



# North Carolina Food Safety and Defense Task Force

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Established 2003

**Wednesday, September 13th, 2023 - 9:30AM (EST)**

**Joint Force Headquarters  
1636 Gold Star Dr.  
Raleigh, NC 27607**

**Teams Link:**

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

**I. Welcome, Introductions, & Membership Engagement- Shane Smith, Chair**

- Only 2<sup>nd</sup> time we've met in person  
Big thank you to Sarah Cope as our past chair
- Possible table top exercise in the future – recalls, emergencies
- New attendee introductions
  - John Burgheart, Kendra Pone , Lisa McCoy
- Membership Highlight
  - Debbie Hamrick, Director of Specialty Crops, NC Farm Bureau and Sarah Runkle, Local Produce Coordinator, Carolina Farm Stewardship Association

**II. Minutes Approval**

- July 12th, 2023, meeting minutes approval
  - Motion: Daniel Gaines
  - Second: Lynette Johnson

**III. Outbreak Update**

- Tamara Morrison, No updates

**IV. Business**

- Committee reports:
  - a. Executive Committee- **Shane Smith, NCDHHS**
    - i. Shane – Chair this year; Candice – Chair-elect
    - ii. Table top exercise next year – recalls, emergencies; haven't done one in 5-6 years
  - b. **Food Emergency Response and Communication (FERC)- Sean Silva, NCDA&CS**
    - i. NC impacted by several recalls due to pathogens, allergens and foreign materials. Weekly FERC Meetings.
    - ii. Life Raft Treats; Life is Peachy Ice Cream and Not Fried Chicken Ice Cream; NC Impacted; Determining distribution
    - iii. Most Significant Recalls - Twin City Foods has recalled Frozen Mixed Vegetable and Sweet Cut Corn products due to Possible Listeria. NC was impacted and REC's conducted. Unilever United States Inc. has recalled Knorr Sopa Soup Mix products due to Undeclared Eggs. This was a Nationwide recall which impacted NC, however. No information was received from the recalling firm after being contacted several times. Publix reported receiving the products in the NC stores during our weekly FERC meetings. Real Kosher Ice Cream has recalled Various Soft

- Serve Ice Cream and Sorbet products due to Possible Listeria. One location in North Carolina received the impacted products.
- iv. State Env. Health received information that healthcare facilities, nursing homes, education centers, and children’s day camps may have also received the impacted ice cream products. The recalling firm was contacted to determine if they may have distributed the product to an outside distributor but confirmed that they only distributed the product to DPI. This was a good scenario whereas all agencies involved quickly worked together to determine if the product was distributed to these facilities especially considering the nature of the pathogen involved. This further stresses the importance of not only having our weekly FERC meetings so that we are able quickly respond to incidents such as these.
  - v. Other Updates from FERC Members- M&P - Hillshire Brands Company Recalls Smoked Sausage Products Due to Possible Foreign Matter Contamination. No known distribution although NC was implicated in receiving the products. M&P will continue to monitor.- Publix- Banquet classic chicken stripe frozen dinner recalled due to plastic foreign materials. - Env. Health- Discussed the use of Kava as a food ingredient which is not approved to be used in food products.
  - vi. Other Updates from F&D- On July 19th an EF3 Tornado struck Edgecombe and Nash counties. As a result information was gathered of all food firm establishments in the Nash county area where the tornado possibly struck and damage assessments were conducted via phone. Only one location had lost power, but their generators kicked in moments after they lost power. None of the locations that I had called were damaged by the storm. The Produce section reported that Boseman Farms in Battleboro, NC. was impacted by the tornado.Their packhouse building was heavily damaged. Approximately 1.5 truckloads of watermelons were lost in a walk-in cooler due to power outages. Inspectors were not dispatched to conduct an in-person assessment as the building was too dangerous to enter
  - vii. Environmental Health discussing use of cava (added to drinks, bars, beans, etc.),
- c. Crop/Produce- **Chris Harris, NCDA&CS**
- i. Sarah Cope, The Produce Safety Program within the NCDA&CS is continuing efforts regarding the Produce Safety Rule in North Carolina To date, we currently have 214 covered farms in our verified inventory with 104 of those being Large, 51 Small, and 59 Very small. As a reminder farm size is due to produce sales. We also have 703 verified exempts, not covered, or out of business farms in our inventory.
    - 1. We are continuing to identify and verify produce farms in NC any chance we are able
  - ii. We are the agency conducting inspections on the covered produce farms for compliance with the Produce Safety Rule. Our goal for the fiscal year is to conduct 45 inspections; we have conducted 116 since July 1 st and some are occurring as we speak and more are scheduled for the next few weeks. We are working to schedule inspections diligently before things start to slow down for the winter season.
  - iii. We also focus on providing education and outreach to all farms no matter their coverage under the Produce Safety Rule. We are continuing to provide educational farm visits, On-Farm Readiness Reviews, and we are gearing up to provide exhibit tables and presentations at commodity meetings that will occur over the fall and winter months across the state.
  - iv. v. As a reminder, the NC Fresh Produce Safety Task Force meets the 2 nd Thursday of every month at 9:00AM and will be meeting tomorrow if you’d ever like to join that Task Force as well. You’ll be hearing more from them later in this meeting.
- d. Conference Planning Committee 2024- **Sarah Cope, NCDA&CS**
- i. The 2024 Annual Conference will be the second week in May, 2024

- ii. If you have any ideas, suggestions, or speakers you would like to hear from at the 2024 conference please reach out to me at [sarah.cope@ncagr.gov](mailto:sarah.cope@ncagr.gov)
- e. Task Force Education and Exercise Committee- **Candice Christian, NCSU & Sarah Cope, NCDA&CS**
  - i. Produce Safety task force speaking today; November – Nicole Lee, past and present outbreaks, looking for a January speaker. Local health departments or industry perspective may be of interest
- Other reports:
  - Academic Reports – N/A
  - Industry Reports – Lindsay Kueffer, NC Retail Merchants Association – Nothing to report
  - Agency Reports – Daniel Gaines, NCDA&CS – Currently fair season, Hurricane Idalia created some flooding in the east– there is a need for a damage assessment; DHHS – SHANE SMITH, S542 CORRECTION FOR WORDING OF PRIVATE BARS, PLACED IN ANOTHER BILL – JANUARY 1, REGULATORY REFORM BILL – CHANGE TIME FOR REINSPECTION DATE; TERRY RITTER- JEKYLL ISLAND – TRAINING INTERN; BLACK MOUNTAIN- NOV 2 AND 3<sup>RD</sup>; CLASS IN WINSTON SALEM; FDA SEMINAR WILL BE IN FL – DATE TBD
- Additional business – N/A
- V. **Speaker Topic:** Outgoing Chair: Lynette Johnston, Current Chair: Stan Biconish, and Incoming Chair: Chip Simmons
  - a. NC Fresh Produce Task Force
- VI. **Adjournment**
  - Motion: Nicole Lee
  - Second: Chip Simmons

**NOTE:** Our next full Task Force meeting is November 8<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am. Our regular meetings are scheduled for every 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 Johnson. The Executive Committee meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every even-numbered month. The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for October 11<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am.

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