaluation of experience from pilot project participants

Action - No action reported to date on this item

Evaluation and Best Practices using the Incident Command System

Goal: Inventory existing public health ICS models and best practices from OK, NC, MN, MI, FL and present these findings at the 2010 50-state meeting

Action - Requested members whose states have plans and procedures to share with Scott Holmes who will also submit documents to the CIFOR website.

Environmental Health Investigation Guide – Focus on Sprouts

Goal: Develop guidance document for sprout environmental investigations and identify key components to be utilized as a template in environmental investigations

Update - Working on refining the document. There was a brief discussion at Rapid Response Team meetings and there is support for moving in the direction of developing written procedures for environmental investigations for products that are frequent problems

Action – plan to send draft to Work Group for review in the next 30 days

Epidemiologic Traceback

Goal: Prepare a Whitepaper that describes the potential application and utility of product tracing to inform epidemiology investigations

Update - Have an outline and have requested published examples of outbreaks from colleagues. Will send draft around to Work Group for review by January 2010

Next Steps for the WG - A conference call was held on July 22 to discuss progress; next call is on September 3. A timeline for each subgroup will be established with clear objectives outlined for the next face-to-face meeting.

Risk-based Workplanning Workgroup

The Risk-based Workplanning WG was charged to conduct a pilot project that would use a cooperative work plan model as the first step towards establishing a national food protection surveillance system. There were many suggested action items on what activities would be included in the pilot project. At the meeting in Kansas City, the WG agreed to breakout the components of the pilot into 5 team work areas: logistics (leads of the subgroups), criteria, risk review, communications and training & outreach. A conference call was held on July 1 to discuss the proposed pilot project. Members of the Logistics Team had met at the AFDO conference in June to refine/clarify and narrow the focus of the proposal they developed in Kansas City. The Logistics Committee met in Nashville on August 11-12 where they reached agreement to further refine and clarify the charge for Phase 1 of the project.

Phase 1 Charge - “**Conduct farm to fork inspections and sampling, based on peanut products, to capture (identify or assess) strengths and opportunities for integration using current systems and tools.**”

- Other activities that have been suggested for the pilot were identified as next steps (e.g., for Phase 2, 3, etc.).
- For Phase I, the workgroup is focusing on **Integration** among federal, state and local agencies; planning to work with up to five states, with state and FDA inspections being included in the pilot. State and local agency participants have not been finalized yet.
- FDA and States will use their own existing tools (e.g., inspectional guidance, checklists).
- The results from these inspections and any sample collections will be analyzed to develop recommendations for improving integration in future projects.
- The WG has requested assistance from the Information Technology WG to get their advice and suggestions on how they should handle inspection forms and sample results.
- A conference call was held with all WG members on September 1 to discuss the refocused charge and progress on tasks to be done by the different teams.

Interactive Information Technology (IT) Workgroup

The overarching goal from the 50 state meeting was for the IT WG to “adopt or create an interactive information system (communication and data sharing).” There were 10 suggested action items for the WG to review and consider when they met in Kansas City.

At the meeting, the WG proposed to do the following projects: Use FoodShield for the Workgroups communication; Create a shared sampling database; and Do a gap / needs / market assessment. After the proposed projects were reviewed by the Coordinating Committee and the Steering Committee, they said the WG needed a more focused charge and the IT WG was asked to evaluate eLEXNET and FoodShield. Conference calls were held on July 11 and August 5 and the IT WG Planning Team met August 25-26 in Rockville to review the new charges and they reached agreement on a new goal and 3 new action items for the project:

Long Term Goal – Integrated / interoperable food information system for labs, inspections and recalls.

New action items for the IT WG:

1. Systems Assessment

- **Goal:** Assess the function of current systems and provide assistance to other groups on these systems to meet their project needs
- **What:** strengths/weaknesses ; original business needs; current data needs/data flow
- **Systems:** FoodSHIELD, eSAF, eLEXNET, NC System, and FDA’s Recall Enterprise System (RES)

2. Business Process/Requirements

- **Goal:** Conduct business process/business needs assessment with Work Planning Work Group for information collection/storage/retrieval/analysis for their work plan pilot project.
- **What:** Collaborate with Workplanning project for pilot project; Understand business needs and ideal data flow for pilot project; and Consider using as model for “big picture” business needs for integrated/interoperable food information system

3. Required Data Fields

- **Goal:** Determine required data fields for integrated/interoperable system
- **What:** Determine data fields for eSAF; Recommend model inspection report; Recommend model recall effectiveness form; and Data fields for eLEXNET system

Next Steps - A conference call is scheduled for September 11 to discuss the new proposed action items with the full WG. Leads for each task were selected in Rockville and members will be assigned to work on the new tasks.

FYI - Next Face-to-Face Meeting for the WGs – A contractor has been selected to provide event management services for the next WG meeting. It is tentatively scheduled for the week of November 16-20 (most likely will have a travel day on Monday, November 16, meet all day on Tuesday, November 17 and end by 12 noon on Wednesday, November 18); sites being considered are in Ft. Worth, Texas and St. Louis, Missouri. A decision on the meeting site will be made by September 14.

Pete Salsbury
Acting Special Assistant
Division of Federal-State Relations