



North Carolina Food Safety and Defense Task Force

Established 2003

January 9, 2012

The North Carolina Food Safety and Defense Task Force was quite active throughout 2011. In addition to the routine work of the Task Force, which includes 6 full meetings annually and 6 meetings of the Executive Committee, the Task Force held its first annual Conference and developed a 5 year Strategic Plan outlining issues and directions for the Task Force to prioritize over the next few years as the group seeks to constantly improve the safety of the food supply in North Carolina and ensure its defense against accidental and deliberate contamination.

One of the major events of 2011 that affected the NC Food Safety and Defense Task Force was the reorganization of the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The Food Protection Branch of NC DENR directly coordinated the environmental health specialist activities for restaurant and lodging inspections in the 85 local health departments and districts in North Carolina. The entire Division of Environmental Health within NC DENR was reallocated as the Environmental Health Section within the Division of Public Health effective July 1, 2011, removing NC DENR as a partner within the larger Task Force. As a result of this change, the Executive Committee re-examined the 2003 charter establishing the Task Force and recommended revising the membership, duties and objectives of the Task Force from what was in the 2003 charter to more closely align with the membership and capabilities of the Task Force as it exists today. The proposed revision is still under consideration by the Governor's Office at this time.

Revised Duties (Proposed) NC Food Safety & Defense Task Force

The Task Force shall have the following duties:

- Partner with local, state and federal agencies to evaluate the State's food system for vulnerabilities related to intentional or unintentional contamination of the food supply, including criminal and terrorist acts, and make recommendations regarding the following issues:
 - improving safety and defense of the food supply system,
 - reducing terrorism threat measures,
 - evaluating and improving food safety and defense mitigation and response plans, and
 - implementing or coordinating training and food safety policy for key stakeholders, including industry trade organizations and independent retail establishments, in the State's food supply system.
 - Review and recommend legislation and/or administrative rules needed to improve the ability of departments and agencies to protect the safety and defense of the State's food supply and the agricultural industry base, including legislation to protect sensitive and proprietary information of the State's food supply system, safety and defense vulnerability information, and defense plans that, if compromised, would heighten the exposure of the State's food supply system to criminal or terrorist acts.
 - Prepare an annual report no later than December 15th each year that includes any recommendations or proposals for changes in laws, rules, and programs that the Task Force determines to be appropriate to enhance food safety and defense in the State.
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Conference

The 2011 North Carolina Food Safety and Defense Task Force Conference was held May 25-26, 2011 at the Sheraton Imperial, RTP, 4700 Emperor Blvd., Durham, NC 27703. This was the first conference ever presented by the Task Force, and was entirely paid for from participant registration fees and funds allocated to the Task Force by the US Food & Drug Administration. The agenda and information about speakers at the conference is included below. Seventy-five people attended the conference, representing local health department personnel, academicians with interests in improving food safety, and private sector commercial interests wanting to understand how to better coordinate their own food safety efforts with the priorities of the Task Force.

Achieving Excellence Together: Using the Task Force Model to Improve Food Protection

Agenda

Wednesday, May 25, 2011

1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Registration

2:00 – 2:15

Welcome

Dr. Jeff Engel, N.C. State Health Director

2:15 – 2:45

The National Task Force Initiative

Key Note Speaker: Travis Goodman, FDA DFRS

2:45 - 3:15

Accomplishments of the Tennessee State Task Force

Betsy Kaesontae, Vice-Chair-TN Food Safety Task Force

3:15 – 3:45

Break

3:45 – 4:15

Academia & Task Forces: Mutual Benefits

Trevor Phister, NCSU

4:15 – 5:00

Industry Benefits from a State Task Force

Steve Tracey, Delhaize America-Food Lion banners &

Bottom Dollar Food

5:00 – 5:30

Coordination and Communication Platforms utilization to enhance a Food Emergency Response

Tim Johnson, NC Emergency Management

5:45-6:30

Reception

Thursday, May 26, 2012

7:00 – 8:00	Registration
8:00 - 9:00	What Makes a Successful Task Force? <i>NCFSD Task Force Executive Committee Members</i>
9:00 – 9:30	Promoting Inter-State Cooperation <i>Doug Saunders, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services</i>
9:30 – 10:00	Tools for Effective Communication <i>Brett Weed, NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services</i>
10:00 – 10:30	Break
10:30 – 11:45	The Task Force Role in a Successful Response <i>Multi-Agency Panel Discussion</i>
11:45-1:00	Lunch
1:00 – 2:15	Putting it all Together: Strengthening Food Protection by Improving Stakeholder Relations <i>Interactive Discussion; Facilitator: Ed Jenkins, NCEM</i>
2:30	Adjourn

2011 Task Force Conference
**Achieving Excellence Together:
Using the Task Force Model to Improve Food Protection**

Speakers
(In order of appearance)

Dr. Jeffrey Engel

Dr. Jeffrey Engel was named North Carolina's State Health Director in March 2009. Prior to that, he served for seven years as the State Epidemiologist and chief of the Epidemiology Section for the State Division of Public Health. He has been a Professor of Medicine at the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University and Chief of the Division of Infectious Diseases at Pitt County Memorial Hospital. Engel received his undergraduate and medical degrees from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland.

Travis Goodman

Travis is a Consumer Safety Officer for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration working in the Division of Federal-State Relations. He is currently focusing on the implementation of the Manufactured Food Regulatory Program Standards. Prior to working for FDA, he was a Public Health Administrator and Food Defense Program Coordinator in the Division of Food Protection at the Indiana State Department of Health. He was detailed to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security from June 2008-2009, as a Food and Agriculture Sector Specialist to provide a State perspective on developing projects and initiatives. Mr. Goodman Chaired the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) National Food Protection and Defense Committee from 2005-2010. He established the Indiana Food Safety and Defense Task Force and the Indiana Environmental Health Association's Terrorism and All-Hazards Preparedness Committee.

Betsy Kaesontae

Betsy is the Director of Quality Assurance and Food Safety for Cracker Barrel Old Country Store. She was born in Pennsylvania, and attended Kansas State University, receiving her B.S. in Animal Science in 1995. Since July 2005, Betsy has worked in the Quality Assurance and Food Safety Department for Cracker Barrel. As a Director of QA and Food Safety, Betsy is responsible for Restaurant and Retail Food Supplier and Product Compliances and Restaurant Equipment and Supplies Compliances along with Regulatory Compliances. Betsy has 15 years of experience in food quality that include: food service, food production, food microbiology and regulatory standards.

Trevor Phister

Dr. Trevor Phister has been an extension specialist in the North Carolina State Food Science Department with a 75% Research: 25% Extension appointment for just over 4 ½ years. He is a founding member of the North Carolina Fresh Produce Safety Task Force, a group bringing academic, extension, government and industry members together to address concerns about the safety of the states produce through research and education. Trevor received a B.S. in Microbiology from the University of Iowa, a Masters degree from Clemson University and a Ph.D. in Food Science from the University of Minnesota. His produce safety related research interests focus on the interaction of enteric bacteria with plants.

Steve Tracey

Steve is the Manager of Supply Chain Food Safety for Delhaize America (Food Lion, Hannaford, Sweetbay). He has 27 years consumer products quality and safety experience with 23 years in food from manufacturing to consulting and retail. He has been an auditor and HACCP coordinator for manufacturing plants and distribution centers, and for the last nine years, has been a leader in food safety and food defense for retail grocery operations. At Food Lion, he has helped build a program of training, auditing, and performance measurement. The program was laid on the foundation of food safety reviews, computer based training, and sanitation vendor coordination. Steve received a BS in Food Science from NC State University in December, 1983.

Timothy Johnson III

Tim is an Emergency Management Coordinator who serves as the Assistant Human Services Program Manager of the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management. Tim has 12 years of experience in Emergency Management beginning with Hurricane Floyd. He has also worked for a global humanitarian organization which allowed him to organize and implement more than 22 long-term recovery organizations in 4 States from 2004-2007. For the State of NC, Tim has worked in the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, Public Assistance Program, and the State Emergency Operations Center. Mr. Johnson has a Bachelor of Science in Psychology and Education from the University of Southern Mississippi and a Masters of Public Administration from Troy State University.

Don DeLozier

Don is the state director for the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Meat and Poultry Inspection Division (MPID). Don has a dedicated staff of 87 field inspectors, 9 area supervisors, 7 field veterinarians, 3 full-time trainers, 5 compliance officers, and 10 office staff support whose daily mission is food safety for the consumers of North Carolina. Don spent several years in private industry before joining USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service where he spent 35 years holding various positions from inspector, trainer, supervisor, Q.C. specialist, and staff officer. He attended the University of Baltimore for Business Management, Ohio State University for Food Science courses, and received his food technology certification from Mississippi State University. He is HACCP-certified with numerous course work in all phases of meat/poultry complex processes. Don has been with NCDA&CS for over 10 years and has been director for MPID for the past 3 years.

Dan Ragan

Dan is the director of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Food and Drug Protection Division. He is a registered pharmacist who has worked for the Department for more than 11 years. Since September, he has served as director of the Food and Drug Protection Division, and prior to that he was administrator of our drug protection program. In October, 2009, he was invited to and testified before a U.S. Senate sub-committee focused on food safety. He has been appointed by the Governor's office to be a member of the executive committee of the Food Safety and Defense Task Force. In 2010 Dan attended the 50 states FDA meeting on the integration of a unified food safety system. Dan grew up in Raleigh, N.C. and received his undergraduate BS degree in Animal Science from NC State University in 1978. He graduated from pharmacy school in 1982 from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill before opening his own practice in 1987. He has run multiple retail pharmacy operations as well as worked as a consultant in long term care pharmacy operations.

Larry Michael

Larry has environmental health experience at both state and local government levels. At the local level, he worked as an Environmental Health Specialist in Lee County. Later, Larry joined the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and worked as a Regional Environmental Health Specialist and Field Supervisor with the Division of Environmental Health (DEH). In 2006, Larry joined the Food Protection Branch of DEH and served as the first Food Defense Coordinator with the Environmental Health Services Section. In May 2007, he was promoted to his current position as Head of the Food Protection Branch. Larry earned a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Health from East Carolina University and a Master of Public Health from the University of NC at Chapel Hill.

David Sweat

Mr. Sweat is the Foodborne Diseases Epidemiologist with the North Carolina Division of Public Health. He earned his Master of Public Health from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill in 1993. As a field epidemiologist with the Texas Department of Health and

the North Carolina Division of Public Health he has investigated numerous infectious disease outbreaks associated with enteric disease pathogens such as *Cyclospora*, *Cryptosporidium*, *Salmonella*, Shiga-toxin producing *E. coli*, *Noroviruses*, and others. He is a published author and contributing author on numerous published papers and presentations. He holds adjunct faculty appointments with the school of public health at UNC-Chapel Hill and with Louisiana State University. He also represents the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials on the national Council to Improve Foodborne Outbreak Response and helped edit the CIFOR Guidelines, published in 2009.

Doug Saunders

Doug is Deputy Director of the Division of Animal and Food Industry Services for the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services where he oversees the activities of the Office of Animal Care and Health Policy, the Office of Dairy and Foods, the Office of Laboratory Services, the Office of Meat and Poultry Services, and the Office of Veterinary Services. Doug has been a very active member of the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) and the Association of Food and Drug Officials of the Southern States (AFDOSS) and has held many different positions within the organizations. Doug has also been actively involved with developing the concept of a National Food Safety System (NFSS), a project that began with the 50 – State Food Safety Initiative Meeting held in Kansas City, MO in September 1998. He subsequently worked with FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition in October 1998 to prepare the summary report from that meeting, and was selected as one of three Vice Chairmen of the NFSS Coordinating Committee. Doug received his Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Science from Virginia Tech.

Brett Weed

Brett Weed is an Emergency Response Coordinator and State Program Liaison for the US Food and Drug Administration Atlanta District, based in Raleigh, NC. Prior to joining FDA, Brett served as the Food Defense Coordinator and Compliance and Preparedness Administrator for the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Food and Drug Protection Division. Brett has a Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry and Bachelor of Arts in Chemistry from East Carolina University and a Master of Science in Biochemistry and Biophysics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Marc Meyer

Marc is the food and lodging supervisor for Durham County Environmental Health division. He has worked as an environmental health specialist in Durham County since 1994. Marc was the lead hazard risk assessor for Durham County environmental health from 1998 to 2008. Marc worked 10 years in the contract food service management industry prior to joining Durham County environmental health.

Leslie Wolf

Dr. Leslie A. Wolf received her B.S. in Microbiology from the University of Kentucky and her Ph.D. in Immunology from the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. She completed a CDC/APHL Emerging Infectious Disease Post-Doctoral Fellowship at the North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health, and then became the first Public Health Scientist with her focus on using molecular diagnostics and molecular epidemiology in the public health laboratory setting. Dr. Wolf set up the PulseNet laboratory in 1999. She has been involved in Food Safety/Food Defense initiatives, Laboratory Preparedness, Quality Assurance and Laboratory Safety programs since transitioning into Laboratory Administration. Dr. Wolf has been Director of the North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health since August 2006.

Committee Reports for the 2011 Governor's Report

The most important work of the Task Force is accomplished through the various committees that have been created to deal with specific training, education, policy recommendation and collaboration initiatives. Included below are the committee reports from 2011.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee met six times in 2011. During each meeting, committee members addressed foodborne outbreaks, legislative changes, and other hot topics. In addition to these activities, the Executive Committee also addressed several substantial issues, including:

- Legislative changes: the Division of Environmental Health was transferred from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to the Department of Health and Human Services in 2011. This change affected several aspects of the Task Force, such as the grant funds and the Executive Order.
- Strategic Planning: the Executive Committee crafted a strategic plan using information gathered from stakeholders at the first annual Task Force conference as well as the essential duties listed in the Executive Order. The new plan (included with this report) encompasses FY 2011-2014.
- Revised Executive Order Duties: The Committee updated the duties listed in the Executive Order to better reflect completed initiatives and refined priorities.

Conference Planning Committee

The Task Force sponsored its first annual conference entitled "Achieving Excellence Together: Using the Task Force Model to Improve Food Protection" on May 25-26, 2011 at the Sheraton Imperial, Research Triangle Park. The agenda and speaker list is included with this report. The conference was attended by 75 participants, the maximum amount the planning committee anticipated. Comments and feedback by the participants were overwhelmingly positive. A second conference will build upon its success and lessons learned.

Education Committee Report - 2011

The Education Committee focused on two primary activities in 2011. One, to provide education to our task force members that gives them a fuller understanding of the work of member agencies and organizations. Presentations for 2011 included information on farmers market food safety, databases that track the incidence of foodborne disease outbreaks, and retail establishments' responses to recalls. Second, the committee continued to investigate ways to provide food safety education as part of the public school curriculum. After serious study regarding this second objective, it was determined that the Task Force's Outreach Committee is better equipped to successfully implement this goal.

The Committee also submitted a grant to Homeland Security under the leadership of Sharron Stewart, Director of the Emergency Programs Division of NCD&CS, and a member of the Education Committee. Funding has been provided to offer statewide training to relevant stakeholders and to review the provisions of the Food Emergency Response Plan (FERP) in 2012. A final determination on the scheduling of this training is awaiting approval of the Task Force's Executive Committee.

The Committee also determined that it would better communicate its mission by changing its name to "Professional Development," since the committee's focus is to provide information to other members of the food safety and defense community.

NC Dairy Security Committee

Since 2001, the Dairy Security Committee has continued to meet and make progress with the input and active participation of its dedicated membership. Various subcommittees were formed to address dairy biosecurity in specific areas such as production (farms), transportation, processing (plants), media and laboratory. One Committee goal has been to influence a national dairy biosecurity plan development as to have a standard plan nationwide. Various national efforts are gaining attention. Many are based on the planning, research and protocols developed by the NC Dairy Security Committee. As a result, the NC Dairy Security Committee was asked to meet and share their work with the National Secure Milk Supply Movement (SMS) Working Group. During this March 2011 meeting in Mooresville, NC, the latest national dairy planning efforts concerning Foreign Animal Disease protocols were discussed. Representing the SMS national working group were Dr. Pam Hullinger, Clinical Professor, Diagnostic Epidemiology (University of California, Davis) and Dr. Danielle Bickett-Waddle, Associate Director for Food Security and Public Health (Iowa State University). The NC Dairy Security Committee was asked to share their work and research as well as make recommendations to national efforts. This exchange of ideas with the Secure Milk Supply Movement Working Group was a monumental moment for the continuing efforts of the NC Dairy Security Committee to improve dairy biosecurity and response locally, regionally and nationwide. Dr. Hullinger has made several trips to North Carolina this year for the purpose of coordinating aspects of her national efforts with those plans developed by the NC Dairy Security Committee.

In September 2011, Mr. Charles ("Buddy") Gaither retired from his CEO position at Milkco, Inc. in Asheville, NC. Buddy also resigned his position as Chair of the NC Dairy Security Committee, but continues to be an active member of the committee. Mr. Jim Howie, Southern Milk Marketing, now Chairs the NC Dairy Security Committee.

Recall Committee 2011

The recall committee of the NCFDTF had several accomplishments in 2011. Our main accomplishment was putting on a recall mitigation/prevention seminar on Jan 25, 2011 in Raleigh. Our committee has also decided to set regular dates for seminars in the future, with a seminar in January in one of the outreach areas and a seminar in September in the Raleigh area. Our next seminar is planned for Jan 31, 2012 in Monroe, NC.

We continue to work to improve the recall response for recalls in NC. We are still working on a master database of all potential facilities that sell/prepare/distribute food so that we can contact high risk facilities during certain recalls with extreme risk to consumers (botulism in self stable products, etc). We are working with Emergency Programs and the NC Retail Merchants Association to merge existing databases and add new facilities to the database. We also are working with the former DEHR (now DHHS) to identify high risk

food servers (daycares, camps, rest homes, etc) that buy products at retail and may not hear of recalls of those products. We hope to have a system in place where those high risk facilities can be contacted during an illness recall to ensure they are aware of the recall.

This committee was working on an initiative to help with consumer education in food preparation in an attempt to prevent food borne illness and recalls for pathogens in raw foods. The committee has noted that a large percentage of illness recalls are for pathogens in raw foods where the lethality has to be carried out by the consumer. This education component has been turned over to the Outreach committee headed by Ben Chapman.

Communication and Outreach

A Subcommittee of the Governor's Task Force on Food Safety and Defense

Respectfully submitted 12-16-2011 by chair, Dr. Benjamin Chapman (NC State)

Members: Cris Harrelson, Brett Weed, Kelly Jeffer, Jessica Dyer

Below is a brief list of accomplishments and activities that the GTFFSD Communication and Outreach Group (COG) has participated in during the past year. 2011 was this subcommittee's first year of operation, born in late 2010 out of discussions related to increasing the visibility and profile of the GTFFSD.

The COG's mandate, as developed by the subcommittee is as follows:

-To coordinate the GTFFSD's public communication and facilitate discussion of the TF's activities beyond the group members. Potential target audiences include – consumers, industry members, policy makers, other stakeholders interested in food safety and defense issues. The COG should manage GTFFSD communications to the above groups and facilitate feedback that can be integrated in to the task force structure. A one-stop-shop GTFFSD website is the main initial focus of COG, with additional GTFFSD communication and outreach committees explored in subsequent years.

2011 Activities

Meetings

COG met four times (two in person and two via conference call) during 2011. Most of the discussion at these meetings focused on website content, development, management and structure.

Summary of work accomplishments

The below structure was established by COG as the framework for the initial website, which is currently being added to (as of Dec 2011) and managed by NCDA&CS. The website can be found at:

<http://ncfoodsafetytaskforce.org/Default.aspx>.

Strategic Plan

In 2011 the NC Food Safety and Defense Task Force spent the summer considering input received at the conference in May, the revision of the charter establishing the Task Force, and the experience of recent years of working together on the Task Force and decided to outline a Strategic Plan to provide direction for the Task Force for the next few years as the group works to improve food safety in NC. The North Carolina Division of Emergency Management lent expertise to the strategic planning effort, and the brief outline of the priorities determined through the process is included below.

2011-2014

North Carolina Food Safety and Defense Task Force Strategic Plan

Duty	Goals and/or Objectives
1. Improve safety and defense of food supply system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Investigate & respond to foodborne illness outbreaks and events (Continue communication & coordination of efforts) b. Train produce growers in GAPs via mock audits c. Train growers in food safety in farmer's markets
2. Reduce terrorism threat to food supply system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. NCRMA and NCDA&CS EP's program for emergency response targeted to industry b. Conduct food supply & vulnerability assessments c. Train extension agents in CARVER + Shock d. Stay connected/get updated from national/state security agencies (DHS, FBI, SBI) (get connected to ISAAC) e. Utilize local health department staff to educate food service establishments in ALERT and FIRST materials
3. Evaluate and Improve food safety & defense mitigation and response plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue recall procedure improvements (improve database, high risk establishments, gain new partners) b. Exercise FERP annually c. Continue recall effectiveness (communication/coordination) & follow-up d. Improve and maintain communication e. Help growers develop farm food safety plan f. Evaluate agriculture water treatment program
4. Implement & coordinate training and food safety & defense policy for stakeholders in state's food supply system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Training segment at each bi-monthly meeting of TF b. Bi-annual recall prevention workshops for retailers, meat handlers, and small entrepreneurs, etc. c. Outreach in public schools via DPI d. Required food safety training (per Food Code) for food handlers working in retail food service e. Trainings and workshops on FSMA f. Purchase NCRMA text for course
5. Review and recommend legislation and policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Promote and accomplish Food Code adoption b. Future Food Code updates c. Study impact of FSMA d. Listening sessions with FDA/USDA on FSMA e. Review legislative proposals
6. Evaluate the state's food system for vulnerabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Perform risk assessment on NC's entire food system (i.e. farm to fork food chain) (assess and prioritize vulnerabilities) b. Create committee to identify and analyze food system vulnerabilities; committee should include DHS representatives (e.g. Julie Casani, Sharron Stewart, NCEM)