



North Carolina Food Safety and Defense Task Force

Established 2003

December 21, 2018

North Carolina Food Safety and Defense Task Force – 2018 Annual Report

The North Carolina Food Safety and Defense Task Force (“Task Force”) was established in 2003 for coordinating interagency and public-private efforts to enhance protection of the State’s food supply system and agricultural industry. Executive Order No. 47, issued by Governor Roy Cooper, requires the Food Safety and Defense Task Force to provide an annual report to the Governor that includes recommendations or proposals for changes in laws, rules, policies, and programs that the Task Force determines are appropriate to enhance food safety and defense in the State. The following is the annual report summary for 2018.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee, comprised of members established in Section three of the Executive Order, held six meetings in 2018. Each meeting included discussion of foodborne outbreaks, regulatory changes, and other relevant topics. Meeting minutes for each Executive Committee meeting are available upon request and are given as an update at bimonthly meetings of the Task Force. Minutes were recorded by Anita MacMullan with the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) or her designee. The Executive Committee supports the NCSU Cooperative Extension’s NC Fresh Produce Safety Task Force and works closely with them to collaborate and hold an annual meeting. The NC Fresh Produce Safety Task Force established in 2007, to ensure NC has a competitive, vibrant and safe fresh produce industry.”

Conference Planning Committee

The Task Force coordinated its seventh annual conference entitled, “Food Recovery Systems and Food Protection” on May 11 and 12, 2018, at the NC Biotechnology Center in Durham. The conference drew 119 attendees from federal, state, and local regulatory agencies as well as industry representatives. The conference was funded by a grant allocated to the Task Force by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), registration fees, and sponsorships from the NC Farm Bureau, Food Lion, Ecolab, Publix, and NC Public Schools.

Food Emergency Response Communication Committee

The Food Emergency Response Communication (FERC) committee meets every Monday via phone conference to discuss food safety and emergency response concerns. The FERC objectives are to serve as a multi-agency food safety “core communication group,” provide situational awareness regarding events of food safety significance, identify projects to enhance response, and strengthen coordination for food emergencies. Multiple federal, state, and local jurisdictions as well as industry partners participate regularly in this meeting. This committee

discussed the approximately 66 food recalls to date this year throughout North Carolina due to various health risks which include *Listeria monocytogenes*, Salmonella, misbranding and undeclared allergens. The FERC also discussed the eight reported foodborne outbreak incidents that have caused over 800 illnesses throughout North Carolina.

The NC Food Safety and Defense Task Force worked through the year to facilitate training and outreach surrounding the change to the cold holding requirements for food establishments. Although there are no recommendations for changes in laws, rules, and programs the Task Force intends to gather stakeholder support for adoption of the 2017 Food Code and will continue to monitor legislation in the upcoming session to protect the State's food supply.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide an annual report regarding Task Force activities. Additional details on Task Force activities can be made available upon request.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen Tracey
Chair, Executive Committee
NC Food Safety and Defense Task Force

Manager – QA Technical Services
Retail Business Services, An Ahold Delhaize Company
919-880-9124
stephen.tracey@retailbusinessservices.com