



# North Carolina Food Safety and Defense Task Force

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Established 2003

## NC Food Safety & Defense Task Force Executive Committee Agenda – Wednesday June 10, 2020 – 9:30 am

Attendees (via phone): Veronica Bryant, Allen Wade, Daniel Gaines, Chris Gunter, Chip Simmons, Steve Tracey, Shane Smith

Todd Brown and Sandy Bridges may join us from Emergency Management once they are less busy.

- Hot Topics
  - No non-COVID outbreaks to reports by all represented on the phone.
  - Per Steve, recalls have gone way down.
  
- COVID-19 Response Update
  - Environmental Health (Veronica and Shane)
    - Many non-food related COVID activities
    - Assisting LHD working through clusters in restaurant workers
    - Providing guidance as restaurants reopen to in person dining
    - Working with partners on consumer confidence program with training (Count on Me NC). Cleaning, disinfecting, and business module components exists.
      - 10,000 certificates issued since May and over 29,000 registr
      - Anyone can take the training
      - Hopefully logo visibility will bring consumer confidence
    - Providing industry and county guidance through phases.
    - Working with counties regarding their inspection processes and changes
  - Communicable Disease (Nicole)
    - Operating in an incident command structure since January.
    - Work in surveillance, contact tracing, outbreak identification/data management/response, and guidance development.
    - Counties are overwhelmed with the volume of cases, which will end up at a volume similar to the number for STDs if the current trajectory continues, and the work associated with one case (i.e. making contact, completing an interview, providing control measures, and performing contact tracing).
  - Meat and Poultry (Allen)
    - All establishments still open; COVID-19 challenges exists
    - Proper PPE, extreme social distancing, moving inspector offices to cars or outside of the building are some of their ongoing adjustments.
    - Allen's primary activities have been to maintain, observe and be proactive with inspection personnel as several establishments have >100 employees
    - People are taking every precaution possible
    - Doesn't think they've seen the peak yet
    - No NC establishments have had to close because of X number of cases
    - More testing being done.

- All establishments are producing more product than before due to demand. There will be a major effect if plants have to shut down.
    - Veronica - EOC group looking at food supply issues. Meet 2/week and report back.
  - Food and Drug (Daniel)
    - CDC & NIOS recs summarized and sent via memo to plants having issues with COVID-19
    - They don't tend to go on site but did work with partners to do an on-site visit at a Mecklenburg facility.
    - They are just ramping up inspections again this week. FDA hasn't resumed their inspections yet.
    - PPE and safety precautions have been reviewed this week. They are distributing it to their field staff this week.
    - Retail grocery stores will not be inspected at this time, but they will return to inspecting manufacturing operations. Inspections will be pre-announced now and a pre-screening over the phone regarding COVID will be completed before the inspection occurs
  - NC State (Chris & Chip)
    - Travel restrictions still exist, but farm visits are starting
    - University priority is getting research back
    - All classes are online for the summer, but a plan exists for the Fall with on campus social distancing. Classes <50 can have face to face. Some online and some blended.
    - Actively collecting resources and posting to fresh produce and safety website – email great resources to Chip or Chris.
  - Retail (Steve)
    - Chuck Martin – should be added to the listserv as the main Food Lion Director
    - Daily COVID meetings are now 3days/week.
    - Food Lion is staying open and providing food.
    - They made purchases that are not usual because restaurants were closed
    - They had events of being limited in getting product to stores due to cases, quarantine, absences. Trying to identify people interested in working on their off days.
    - Sales are high compared to week to week. They're leveling off since March.
    - Providing PPE and now associates may be required to wear masks, but keeping line with local jurisdictions who may not require them.
    - One store damaged in Charlotte due to protesting but all stores fine other than that
    - Extra associates hired to disinfect carts, handles on doors, etc., to cover touchpoints
    - Corporate offices working from home. Evaluating what return to office will look like.
    - Food Lion gives local health department a heads up when an associate is positive.
- July Meeting
  - There were audio issues during last meeting, but there's been positive feedback.
  - July and September – we should realistically plan for virtual meetings. Travel time is real work time that can be saved.
  - Steve - September could be our first mask to mask meeting
  - Shane suggested Microsoft Teams
  - All on the call are able to do Teams meetings, but Chris believes Zoom is better and the NC State team can set them up.
  - We will think through using Zoom, sending out the invite, etc. There is a 300 person limit.
- LHD Task Force Grants
  - LHDs get grants to attend our meeting but we didn't have one. It's FDA money and they don't like it coming back to them. \$7,800 total.
  - Veronica proposed that counties can write a proposal for a Task Force related activity to use this funding. Examples, food defense/retail campaign to get materials developed around intentional contamination, allergens, or sheltering/emergency food.

- Exec committee would have to agree to sponsor those events so counties can get the money and spend it. We need more local involvement, and this is a way to bring them in and stop them from having to return grant dollars since our conference was canceled.
- Action Items
  - Veronica to get with Chris to set up Zoom meeting for 2<sup>nd</sup> week in July (July 8<sup>th</sup>)
- Next Meeting
  - July 8 via Zoom
  - Discuss then what meetings will look like going forward
  - We need to think about the incoming officers – to be discussed during July. Industry, EM, or academia needs to be represented for the Chair elect position.
- Adjournment
  - Adjourned at 10:36am

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