



North Carolina Food Safety and Defense Task Force

Established 2003

December 31, 2012

The North Carolina Food Safety and Defense Task Force had another active year fulfilling its mandate to address the issues necessary to ensure a safe food supply for North Carolina. In addition to the routine work of the Task Force, which included 6 full meetings and 6 meetings of the Executive Committee, the Task Force held its second annual conference and updated the Food Emergency Response Plan, an annex of the State Emergency Response Plan that provides all-hazard procedures for integrating responses between agencies responsible for the protection of North Carolina's Food Supply.

The work of the Task Force is accomplished through initiatives from its committees. The following is a report from each committee that details its accomplishments during 2012.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee met six times in 2012. 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 required in a transfer of the grant funds to DHHS and will require changes to the Executive Order in 2013.
- 2009 FDA Food Code Adoption: The Food Protection Program with EHS/DPH/NCDHHS adopted the 2009 FDA Food Code as its food safety rules within retail food service establishments, effective September 3, 2012. The adoption represents a significant improvement prevention methods for several key foodborne pathogens.
- FERP Update: The Executive Committee received assistance from the Emergency Programs Division of NCDA&CS with the update of the NC Food Emergency Response Plan. Several meetings with stakeholders were held statewide to solicit input before the plan was revamped.
- Democratic National Convention: The Executive Committee was kept abreast of the planning and implementation of food safety oversight during the 2012 Democratic National Convention in Charlotte (September 2012).

Conference Planning Committee

The Task Force sponsored its second annual conference entitled “Food Protection Evolution: Adapting to Changing Times” on May 2-3, 2012 at the Sheraton Imperial, Research Triangle Park. The conference was attended by 125 participants, the maximum amount the planning committee anticipated. Comments and feedback by the participants were overwhelmingly positive. A third conference will build upon its success and lessons learned. The agenda and speaker list is included within Annex 1.

Recall Enhancement Committee

The Recall Enhancement Committee hosted two outreach workshops targeted to value-added food producers and meat processors. The January 31, 2012 workshop, held in Monroe, had 15 attendees, and the September 19, 2012 workshop, held in Raleigh, had 21 attendees. The Committee has scheduled its January 2013 workshop for the 16th, and it will be held in Greensboro. The target audience for these workshops is food producers and marketers in NC, particularly the actual processors. The goal of the seminars is to educate processors on risks, causes, and mitigation strategies to prevent recalls or lessen the impact on a business from recalls. Time is spent on discussing pathogens and possible ways to eliminate or reduce the risk of certain pathogens in products. Producers are also given guidance on developing their own recall plan for their specific business. Attendees receive a CD with model plans and guidance on developing a plan along with other materials related to recall procedures.

The Recall Enhancement Committee also is working on improving the recall response in NC by developing a single database of all retail stores, convenience stores, food producers, distribution locations, restaurants, day cares, institutions that prepare food, and any other business that sells or distributes food. This master database will help response time in critical (time sensitive) recalls like a botulism risk in canned products. At this time we are working to merge a couple of current databases and then fill in the gaps. We held a couple of meetings this year to work through some merging problems and we are still working through those issues at this time.

Education Committee

The committee is responsible for providing in-service presentations to members of the task force during its regular bi-monthly meetings. In 2012, presentations were made by:

Jessica Dyer on the FERN Lab

David Sweat on Epidemiological Investigations

Larry Michael on Food Code Adoption

Larry Michael & Donna Wanucha on food safety at the Democratic National Convention

Fresh Produce Safety Committee

Three Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) Mock Audit trainings were offered at the beginning of 2012 by NC FPSTF members.

January 31st 2012: Edenton County

February 8th 2012: Wilson County

February 28th 2012: Pender County

NC FPSTF offered three in service training sessions for Cooperative Extension agents in April and May of 2012. These trainings covered Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), Good farmer's market practices, food safety program economics and updates on the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA).

April 19th-20th 2012: Kannapolis, N.C.
May 16th-17th 2012: Waynesville, N.C.
May 22nd-23rd 2012: Plymouth, N.C.

NC FPSTF members presented at the 8th Annual Commissioner's Food Safety Forum on August 28th 2012. Their presentation was titled, "Employing best practices to reduce the risks and impacts of a recall in the fresh produce industry."

NCDA and the NC FPSTF hosted a workshop, "Food Recall Education Workshop" on preventing and managing food recalls in Raleigh on September 19th 2012.

Caswell and Franklin County Extension Centers offered two trainings on Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) on October 10th and October 24th 2012. These trainings are offered by extension agents throughout the state and are continuously offered.

NC FPSTF members presented at the 27th Sustainable Agriculture Conference on October 26th-28th 2012. Sessions presented included, "GAPs Certification for the Small Farm" and "Farm Business, Food Safety on the Farm."

NC FPSTF members presented at the 2012 Southeast Strawberry Expo on November 7th 2012. The members presented a session titled, "A critical eye, Food Safety Risk Investigation: A Hands-on Approach to Identifying Food Safety Risks and GAPs Audits."

NCSU, NC Cooperative Extension and Carolina Farm Stewardship Association have partnered to deliver four trainings across the state that will help NC farmers meet fresh produce safety standards. A NC FPSTF member is a presenter to these trainings offered in November and December 2012.

November 19th 2012: Pender County
November 30th 2012: Richmond County
December 4th 2012: Buncombe County
December 12th 2012: Chatham County

Throughout 2012, NC FPSTF members have offered Good Farmer's Market Practices training's. As a result of these trainings seventy three agents have been trained and can be contacted to further offer these trainings in their perspective counties.

ANNEX 1

**2012 Annual Conference
Food Protection Evolution: Adapting to Changing Times**

Agenda

Day 1 (May 2, 2012)

	8:00 - 9:00	Registration
	9:00 - 9:15	Welcome <i>Dr. Laura Gerald, NC State Health</i>
<i>Director</i>		<i>Douglas Hoell, Director, NC Emergency Management</i>
	9:15 – 10:15	The Challenge of Emerging Pathogens – The Very Different Issues with non O157:H7 STEC E. coli and with Cronobacter sakazakii. <i>Donald L. Zink, Ph.D., Senior Science Advisor Center for Food Science and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN)</i>
	10:15 - 10:30	Break
	10:30 - 11:15	NC's Adoption of the 2009 Food Code <i>Larry Michael, Head, Food Protection Program Environmental Health Services/DPH/NCDHHS</i>
	11:15 - 12:00	Addressing Employee Health in Retail
Food Service		<i>Donna Wanucha, Regional Retail Food</i>
<i>Specialist</i>		<i>State Cooperative Programs, SE Region</i>
<i>USFDA</i>		
	12:00 – 1:15	Lunch/Overview of the NCFSD Task
Force Strategic Plan		
	1:15 – 2:00	<i>Clostridium botulinum</i> Toxin: Emerging Capabilities and Testing Requests <i>Royden Saah, Coordinator</i>

*Bioterrorism & Emerging Pathogens
Unit
NC State Laboratory of Public Health &
Jessica Dyer, Chief Microbiologist
Food and Drug Protection Division,
NCDA&CS*

2:00 – 2:45

**Retail Food Safety Trends – Changes
From Then to Now**

*Terry Levee, Director of Food Safety
Programs
Food Marketing Institute*

2:45 – 3:00

Break

3:00 – 4:30

**Interactive Group Training: NC Food
Emergency Response Plan**

*Sharron Stewart, Director
Emergency Programs Division,
NCDA&CS*

4:30

Dismiss

5:30 – 6:30

Reception

Day 2 (May 3, 2012)

8:00 – 9:00

Registration

9:00 – 9:45

Processing of Acidified Foods

Current Research on the Safe

*Fred Breidt, Ph.D.
Microbiologist, USDA-ARS
North Carolina State University*

9:45 – 10:30

**Safe Production and Handling of
Produce: How FSMA Impacts the NC
Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Industry**

*Chris Gunter, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor and Extension
Specialist
North Carolina State University*

10:30 – 10:45

Break

10:45 – 11:15

Emerging Trends in Agro-Terrorism

*Jim Page, WMD Coordinator
FBI-Charlotte Division*

11:15 – 12:00

**Creating a Culture of Food Safety
through the use of Multiple Media and
Messages**

*Benjamin Chapman, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Food Safety
Specialist
North Carolina State University*

12:00

Dismiss

**2012 Annual Conference
Food Protection Evolution: Adapting to Changing Times**

Speakers

(in order of appearance)

Dr. Laura Gerald

Laura Gerald, MD, MPH is the State Health Director and Director of the Division of Public Health. She has served in several other key health positions within state government. She was the Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Health and Human Services and has also served as the Executive Director of the North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund Commission.

Previously, Dr. Gerald served as Senior Medical Consultant with the North Carolina Foundation for Advanced Health Programs. In this position, she supported Community Care of North Carolina, where she worked in disease management and quality improvement. Dr. Gerald is a pediatrician who also provides clinical coverage at Children's Health of Carolina in Robeson County.

Dr. Gerald received a master's degree in public health from Harvard University School of Public Health (HSPH) with a concentration in Health Care Management, an MD from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, and her undergraduate degree from Harvard University and Radcliffe College. While at HSPH, Dr. Gerald completed the Commonwealth Fund Harvard University Fellowship in Minority Health Policy.

Dr. Gerald is a member of the North Carolina Pediatric Society, the North Carolina Medical Society, the American Public Health Association and is a Fellow in the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Douglas Hoell

Doug Hoell has served as Director of the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management since July of 2005. He has a B.S. degree from NC State University. His career in the Emergency Management business began in 1976. He has experience at the local, state and federal levels of government. Doug currently serves as Vice-Chairman of the Preparedness Committee of the National Emergency Management Association. He is a published author, and he is the leader of the State Emergency Response Team, and Vice Chairman of the North Carolina State Emergency Response Commission.

Dr. Donald L. Zink

Dr. Donald L. Zink received a Bachelor of Science degree from Abilene Christian University. He earned an M.S. degree in Microbiology and a Ph.D. in Biochemistry and Biophysics from Texas A&M University. Between 1978 and 1983, he held faculty positions at Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine and at the University of Arizona in the Department of Microbiology and the Department of Food Science. He joined Campbell Soup Company in 1983 as Manager of Process Microbiology where he worked in the area of refrigerated food safety and aseptic processing. In 1990, he joined Nestlé, where he held various positions in Quality Assurance for the Carnation Company and later served as Director of Food Safety for Nestlé USA. In 2000, he joined a new beef processing venture company, Future Beef Operations, as Vice President of Research and Development and Product Safety. In 2002, he joined the U.S. Food & Drug Administration's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition where he served as a Senior Food Scientist in the Office of Food Safety and in 2008, assumed the duties of Senior Science Advisor for CFSAN in the Office of the Center Director.

His responsibilities as the Senior Science Advisor include serving as the Chief Scientific Advisor to the Center Director on the significance of new and ongoing scientific developments that affect the Center's research programs and policies. Dr. Zink also serves as the Center's expert, principal advisor and spokesperson for science, research and data needs in communications with top Agency officials, and officials throughout the Federal government and the scientific and research communities. The responsibilities of the Senior Science Advisor staff also include coordinating/overseeing our partnerships with academia including the Joint Institute for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (JIFSAN), an FDA – University of Maryland partnership to promote food safety and nutrition education and research. Dr. Zink is also tapped to provide advice on other education efforts within CFSAN.

Dr. Zink has served as a member of several advisory committees including the Committee on Program and technical Review of the U.S. Army Natick RDEC for the National Research Council and the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods.

Larry Michael

Larry is Head of the Food Protection Program with the NC Division of Public Health. He 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 NC Division of Environmental Health and worked as a Regional Environmental Health Specialist and Field Supervisor. In 2006, Larry joined the Food Protection Program and served as the first Food Defense Coordinator with the Division. In May 2007, he was promoted to his current position in the NC Division of Public Health. 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.

Donna Wanucha

After serving in the US Army, Donna received her BS in Microbiology from The Ohio State University. She worked on her Masters Program in Microbiology at UNC Charlotte where she published her work on *Vibrio vulnificus*. Donna has also worked in private industry in Food and Pharmaceutical quality assurance settings. She began her Public Health career with the Mecklenburg County Division of Environmental Health, Food and Lodging Program and continued with Forsyth County Environmental Health in Winston-Salem, NC. She then worked for the North Carolina Division of Environmental Health as a Regional Environmental Health Specialist with Dairy and Food Protection Branch.

Since 2005 she has worked for the US Food and Drug Administration as a Retail Food Specialist in State Cooperative Programs in the Southeast Region of USFDA. Donna supports state and local regulatory food programs in North Carolina and South Carolina through promotion and interpretation of FDA Food Code and promotion of the National Retail Food Program Standards. She is also a resource for the food industry in regard to best food safety practices and Food Code interpretation.

Donna is a Registered Environmental Health Specialist with the NC State Board of Environmental Health Specialist Examiners and is also a Registered Environmental Health Specialist with NEHA (National Environmental Health Association)

Royden Saah

Royden Saah served in the USMC Reserves during his undergraduate years at NC State University. He earned a Bachelor's of Science in Zoology before working in quality assurance in the biological industry testing blood products such as rabies immunoglobulin and albumin for the treatment of rabies exposure and shock respectively. He left industry to pursue a Master of Science degree in NCSU Microbiology Department focusing on oxidative stress regulation in bacteria. After graduate school, Royden served in the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services in food pathogen detection before arriving at the NC Division of Public Health where he is currently employed.

For the past 10 years, Royden's responsibilities have focused on developing a network of laboratories in North Carolina capable of detecting biological agents that are novel or a concern to law enforcement. He is a contributing member of the Public Health Preparedness & Response Committee of the Association of Public Health Laboratories.

Jessica Dyer

Jessica Dyer is the Microbiology Branch Chief for the North Carolina Department of Agriculture's Food and Drug Protection Division. She received her B.S. degree in Microbiology from UNC-Charlotte and her M.S. degree in Food Microbiology from Kansas State University. She has worked in food microbiology for six years, starting with Cargill's Egg Products Division in 2006 and moving to NCDA in 2008. Under Jessica's direction, the laboratory continues to exceed its goals of strengthening laboratory capability, including initiatives of enhanced detection of foodborne pathogens, implementation of food defense methods, and increased laboratory

capabilities for large-scale outbreak response. She has been a member of the Food Safety and Defense Task Force since 2009.

Terry Levee

Terry Levee is the Director of Food Safety Programs at the Food Marketing Institute (FMI). Levee joined FMI in August 2011, where he is responsible for developing and implementing food safety programs for retailer and wholesaler establishments as well as directing food safety and food protection activities on behalf of the FMI membership. Levee also serves as an executive board member for the Conference for Food Protection, where he had previously served on Council 1; Laws and Regulations for approximately 18 years.

Prior to joining FMI, Levee spent more than 20 years as Director of Quality Assurance and Food Safety for retailers, such as Giant Food and Winn Dixie Stores, Inc. Before going to work in retail, Levee spent seven years as an REHS for Johnston and Cumberland counties in North Carolina, and he still maintains his registration.

Levee received his BS in Environmental Health from East Carolina University. When not working on a food safety crisis, Levee enjoys outdoor activities with his wife Denise and son JT.

Sharron Stewart

Sharron Stewart graduated from NCSU in 1981 with a BS in Horticultural Science. She began her career that same year with NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services working with the plant and pesticide regulatory program. Ms. Stewart remained in the pesticide regulatory program for 23 years serving in various roles from field work to administration before transferring the Emergency Programs Division in 2006. She has been working the Department for just under 30 years.

Sharron became a Certified Public Manager in 1999 and completed the UNC Community Preparedness and Disaster Management-Master level program in 2005.

Additional work committees and roles include: Commissioner - the State Emergency Response Commission since 2007; Co-chair Domestic Preparedness Regions and Advisory Committee for Regional Response Teams (HazMat); member of NC Critical Infrastructure and Key Resource Workgroup and served on the NC Sea Level Rise Advisory Committee. Sharron has been an active participant in on the State Emergency Response Team member for NCSU since 1996 working all state level disasters since that time. She was deployed with the NC Incident Management Team to Hattiesburg, Ms in 2005 following Hurricane Katrina, for animal disaster response. She has been an active member of State Agriculture Response Team since 2000 and a National trainer for SARTUSA during the building of national animal response teams.

Dr. Fred Breidt

Dr. Fred Breidt is Lead Scientist and USDA Professor in the Department of Food, Bioprocessing and Nutrition Sciences at North Carolina State University. His specialties include food microbiology, food safety, microbial ecology of food fermentations, and microbial genetics/genomics. Dr. Breidt is also the author of numerous peer-review publications and book chapters. He received his Ph.D. in Microbiology in 1987 from the University of Kansas, Lawrence and his B.S. in Genetics in 1981 from the Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

Dr. Chris Gunter

Dr. Chris Gunter is the production specialist for the commercial vegetable industry in North Carolina, working with growers to maintain a high quality of life through the use of integrated, economical and environmentally sound production practices. Since joining N.C. State in 2007, his main focus is with the Solanaceous (tomato, pepper) and Cruciferous (cabbage, broccoli) cropping systems. Another emphasis of Dr. Gunter's research is maximizing the efficiency of high-cost fertilizer inputs used in tomato production. Working directly with growers and agents, Dr. Gunter helps solve production problems through informal field visits, formal field days and the production of Extension publications related to crop production. Dr. Gunter is also involved in fresh produce safety and the impact of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) on these crops during field production and throughout the produce handling chain. He is a co-chair of the N.C. Fresh Produce Safety Task Force. Based on the N.C. State University campus in Raleigh, N.C., Gunter is an advisor with the N.C. Greenhouse Vegetable Growers Association, the N.C. Vegetable Growers Association and the N.C. Tomato Growers Association. Dr. Gunter received his Ph.D. in Horticulture from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, his M.S. in Horticulture from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and his B.S. in Horticulture from Purdue University.

Jim Page

Jim is the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Coordinator for the Charlotte Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Jim has been with the FBI since 1998, beginning with the White Collar Crime & Violent Crime sections. Jim transferred to the Joint Terrorism Task Force after the events of 9-11 and worked 18 months of temporary duty at FBI Headquarters as a supervisor in the Terrorist Screening Operations Unit (TSOU). He is a Firearms Instructor and spent 11 years on the FBI SWAT team. Jim came to the FBI from the Marine Corps where he was an officer and Helicopter Pilot. He served in Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Shield & Desert Storm and also served aboard the USS Tarawa during Operation Desert Stay. He was also deployed to Somalia Africa for Operation Restore Hope.

Dr. Benjamin Chapman

Dr. Ben Chapman is an assistant professor and food safety extension specialist at North Carolina State University. At NC State, and through NC Cooperative Extension, Dr. Chapman supports Extension Agents, focusing on consumer, retail and foodservice food safety issues. Dr. Chapman has designed, implemented and evaluated on-farm food safety programs; consulted for industry and government around food safety issues and conducted observation studies at community dinners, foodservice, farmers' markets and in food production settings. Much of Ben's focus is on telling food safety stories with the aim of creating and fostering good food safety culture.