

Partnership for Food Protection Workgroup Activities - Update #5

The four state and local-led Partnership for Food Protection (PFP) Workgroups (WGs) - Training, Response, Risk-based Workplanning and Interactive Information Technology and the FDA/Center for Veterinary Medicine-led (CVM) PETNet project - continued work on the projects they plan to complete by August 2010. The following report is based on a presentation at the Association of Food and Drug Officials Annual Education Conference in Norfolk, VA on June 21, 2010, titled: "Update from the Partnership for Food Protection - Progress Report and Discussion."

Pete Salsbury, the FDA Workgroup Liaison, served as the Panel moderator, and started the presentation. The topics to be addressed included: acknowledging previous work to develop an integrated food safety system (e.g., this concept was proposed by AFDO in 1998); meet the panel; background on how the project started; progress reports; and questions for the panel.

The Panel included: Pete Salsbury – FDA Workgroup Liaison; Dave Read - Training Workgroup; John Ryan - Interactive Information Technology Workgroup; Ben Miller - Response Workgroup; Chris Melluso - PETNet Project; and Claudia Coles - Risk-based Workplanning Workgroup.

Background on the project: The work started in August 2008, when 250 federal, state, local, territorial and tribal officials met in St. Louis. The participants addressed the challenges of ensuring food for all Americans is safe and secure and came up with 27 action items and recommendations. The recommendations were reviewed by FDA and sorted into categories.

Following this review and discussion with FDA's Council of Association Presidents, a decision was made to form a Coordinating Committee consisting of 20 state and local members; and 11 Federal (FDA, CDC, USDA, DHS) members. The committee's first meeting was in February 2009.

Next, four State & Local-led Workgroups and the CVM-led PETNet project were started. The groups have held face to face meetings in May and November 2009. Each workgroup selected one or multiple action items identified at the 50 state meeting to implement; WGs developed a project plan and timeline to complete action items by August 2010; and elected chairs / co-chairs.

The following is an update on what has happened since the meeting in May 2009.

Training Work Group Update by Dave Read, Minnesota Department of Agriculture

The purpose of the Training WG (TWG) was to assist the PFP with development and implementation of uniform, national standards for training and certification of regulators working in: Retail Foods; Manufactured Foods and Feed; and Raw/Unprocessed Foods (producer level).

Why this was needed: A competent regulatory workforce doing comparable work at the international, federal, state, local, tribal and territorial levels is foundational to success of a fully integrated national and food safety system.

The TWG started with a draft “Visionary plan for Food Safety Training and Certification” for Federal, State, Local, Territorial and Tribal Regulators (FDA, DHRD, ORA). It was introduced to TWG at the November, 2009 Fort Worth meeting.

The draft states: FDA, CDC and USDA are working with state, local, territorial and tribal regulatory and public health partners to establish a **public health risk driven fully integrated national food safety system**. A **critical element of success of this food safety system is having competent workforce** doing comparable work at the international, federal, state, local, territorial, and tribal levels. **This workforce includes personnel involved in the full spectrum of food safety activities** including inspection, compliance, laboratory analysis, epidemiological investigation, emergency response, and those involved in the leadership and management of the system and workforce.

The vision includes: a curriculum development/delivery roadmap; standards and quality assurance “built-ins”; potential for certifications and accreditations (students/academia/NGO’s); auditing considerations (federal or third party); and funding (Centers of Excellence, training institutes, academia, NGO’s) proposals.

Charges for the TWG:

Charge 1: To establish competencies and certification for all disciplines.

SHORT TERM DELIVERABLE - Perform a job analysis for (all government jobs and stakeholders) inspectors involved in food protection (prevention, intervention, response); Identify current competency assessments and credentials; Develop a set of core competencies; and Develop a framework for credentialing.

LONG TERM DELIVERABLE: To expand and include other disciplines, experienced staff and stakeholders involved in food protection

Charge 2: Establish a National Training Center.

SHORT TERM DELIVERABLE: Assess/review training currently available; Assess/review Kellogg Foundation proposal for the International Food Protection Training Institute (IFPTI).

LONG TERM DELIVERABLE: Comprehensive course catalog.

Where Are We? Accomplishments:

- 1) Vision document developed/evolving
- 2) Conducted national survey to collect info on food inspector job descriptions, curricula, courses, and subject matter experts
- 3) Entry level competencies and certifications under construction using “Vision” as roadmap (120 job tasks 24 competencies identified from existing data)

- 4) National Training Center (IFPTI) endorsed – developing plans for “Centers of Excellence” and “Food Safety Training Institutes”
- 5) Course catalog 1st edition in development with assistance from the IFPTI
- 6) FoodSHIELD adopted by TWG for sharing information at November, 2009, Fort Worth meeting www.foodshield.org

Moving Forward: Complete comprehensive job task analysis (JTA) and competency assessments to build “standard” job descriptions (FDA RFP issued 4/29/10 closed 5/26/10); Identify/endorse curricula for various levels (entry, journey, expert) and various specialties (retail, manufactured, raw, feed); and Develop/endorse curricula for certificate and certification programs.

There is a parallel process: JTA to identify training needed for food inspector level positions (Forms the foundation of the training programs); Ongoing need for training while JTA is in process; FDA consultant to do the JTA; IFPTI working on course delivery, curriculum development at journey level and backmapping existing courses to identified competencies; FDA continuing to provide on-line and classroom training courses through ORA-U.

Interactive Information Technology (IIT) Work Group Update by John Ryan, Hawaii State Department of Agriculture

IT Work Group Vision: An **integrated/interoperable food information system** that links information such as laboratory, inspection, and recall data *to support the overall goal of an integrated national food safety system.*

The Challenges: Many legacy systems already in use at all levels (state, county, local, federal, health, agriculture); Focus of legacy systems varies greatly (inspection, sampling, retail, farms, restaurants); Variation in forms, database formats, input / output, public/non-public).

The Need: Information Sharing across boundaries

The Question: Is there enough commonly collected data to create an “integrated system” that can be used for risk assessment, recall, compliance, better management?

Year 1 Project Teams: Have now? - Systems Assessment; Want? - Business Needs; and Key elements? – Data elements

Systems Assessment - *Project:* Review 7 Currently-Available Systems

- Inspections: eSAF (FDA)
- Laboratory: PulseNet (CDC); eLEXNET (FDA)
- Recalls: NC Recall System (NC DACS); Recall Enterprise System (FDA); Reportable Food Registry (FDA)
- Collaboration: FoodSHIELD (U of MN)

Systems Assessment

- Created an Assessment Tool that evaluates: Types of information collected; Access permissions for data entry & retrieval; Mechanism for data import/export, data entry, and reports options; External system integration; and Other capabilities.
- Completed all 7 system assessments.

Business Needs working with other Project Teams

Project: Gap analysis to identify needs

Where do needs match current functionality? Where are there *gaps* or disconnects?

What are the *key* inspection data elements? How do those compare with pilot group results?

Business Needs: The survey identified: the **types of information** that states and locals track and use during all steps of a food inspection; the **kinds of systems** in place to track, analyze, share and report inspection and sampling info; and what information, systems, or electronic tools are **wanted/needed** that would improve inspection and investigation operations.

Business Needs: Project: Develop preliminary IT needs assessment statement

Created on-line survey of local, state, and federal agencies (Received >111 responses); Conducted follow-up interviews; Reviewing copies of current inspection forms for common elements.

Data Elements: Project 1: Develop model web-based recall effectiveness form; *Project 2:* Evaluate system input requirements from forms in use.

Identified the data needs, reviewed current paper form, created a web-based version for assessing recall effectiveness; and Collected and now evaluating health, agriculture inspection and sampling forms to determine input commonality.

IIT WG Year 1 Summary: Project team findings, gap analysis & recommendations; and reflections on the WG will be reported in August at the 50 state Workshop.

Response Work Group Update by Ben Miller, Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Indicators for Success (make progress on the following projects):

- Improved outbreak response through better understanding of best practices and the use of: Recall effectiveness checks; NIMS/ICS for foodborne outbreaks when appropriate; Standardized outbreak response tools; and Product tracing for epidemiological investigations
- Improved Federal, state and local communication and collaboration: Details to FDA EOC
- More efficient and effective use of resources among Federal, state and local partners

Recall Effectiveness:

Deliverable: Pilot the NC secure web-based recall effectiveness tracking system in multi-state response

Output: Evaluate the functionality and performance of an electronic recall effectiveness system in pilot projects

Current Status: NC's ICS Task Tracker and Recall Effectiveness Check systems have been combined into a single website

Action Items: Recruit states and pilot the new combined platform during a multi-state response; Present lessons learned and suggested enhancements to inform the FDA recall system (RES); and Continue to coordinate with IT Workgroup

Recall Effectiveness Using 3rd Parties

Deliverable: Pilot the use of third parties to conduct recall effectiveness checks

Output: Evaluate the functionality and performance of an electronic recall effectiveness system in pilot projects

Current Status: CA Dept. of Public Health is in the process of contracting for services to conduct a pilot using 3rd parties to conduct retail recall effectiveness checks

Action Items: CA provide report to Work Group on the lessons learned from the pilot by October 2010

Details to FDA Emergency Operations Center

Deliverable: Develop a pilot program for state and local partners who are willing to be detailed, preferably during an event, for 2-3 weeks to the FDA Emergency Operations Center to improve Federal, state and local collaboration

Output: Evaluation of experience from pilot project participants

Current Status: Application is available to all members of the Food Protection Workgroups

Action Items: Invite Response WG members to apply to pilot the process (6 details available)

Environmental Investigation Tools

Deliverable: Develop guidance document for sprout environmental investigations and identify key components to be utilized as a template in environmental investigations

Output: Guidance document (pending release DFI Bulletin)

Current Status: Draft has been received and is under review by Work Group

Action items: Final comments from Work Group due in June 2010 and recommendations submitted to the Coordinating Committee

Incident Command System for Foodborne Disease Outbreaks

Deliverable: Inventory existing public health ICS models and best practices (OK, NC, MN, MI, FL) for foodborne disease outbreaks

Output: Inventory and presentation

Current Status: Models collected from MN, OK, NC, and FL

Action Items: Coordinate panel presentation on NIMS/ICS at FDA's 50 State Workshop in August 2010

Epi Traceback to Support Investigations of Foodborne Disease Outbreaks

Deliverable: Describe the potential application and utility of product tracing to inform epidemiology investigations

Output: White paper

Current Status: Paper distributed to subgroup for review on April 2nd

Action Items: Review by subgroup and present final draft before August 2010 meeting

Pet Event Tracking Network (PETNet) Update by Christopher Melluso, D.V.M.; Center for Veterinary Medicine; Food and Drug Administration

Brief history:

PETNet originated from August, 2008, FDA sponsored the “Gateway to Food Protection” meeting, the “50-State” meeting.

The **Outbreaks/Food-Borne and Feed-Borne Investigations Workgroup** at the 50-State meeting created a subgroup consisting of veterinarians, animal feed regulators, and others involved with animal health issues.

This subgroup developed an ambitious proposal for a system to identify, track and report disease outbreaks in companion animals including contamination incidents in pet food or animal feed. This subgroup named the system “Pet Event Tracking Network” or “PETNet”.

Original concept: PETNet was a system for detecting, identifying, tracking, and reporting disease outbreaks in companion animals, supported by three main components:

- **Surveillance** systems and mechanisms for detecting disease outbreaks in companion animals
- Adequate veterinary **diagnostic laboratory** infrastructure to confirm disease outbreaks; and
- **Epidemiological investigations** of disease outbreaks in companion animals.

Challenges: Determining the partners and merging them; Funding- initial and long term; Ownership; Jurisdiction; Regulatory and legal issues for PETNet; Information Technology; Group wrestled with the original concept; By November 2009 final direction was determined.

Pet Event Tracking Network: A secure information exchange network; Federal and State regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over pet food products; allows states access to the same information for a food borne disease outbreak in companion animals as the FDA and at the same time FDA gains access to the information; States have this information to exercise their regulatory authority.

PETNet Basics: An alert system; short concise reporting form; system is based in FoodSHIELD; limited to pet food products; and is expandable.

How PETNet Works: PETNet member completes reporting form and submits it to PETNet in FoodSHIELD; report is archived and made accessible; PETNet members can go to the report at their convenience; FoodSHIELD sends email alerts to all PETNet members; and PETNet members can contact the reporter for additional information.

Data Quality: Reports are simple and concise; reports are not submitted by consumers but are submitted by regulatory professionals based on their assessment of what they are seeing in their jurisdictions.

Streamlined Data Points (include): Species; Life stage; Clinical signs; Laboratory confirmation (Y or N); Number exposed/affected; Pet product identification; Manufacturer; Product form; Case number (assigned by PETNet system); State of report origin; Source of data; Reporter's (PETNet member) contact info.

For more information: Christopher Melluso, D.V.M.; Emergency/Complaint Coordinator; Center for Veterinary Medicine; Rockville, Maryland; 240-276-9215 or by email to christopher.melluso@fda.hhs.gov

Risk-Based Work Planning Workgroup Update by Claudia Coles, Washington Department of Agriculture

The WG includes 30 state and local representatives from 16 states (includes cooperators in pilot project) and 16 federal representatives.

Original Charge: *“Conduct a pilot project that would use a national cooperative work plan. . . [the goal being] to test a system-wide approach to establish a viable, effective, risk-intervention strategy to address an identified problem or risk.”*

Proposed Objectives: Serve as a model for a national food protection surveillance system; include each segment of the food safety continuum--from farm to fork; establish risk-based inspection protocols; establish a work plan with guidelines; and select a high-risk product as test subject.

Modified Charge: *“Reduce the chance of illness or injury from adulterated food and foodborne illness by establishing a risk-based surveillance system that covers the farm-to-fork continuum.”*

Objectives: Provide an improved national model for risk-based work planning between federal, state, and local food safety agencies; provide a surveillance system model that integrates federal, state, and local agencies as partners; and identify issues and questions requiring further analysis.

Phase I - Taking a “snapshot” of the current food safety system: Ascertain systems, tools, and customs currently employed in federal, state, and local food safety systems identifying how and to what extent data in those systems is documented, utilized, and communicated. Goals for Phase I would provide information:

TO CAPTURE a representation of the food regulatory system, including, but not limited to, sampling and inspection work.

TO IDENTIFY inspection and sampling tools.

TO DETERMINE how and for what purposes information collected by way of inspection and sampling is used.

TO EXPLORE methods and pathways of communication.

TO POINT OUT, based on the sum of our evaluations, the apparent level of integration as it currently exists in the food safety system.

TO ESTABLISH our findings as a baseline from which future evaluations will measure the effects upcoming pilot projects have upon the nation's developing integrated food safety system.

TO EVALUATE whether information being collected by the states meets the FDA food program standards for retail/manufactured foods and good manufacturing practices.

TO RECOMMEND future evaluations and methods to improve integrated inspections and the development of an integrated food safety system.

OUR METHODS: Work with States in the pilot project. A HUGE debt of gratitude is owed to our state collaborators: Florida; Georgia; Mississippi; N. Carolina; and Tennessee.

Our Findings are in the Bag (to be reported at the 50 state workshop) – will emphasize: improved resource efficiency; reduced response time; standardization of tools and processes; and division of authority.

The panel ended after each member answered questions about their experience being a part of the PFP project.

For more information on the PFP project (e.g., meeting reports and WG summary updates): www.fda.gov/ForFederalStateandLocalOfficials/Meetings/default.htm

Or contact: peter.salsbury@fda.hhs.gov

Prepared by: P. Salsbury: 7/21/10