



North Carolina Food Safety and Defense Task Force

www.ncfoodsafetytaskforce.com

Established 2003

Wednesday, September 14, 2022 - 9:30AM (EST)

Meeting Minutes

I. Welcome, Introductions, & Membership Engagement- Sarah Cope, Chair

- New attendee introductions
 - Minoo Mehrotra, Food Compliance Supervisor, has been with NCDA&CS Food & Drug Protection Division for 13 years and will be joining Task Force meetings going forward.
- “Meet me in 3” member introduction:
 - **Lucy Love**, Produce Regulatory Specialist within the Produce Safety Program at the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
 - Outgoing Chair of the NC Fresh Produce Safety Task Force
 - 15 years at the Department of Agriculture, with 6 years in the Produce Program & previously with Stokes County
 - Has her own tobacco farm and also is a beekeeper!
 - **Stan Biconish**, Ag Program Specialist within the Produce Safety Program and Research Station Division at the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
 - Incoming Chair of the NC Fresh Produce Safety Task Force
 - Native to SE North Carolina, has been in agriculture his whole life. Has a small farm in Bladen County with his wife. Spent time prior in career in the commercial industry and most recently as a National Claims Manager. Now with the Research Divisions of Dept. of Agriculture and now as a liaison with Produce Safety Program
- Break out discussion
 - What are some challenges you face in your role related to produce safety?
 - For example, regulatory compliance, recalls, outbreaks, supply chain, quality, shelf life, produce safety education/awareness, misunderstandings, etc.
 - Unique products that might be under Meat & Poultry inspection but the finished product is a mixed-pack potentially with a meat, food and produce commodity in the same grab & go meal. How do the different programs fit into handling/regulating those commodities.
 - Identified mushrooms are a covered commodity in PSR but also bringing awareness of toxic mushrooms. If mushrooms going to be a RAC, food, or dietary supplement... a toxic mushroom is naturally adulterated and thus not able to be sold.
 - Consumer-focused discussion covering unique viewpoints from growers with FSMA, PSA training and GAP certification training and how they are interpreting & coming into compliance with these regulations (water, sanitation, etc.). Educating through training, on farm readiness review and allowing adjustments if needed. No two farms are the same!
 - Challenges to Produce Safety = knowledge of the Rule. Sometimes frustrating when growers are still unaware of the PSR but aware of requirements for 3rd party audits.
 - 38+ million pounds of fresh produce redistributed for those in need by the NC Food Bank. NCFB has produce safety policies in place and sometimes a daunting task to train volunteers for safe handling (storage, cross-contamination, cleaning & sanitation in holding areas).

- Article recently about food safety wisdom vs knowledge. Wisdom tackles problems in 5 ways:
 - Knowledge
 - Experience
 - Understanding of challenges/solutions
 - Common sense
 - Insight
 - A lot of analysis/interpretation needed to find wisdom out of the knowledge we already hold.

II. Minutes Approval:

- July 13, 2022 meeting minutes approval
 - FERC Sub-committee Report revision: The incorrect company name was noted for the recalled smoked clams- Bumblebee Foods was replaced with Crowned Prince
 - Motion: Nicole Lee
 - Second: Chip Simmons

III. Outbreak Update

- Nicole from Communicable Diseases – nothing to report right now

IV. Business:

- Committee reports:
 - a. Executive Committee- **Sarah Cope, NCDA&CS**
 - i. August 2022 Meeting: Welcome Incoming Chair, Shane Smith
 - ii. Thank you to our Past Chair, Lynette Johnston
 - iii. Membership survey via email to update Listserv and Contact Sheets
 - iv. Annual Report to be submitted this fall: Sarah, Veronica and Lynette
 - b. Food Emergency Response and Communication (FERC)- **Sean Silva, NCDA&CS**
 - i. Recalls:
 1. Lyons Magnus Nationwide Recall – nutritional beverages d/t potential microbial contamination for *Cronobacter sakazakii*. Effectiveness checks completed.
 2. Kings Hawaiian Pretzel products – d/t potential microbial contamination of *Coronobacter sakazakii* & *Clostridium botulinum*. Effectiveness checks completed.
 3. Meat and Poultry – Sunset Farms Foods – Chicken and Pork Smoked Sausage products d/t foreign matter contamination (plastic glove). NC was impacted.
 4. Increase in nationwide *Cyclospora* and *Listeria* outbreaks.
 5. Low water pressure in Blowing Rock, NC. Restaurants were closed due to this if they didn't have a safe water source.
 6. Publix updated NCDA with several recalls they were handling/initiating.
 - c. Crop/Produce- **Chris Harris, NCDA&CS**
 - i. Inspections: 78 conducted to date
 1. Initial, educational inspections
 2. Summer crops are wrapping up and transitioning into fall crops
 - ii. OFRRs: 49 conducted to date
 1. Still offering to all farms prior to inspection
 - iii. Educational Farm Visits: 133 conducted to date
 1. Offered to all farms prior to or after inspections/OFRR
 - iv. PSA Grower Training Courses: 59 hosted in NC to date
 1. Approximately 810 attendees

- 2. Approximately 382 farms completed
 - v. Produce Safety Professionals Conference
 - 1. November 15, 2022
 - 2. NC A&T Extension and Research Farm Pavilion
 - 3. Proactive approaches to strengthening traceability system and crisis response
 - 4. More information about registration to come via Listserv when updated
 - vi. Commodity meetings and conferences are picking up
 - 1. For a full list of upcoming produce events, please reach out to Chris Harris at chris.harris@ncagr.gov
 - vii. NC Fresh Produce Safety Task Force
 - 1. Meets the 2nd Thursday of every month at 9:00AM
 - 2. If you're interested in attending, please reach out to the current chair Lynette at lynette_johnston@ncsu.edu
 - d. Conference Planning Committee 2023- **Lynette Johnston, NCSU**
 - i. The FSDTF Conference will be held the second week in May 2023
 - ii. This will be a hybrid meeting
 - 1. Lynette is looking into potential venue options, if you have any suggestions please email Lynette at lynette_johnston@ncsu.edu
 - iii. Developing a conference theme
 - 1. If you have any theme and/or speaker suggestions, please email Lynette at lynette_johnston@ncsu.edu
 - 2. Would love to hear about recurring topics in your role, new research to share.
 - e. Task Force Education and Exercise Committee- **Candice Christian, NCSU**
 - i. Business Emergency Operation Center presentation by James Wong
 - 1. Wednesday, November 9, 2022 at 9:30AM
- COVID Updates from all stakeholders
 - a. Nothing to report
 - Other reports:
 - Academic Reports
 - i. NCSU: Chip Simmons, no big news but classes are back in session, so campus is busy! CALS still seeking a new Dean, back to drawing board for candidates for this important position.
 - Industry Reports
 - i. Harris Teeter LLC: Jeff Hawley, Brenda Bacon, who was my manager for 25 years, retired July 15th. The new Director of Quality Assurance & Food Safety at Harris Teeter is Sarah Durham. Sarah started with the Health Dept. in NC and worked for Food Lion in food safety for several years. Sarah started at Harris Teeter on June 27th.
 - Agency Reports
 - i. FDA: Donna Wanucha, 2022 FDA Retail Food Protection Seminar, free event next week. Theme is Norovirus with research from VT and case studies from around the US.
 - <https://web.cvent.com/event/06afa17b-faea-4cce-bd9e-de10ed850062/summary>
 - 1. Voluntary Retail Standards have been updated online for continual quality improvement.
 - 2. Conducting Nation Risk Factor Survey in grocery stores (specifically delis) – randomly selected, will go along with local regulators. Handwashing frequency and active managerial control to be included.

ii. NCD&CS: Minoo, September is National Food Safety Education Month!

- Additional business
 - a. No additional business noted.

V. Speaker – Stan Biconish and Lucy Love, NC Fresh Produce Safety Task Force Update- A Year in Review

Goal: Ensure NC has competitive, vibrant, safe produce industry supported through research, teaching and outreach programs among various collaborators including NCSU, NCD&CS and industry groups.

Meetings: second Thursday of each month with updates from stakeholders.

Outreach: Team effort to educate and train those in NC.

OFRR, Workshops, webinars, field days, GAP audits & training (essential to sell in certain markets).

Professional development through Speakers and annual Produce Safety Conference.

Also incorporate FDA resources to our meetings. Diane Ducharme, Ph.D. to help understand interpretations of Rules. Very valuable part of our Task Force for implementation with our grower population.

Subcommittee formed to address problems with GAP Audits

December 2021: Reconnect & Refocus Meeting to bring people back together in-person.

Collaborations to plan activities for 2022. Always looking to build & diversify membership.

Spring 2022: NC Farm Tour – visited 10+ farms, processors, and other entities to see unique handling & distribution methods. Emphasis on how companies adjusted during Covid & how they reach susceptible populations for their products (especially important for the non-profit organizations visited). Growers made note, time and time again, of importance of GAP audits/PSA trainings for their success.

Hosted 2 Produce Safety Field Days – Mills River & Clinton Research Stations

Pilot Water Systems Workshop – at Piedmont Research Station in Salisbury, NC. Day 1 = Regulators – discuss different water systems & in-depth information of pathogens and cross-contact. Information on wells, pumps, distribution systems with details to problem areas if not properly used/maintained. Day 2 = Growers – very well-educated farmers with a great exchange of ideas and situations across various types of farms/growers/commodities.

NCSU Produce Safety – 750+ attendees over 350+ farms have participated in PSA Trainings. Across many NC counties

Hosted 2 Packinghouse Sanitation Workshops – Mills River & Clinton Research Facilities

Sanitation from harvest through packinghouse activities. Mills River and Clinton facilities unique due to equipment within. Also have a mobile packing unit that is used to teach across the state (has own power source) from field → box.

UPCOMING: Produce Safety Professionals Conference: Proactive approaches to strengthening traceability systems and crisis response on Tuesday, November 15. Hosted by NC A&T at their new NC A&T and Extension and Research Farm Pavilion in Greensboro, NC.

VI. Attendance:

Name:	Date: Wednesday, September 14, 2022
Alexandria Rimmer	
Alexis Welch	
Alice Isley	
Allison Sain	
Alyssa Barkley	
Amanda Osteen	
Amber LaRose	X
Andre C. Pierce	
Anna Allen	X
Anne Lowry	
Ashley Miles	
Ben Bailey	
Ben Chapman	
Beth Frith	
Betsy Meeks	
Cameron Howell	
Candice Christian, Executive Committee, Member	
Carla Catalán Day	
Carla Pressley	
Carolyn Griffin	
Christopher Harris	X
Chuck Martin	
Courtney Matthews	
Dan Tew	
Daniel Gaines	
Danny Thornton	
David Buckley, Executive Committee, Member	X
Debbie Hamrick	
Diane Ducharme	
Donna Wanucha	X
Ellen Reynolds	X
Felissa Vazquez	
Garry Freeman	
Genevieve Sinclair	X
Gordon (Ross) Jackson	
Hannah Byers	
Harold Jernigan	
Hillary Waldroop	X
Holly Haire	
James Ball	
James Thomas Jumalon	
Jamie Stamey	
Jason Smith	
Jaymin Patel	
Jeff Hawley	
Jeff Suggs	
Jeff Uriate	X
Jennifer Hatley	
Jessica Badour	
Jessica Zetlau	
Jimo Ibrahim	X
Joan Sims	
JoAnn Pittman	
Joe Doster	

John Zeberan	X
Julie Schlegel	
Jonathan Ruiz Espejo	
Karen Beck, <i>Executive Committee, Member</i>	
Kate Nicholas	X
Katelynn Rollins	
Kevin Hardison	
K.P. Sandeep	
Kristine Markulin	
Larry Michael, <i>Executive Committee, Member</i>	
Lee-Ann Jaykus	
Lindsey Kueffner	X
Lisa Benton	X
Lisa Halbedl	
Lisa McCoy	
Lisa Morgan	
Lori Jenrette	
Lucy Love	X
Lynette Johnston, <i>Executive Committee, Chair</i>	
Mark A Kenion	
Marvin Lackman	
Mary Yavelak	
Matthew Perkins	
Meg McGuire	
Michele Howard	
Michelle Bouchey	X
Minoo Mehrotra	X
Miranda Roehrig	
Monica T. Kiker	
Neeti Karmacharya	X
Nicole Arnold	
Nicole Clausen	X
Nicole Lee, <i>Executive Committee, Past Chair</i>	X
Nykesse Roberts	
Otto "Chip" D. Simmons, III, <i>Executive Committee, Member</i>	X
Paul Potter	X
Peter Sloane	X
Rachel McDowell	
Reagan Converse	
Rick Barney	
Roger Mozingo	
Rose Hoban	
Sandra Bridges	
Sandra Saunders	
Sarah Cope, <i>Executive Committee, Chair Elect</i>	X
Stan Biconish	X
Sean Silva, <i>Executive Committee, Member</i>	X
Shane Smith, <i>Executive Committee, Member</i>	
Steve Tracey, <i>Executive Committee, Member</i>	
Summer Williams	
Susan M. Thompson	
Tammra Morrison	
Terri Ritter	
Thomas Jumalon	
Todd Taylor	

Tommy Hyatt	X
Traci Stevens	X
Valerie Lott	
Veronica Bryant, <i>Executive Committee, Past Chair</i>	
Warren Richardson	
Wilbur Huggins	

VII. Adjournment

- Motion: Chip Simmons
- Second: Sean Silva

NOTE: Our next full Task Force meeting is November 9th at 9:30am. Our regular meetings are scheduled for every 2nd Wednesday of the next odd-numbered month. If you have any questions, or would like to join the Executive Committee, please reach out to Sarah Cope, Shane Smith, or Lynette Johnston. The Executive Committee meets on the 2nd Wednesday of every even-numbered month. The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for October 12th at 9:30am.
