



# North Carolina Food Safety and Defense Task Force

www.ncfoodsafetytaskforce.com

Established 2003

**Wednesday, January 10, 2024 - 9:30AM (EST)**

**North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health  
Raleigh, NC  
Conference Room**

**Teams Link:**

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

- I. Welcome, Introductions, & Membership Engagement- Shane Smith, Chair**
  - New attendee introductions
    - Aaron Stevenson,
    - Ashley Whittington
    - Carolyn White
  
- II. Minutes Approval**
  - November 8, 2023, meeting minutes approval
    - No Meeting Minutes for November due to Executive Committee not being present
  
- III. Outbreak Update**
  - Sushi Nine - Norovirus outbreak in December in a 10 day period. State Guidance was provided on Norovirus cleanup. Case Count - 206 individuals ill. 2nd largest outbreak since 42nd Oysters. Worked with county and state - Ashley Whittington
  - Lead Investigations with Cinnamon Applesauce - Over 200 probably and confirmed cases. High levels of lead in blood. Environmental Health is doing a retail audit check at Dollar Tree Stores. - Veronica Bryant
  
- IV. Business**
  - Committee reports:
    - a. Executive Committee- **Candice Christian, NCSU**
      - i. Outbreaks and investigations - In the last Executive Committee meeting we discussed the applesauce recall since October with elevated lead levels
      - ii. The Executive committee would like to update the membership list. The committee is developing a survey and will be sending out next month.
      - iii. Annual report has gone through the review process at DHHS and was submitted and approved in the Governor's Office.
      - iv. Planned the annual conference.
    - b. Food Emergency Response and Communication (FERC)- **Sean Silva, NCDA&CS**
      - i. F&D Recalls - The Quaker Oats Company recalled Granola Bars and Cereal products due to possible Salmonella. Various retail locations were impacted by the recall and recall effectiveness checks were conducted to ensure products were removed from the shelf. Reckitt/Mead Johnson Nutrition recalled Nutramigen Powder Infant Formula due to possible *Cronobacter sakazakii*. Retail stores and Health Care Facilities in NC received the impacted product. Recall effectiveness checks are currently being conducted. Ventura Foods recalled Publix brand Deli Carolina-Style Mustard BBQ Sauce due to undeclared fish allergen which was not declared on the label. Publix stores in NC were impacted by this recall and recall effectiveness checks will be conducted. Vesta Fiery Gourmet Foods issued a

recall for Benny T's Vesta Dry Hotsauce due to undeclared wheat which is not declared on their label. This is a nationwide recall, however. Since the manufacturer is located here in Raleigh, it is likely that retail stores in NC were impacted

- ii. Other Updates - Meat and Poultry Division reported that Simmons Prepared Foods, Inc. is recalling Boneless Chicken Bites Products due to Possible Foreign Matter Contamination – TGI FRIDAYS BONELESS CHICKEN BITES HONEY BBQ CHICKEN – NC was impacted by the recall. FDA noted that a lot of WanaBana products were still found on the shelves across the nation and has asked for state level inspectors to ensure they educate stores about pulling products off the shelf. Publix reported that their stores in NC were impacted by the Quaker Oats and Reckitt Baby Formula recalls. The Food Lion representative reported that they were only impacted by the Reckitt recall.

c. Crop/Produce- **Chris Harris, NCDA&CS**

- i. Produce Professional Conference was on December 12, 2023 at the Farm Pavilion at NC A&T. The conference focused on legal ramifications, value added food products, state and federal laws that apply to produce. Topics included: What would happen in the event that a farm was involved with a recall/outbreak? Understanding different jurisdictions that might be involved, learning mitigation strategies covered to prepare for outbreak/recall. Market managers, food hubs, value added food processors, farmers all attended. It was a good turn out and feedback from the conference attendees was positive.
- ii. Produce Safety Task Force will be undergoing a restructure/regrouping in 2024.

d. Conference Planning Committee 2024- **Sarah Cope, NCDA&CS**

- i. The North Carolina Food Safety and Defense Task Force 2024 Annual Conference will be held in place of the May 2024 monthly meeting. So, please save the date for May 7 & 8, 2024. We are planning for an amazing and interactive tabletop exercise day 1 of the conference followed by a spectacular line up of guest speakers on day 2. Our broad theme for the conference this year will People, Purpose & Passion: The Pathway to Safe Food. So, that means we will be discussing how food safety and defense are applied throughout a variety of avenues. To give you a little sneak peak, at this time we have planned a panel to hear about food safety from a grocer's perspective; we will explore new products through AI and technology in food systems; dive into food fraud; and more. Once the location has been set a save the date will be sent out so more updates will be on the way, but we look forward to seeing everyone there for another wonderful and educational conference this year. If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions for the 2024 Annual Conference please feel free to email [sarah.cope@ncagr.gov](mailto:sarah.cope@ncagr.gov).

e. Task Force Education and Exercise Committee- **Candice Christian, NCSU & Sarah Cope, NCDA&CS**

- i. Today - Steve Tracey and Melissa Hamm will be speaking with us. In March, Sarah Cope secured an opportunity for the Georgia Food Safety and Defense Task Force to speak with us. They will be presenting virtually. In May is the Annual Conference.
- ii. The Task Force is currently looking for speakers in July. Please reach out to [Candice.Christian@ncsu.edu](mailto:Candice.Christian@ncsu.edu) and/or [Sarah.Cope@ncagr.gov](mailto:Sarah.Cope@ncagr.gov).

● Other reports:

- Academic Reports - N/A
- Industry Reports - N/A
- Agency Reports - There will be a public hearing for pool and summer camp rules with final approval for rule-making. Mobile unit rules are currently being worked on. Determining bar definition. FAQ was created to help answer questions we have been getting. There is a survey link to the counties. - Shane Smith
  - i. Quality assurance efforts across the state. 50% of the counties enrolled in program standards. There is a Compliance and Enforcement Manual; Training Updates -

Emergency Preparedness Course is open June 10th; Environmental Health Symposium is November 12th.

- Additional business

**V. Guest Speaker Presentation:** Steve Tracey & Melissa Ham

- a. This presentation will include the reasoning behind the formation of the Task Force, discuss the original purpose of the Task Force, share about the importance of the Task Force over the years/accomplishments the Task Force has made, and will lead into some ideas/brainstorming/objectives to focus on as the Task Force moving forward into the new year.

**VI. Adjournment**

- Motion: Daniel Gaines
- Second: Nicole Lee

**NOTE:** Our next full Task Force meeting is March 13<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 Shane Smith, Candice Christian, or Sarah Cope. The Executive Committee meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every even-numbered month. The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for February 14<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am.

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