



North Carolina Food Safety and Defense Task Force

Established 2003

2019 Annual Conference

From the Fork Back to the Farm: Outbreaks, Recalls, and Traceability

Speaker Biographies

Day 1 – Tuesday May 7th, 2019

Dr. William Hallman, Rutgers University

Dr. William Hallman is professor and the Chair of the Department of Human Ecology at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey and is a Distinguished Research Fellow at the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania. He has served as the Director of the Rutgers Food Policy Institute and as Chair of the Risk Communication Advisory Committee of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Dr. Hallman holds a B.S. (Biology, Psychology) from Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology from the University of South Carolina. He joined the Rutgers faculty in 1989, and is a member of the graduate faculties of the Department of Psychology, the Department of Nutritional Sciences, and the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy. He also serves on the executive committee of the Rutgers Global Health Institute, and is a member of the Rutgers Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute.

An expert in risk perception and risk communication, Dr. Hallman has written extensively about controversial issues concerning food, technology, health, and the environment. He recently co-authored the Risk Communication Applied to Food Safety Handbook, published jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and the World Health Organization (WHO), and was coauthor of the recent National Academies consensus report, Communicating Science Effectively, A Research Agenda. He also serves as a member of several committees of the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine, including the Standing Committee on Advancing Science Communication Research and Practice, the Advisory Committee for the Climate Communications Initiative, and the Organizing Committee of the Sackler Colloquium on the Science of Science Communication

Jessica Badour, Georgia Department of Agriculture

Jessica Badour is a veteran communications specialist turned food safety professional, who has built a successful career in sharing information. She joined the Georgia Department of Agriculture in 2010 and has served as the Recall Coordinator & Outreach Specialist since 2012. Her work focuses on recall communications for Georgia, while facilitating educational and promotional outreach opportunities for the Department's Food Safety Division. Jessica is actively involved in many local, regional and national

associations, currently serving as the President of the Georgia Environmental Health Association and Vice President of the Association of Food & Drug Officials of the Southern States. She is part of the Executive Committee for the Georgia Food Safety & Defense Task Force and oversees Georgia's federal grant to fund task force activities. Prior to joining the government workforce, Ms. Badour has been a news reporter, freelance writer, editor, nonprofit executive director, and public information officer. A Hampton Bays, New York, native – as well as wife, and mother to a two-year-old human and eight-year-old Boxer dog -- she's lived in the greater Atlanta area since 2008 and is proud to call herself a Georgia peach. You can engage with her and help spread messages of food safety on Twitter and Instagram @GDAFoodSafety.

Debbie Hamrick, NC Farm Bureau Federation

Debbie Hamrick is the Director of Specialty Crops for North Carolina Farm Bureau. In this role she establishes and maintains working relationships with internal and external industry members, issue stakeholders and leadership to inform policy work in priority and emerging issues. She convenes stakeholder meetings for internal and external groups to discuss policy and issue areas. Debbie communicates policy positions to membership, industry, regulators and elected officials and mobilizes members and industry leaders to advocate. She builds the NC Farm Bureau Federation network and presence by working with partner organizations, regional stakeholders, and traditional and non-traditional agricultural demographics within North Carolina and other relevant geographies. She builds leadership in NCFB specialty crops volunteers through regular communication.

A frequent speaker at meetings and events, Debbie currently is a member of the NC Fresh Produce Safety Task Force, the NC Rural Center Board, the NC Sea Grant Board, the International Focus Board, the NC Choices Board of Advisors, the Center for Environmental Farming Systems Board of Advisors and is a founding member of the NC Pollinator Conservation Alliance and the National Initiative for Consumer Horticulture.

James Sharp, Fresh-Pik Produce

James Sharp, a 5th generation farmer from Wilson County, NC is the owner of Fresh-Pik Produce, Inc. James grew up and worked on a traditional row crop farm until he went to North Carolina State University. When he was twelve years old, he decided he wanted to be in charge of the family garden. He added a row of cantaloupe, watermelon and tomatoes and produced such exceptional yield it was more than his family could eat or even give away! James ended up selling most of his produce to the locally owned grocery stores in the area. He has been in the produce business ever since.

Fresh-Pik Produce, Inc. was created in 1997 and a state of the art cooling facility was built in the year 2000. Production at Fresh-Pik Produce, Inc. has expanded to include Romaine and leaf lettuce, personal watermelon, seedless and seeded watermelon, pepper, strawberries, cabbage, collards, mustard greens and strawberry plants and other nursery stock. Fresh-Pik Produce, Inc. was one of the first growers in North Carolina (2003) to become GAP (Good Agriculture Practices) certified. Fresh-Pik Produce, Inc. is now GFSI Global and Primus GFS Certified and ships produce all over the United States and into Canada.

Veronica Bryant, NC Division of Public Health, Environmental Health Section

Veronica Bryant is the EH Preparedness and Outbreak Coordinator for NC Environmental Health Branch. Veronica is an active member of the North Carolina Variance Committee, as well as the International Association of Food Protection and the Conference for Food Protection. During her state career, she has been assisting in trainings offered on verification and validation of HACCP Plans, emergency preparedness, and epidemiology courses, as well as state specific variance information. Veronica holds a bachelor's degree in Chemistry and has over 10 years of experience in Environmental Health in NC.

Sanjay Gummalla, Ph.D., CFS - American Frozen Food Institute

Sanjay Gummalla is currently vice president, scientific and regulatory affairs, at the American Frozen Food Institute (AFFI). His broad industry experience in food science, food safety, and nutrition are key to guiding science and policy advocacy, and effective scientific tools and resources for the food and beverage industry. He is in the forefront of coordinating *Listeria monocytogenes* prevention and control programs and policy efforts on behalf of the frozen food industry.

Prior to joining AFFI, Sanjay was the vice president of product development at Zentis NA, a global fruit preparation manufacturer. His technical expertise extends to flavor development, food microbiology, and product development resulting from managing global food application projects at Givaudan Flavors and leading the global dairy flavor research and development portfolio at Cargill.

Sanjay currently serves on key committees representing the industry, he is an advisor on the U.S. Agricultural Trade Advisory Committee for Processed Foods, a committee member on IAFP's Journal of Food Protection, President of the Capital Area Food Protection Association, and chair of the International Food Science Certification Commission which administers IFT's Certified Food Scientists program.

On the food safety front, he is a Preventive Controls Qualified Individual instructor and served as adjunct assistant professor at the University of Cincinnati, where he taught food microbiology. Early in his career, he was a post-doctoral researcher at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) representing FDA's foray in to nanotechnological applications for food safety. He holds a Ph.D. in Nutrition and Food Sciences from Utah State University.

Lynette Johnston, Ph.D. Food Safety Area Specialized Agent, Department of Food, Bioprocessing and Nutrition Sciences - North Carolina State University

Lynette is a native of Texas, with roots planted in North Carolina since 2000. She earned her B.S. in Food Technology from Texas Tech University and received her Ph.D. in Food Science from NC State University in 2005 with a research focus on fresh produce safety. She has experience working in the dairy processing industry and the microbiology lab at the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Food and Drug Protection Division. Lynette currently serves as an Area Specialized Agent working with the NC food industry, assisting food processors and produce farms with implementation of food safety regulations.

Currey Nobles, M.S. Food Safety Area Specialized Agent, Department of Food, Bioprocessing and Nutrition Sciences - North Carolina State University

Currey is a native North Carolinian who grew up in Asheboro, NC. He earned a B.S. in Food Science in 2015 and a M.S. in Food Science in 2017, both at NC State University. His research focused on the safety and quality of processed meat products. After graduating, Currey started work in January 2017 as a Food Safety Area Specialized Agent at NC State University. As an ASA, Currey has provided food safety trainings and consultations to over 65 food production companies across 30 counties in North Carolina.

Outbreak Panel Speakers

Nicole Lee, MPH

Nicole Lee currently serves as the Foodborne Epidemiologist for the North Carolina Division of Public Health where she's had the opportunity to work on multiple food and waterborne outbreaks. Nicole has over 10 years of experience in surveillance, survey design, data analysis, training, program management and outbreak response. Her programmatic experience includes chronic disease, influenza, enteric (i.e. foodborne/waterborne), and other areas within the communicable disease branch. She has provided regional trainings for the local health departments as well as technical assistance during the day and after-hours. Nicole has worked with local, state, and federal partners for both routine surveillance activities and outbreak response. As a Louisiana native, Nicole enjoys good food, fun experiences, and quality time with family and friends.

Bonnie Kissler, FSIS USDA

Bonnie Kissler has over 20 years of experience in the prevention and control of infectious diseases. Currently, she is the Deputy Director within the Applied Epidemiology Staff at the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). Bonnie has coordinated and managed over 400 multistate and multi-agency foodborne illness investigations at the local, state, and federal levels. Between 2009 and 2018, she was a Senior Epidemiologist with FSIS stationed at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention within the Outbreak Response and Prevention Branch.

Jessie Marus, CDC

Jessie Marus is an epidemiologist on the Foodborne Outbreak Response Team at CDC, where she primarily focuses on the investigation of listeriosis outbreaks. She is also a Class of 2017 Presidential Management Fellow and is currently on rotation at the US Department of Health and Human Services in Washington DC working on strategic planning and policy. Jessie has a Master of Public Health degree from Georgia State University and is a native of Atlanta, GA.

Dr. Beth Yongue, State Director, NCDA&CS Meat and Poultry Inspection Division

Dr. Beth Yongue is the State Director of the Meat and Poultry Inspection Division for the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. She is a native of Laurinburg, NC. After graduating from Scotland High School, she received a Certificate of French Language from the Sorbonne University in Paris, France and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in French from UNC Chapel Hill where she was a member of Pi Delta Phi French Honor Society. She received her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine. Beth has been employed with the NCDA&CS Meat and Poultry Inspection Division since 1997. She and her husband, Jim Knight, a retired NCDA&CS employee, are kept well entertained by their menagerie of animals including dogs, goldfish, a colony of feral cats they have rescued, and a herd of white tailed deer that call their CDC

Day 2 – Wednesday May 8th, 2019

Steve Tracey - Manager, QA Technical Services - Retail Business Services, an Ahold Delhaize Company

Steve has 35 years consumer products quality and safety experience with 31 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 18 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. He is an executive committee member of the NC Governor's Food Safety and Defense Task Force, and served for multiple years on the NC DENR Food Safety Advisory Committee. The current role as Manager QA Tech Services includes the recall office for all five retail brands of Ahold Delhaize USA (Food Lion, Hannaford, GIANT MARTINS, Giant Food, & Stop and Shop), as well as supporting GFSI and food safety programs in multiple distribution centers.

Mr. Tracey is a Certified Professional – Food Safety, with the National Environmental Health Association, a Certified Food Scientist and Professional Member of IFT, a member of the International Association for Food Protection (IAFP), and is a past president of IAFP's local affiliate, CAFP. Steve was a leader of the local arrangements committee for IAFP 2013 in Charlotte, NC. Steve is a certified instructor for the Safe Mark food safety course as well as the Serve Safe Food Safety Manager program, which he taught for over 10 years. He received a Bachelor of Science in Food Science from NC State University in December 1983. Steve has been married for 27 years and, with his wife Sue, lives in Apex, NC. They have three children.

Emma Nesbit, FDA Recall Coordinator, Human and Animal Food East III Division

Emma Nesbit was born in Jacksonville, FL. After graduating from Ribault Sr. High School in Jacksonville, FL she pursued a higher education at Fisk University in Nashville, TN where she received her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in the Biological Sciences. After graduation she was offered a position with the Food & Drug Administration, New Jersey District Office. She started her career with FDA as a Consumer Safety Officer as a generalist conducting Medical Device, Drug & Foods Inspections. She later became the Consumer Complaint Coordinator and in 2000 she was accepted into the Mammography Quality Standards Act (MQSA) Program and became the X-ray Monitor for the New Jersey District. In 2007 she transferred to the Cincinnati District Office and in December of 2007 she became the Recall Coordinator for the Cincinnati District Office. In April 2018 she transferred to the Atlanta District Office now known as the Human and Animal Food East III Division.

One bucket list item for Emma is to visit all fifty states. So far, she has either lived in and/or visited a total of thirty-one (31) states, plus the District of Columbia and various Countries outside the US. Her interest includes: reading, music, skating, bowling, horseback riding, camping, watching sports, acting and traveling.

Christy Brennen, VA Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Christy is the Virginia Rapid Response Team and Recall Coordinator for the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Food Safety Program. The position involves coordinating multi-agency responses to foodborne illness complaints, outbreak investigations, natural and human sourced emergencies, and disasters which involve the food supply. Previously, she was the Manufactured Food Regulatory Program Standards Coordinator. Ms. Brennen been employed in the food industry for over twenty-five years, working in several management positions including: quality control, production, and sanitation. These positions have enabled me to understand the difficulties in resource acquisition, food production, food labeling, product development, product safety and quality, sanitation programs, and employee management regarding food safety training and compliance. Christy left private industry because she truly believes in the importance of an integrated food safety system which are the main priorities of Manufactured Food Regulatory Program Standards and Rapid Response Team federal grant programs. She has a Bachelor of Science in Biology and a Master of Science from VA Tech.

Jeff French

BS in Marine Biology from UNCW a LONG time ago! Marine Biologist Supervisor with NC Div. of Marine Fisheries 1989-1999 working with oyster rehabilitation and shellfish bottom leasing programs. 1999 to present, regional environmental health specialist with Shellfish Sanitation and Recreational Water Quality Section. Responsible for central and western NC region.