

**Animal Production Food Safety and Security
Committee Report**

2010 NIAA Annual Meeting

Wednesday, March 17, 2010



The Animal Production Food Safety and Security Committee met on Wednesday, March 17, 2010 from 8 am to 11:30 am during the NIAA 2010 Annual Meeting in Kansas City, Missouri with 28 people present. Dr. James McKean served as Chair and Mr. Andrew Kennedy as Vice Chair.

The committee session focused on Salmonella in Pork, Poultry, Eggs – regulatory efforts, impact on international trade and tools for assessing and protecting agriculture and the food supply chain. The following speakers presented relevant information pertaining to:

Dr. Liz Wagstrom, National Pork Board, presented, “Food Safety Issues for Salmonella in Pork”: Salmonella caused 37% of all pork-based foodborne outbreaks, but a much smaller percentage of all salmonella outbreaks. Based on research conducted by Dr. McKean at Iowa State, Salmonella detection in pork production is on a significant downward trend from 1998 to 2008. The last FSIS baseline study was conducted in 1998 this year a new baseline study is scheduled for this year. Danish salmonella control, begun in 1993, cost to industry of \$.25/head across 22 million head, led to significant reduction of Salmonella, initially through on farm feed improvement and then in-plant sanitation improvements. Monitoring is done at slaughter using Mix-ELISA testing, with financial penalties for producers with higher rates of disease. Implications of new baseline – if U.S. baseline moves lower, how can we improve? We have excellent control in large establishments through HACCP programs – on par with Danish. Small facilities could be improved via on-farm controls and improved sanitation at processors. A major issue to this is the cost implications for on farm monitoring. Recommendation is to focus on processors.

Dr. Patricia Curtis, Auburn University, presented “Food Safety Issues for Salmonella in Eggs and Egg Products”: U.S. population experiences 79,000 illnesses and 300 deaths annually from consuming Salmonella contaminated eggs. Salmonella Enteritidis is the primary culprit, but Salmonella Heidelberg is also on the rise and is more resistant to cooking. For every reported and confirmed case of Salmonellosis, 38 cases are unreported. Key mitigation steps include (1) prevention of infection of the layer through chick testing, BMPs, Biosecurity and Vaccines (2) post harvest pasteurization, washing, refrigeration and safe handling. Cost of pasteurization currently limits adoption to food service that serves at-risk populations and high-end retailers. If only one egg in 20,000 has SE Why do we have a problem? Common issues include improper handling by restaurants and consumers - mixing many eggs together and letting the batch sit at room temperature for long periods of time (e.g. buffets and omelet bars). Tequila and Tabasco will not kill bacteria! Free range and farmers markets are not immune to Salmonella. What we can do is work with food service establishments to move to pasteurized products and implement food safety practices. Implications for other commodities: if the FDA is putting rigorous controls on laying operations, how long until they are put on other farming operations?

Kate Leese-Burgers, MPH, James Lee Witt Associates, presented “Systems-based Approach to Assessing and Protecting Food Agriculture”: Food Protection = Food Safety + Food Defense - Per Homeland Security Directive 9, issued in 2004, Food and Agriculture are defined as critical infrastructure. However, to date, of the 18 sectors defined as critical infrastructure, Food and Ag is the only sector without any assets defined as critical. This has limited funding from DHS and poses a significant security risk to the U.S. food supply. The reason for this is that Food and Ag is larger scale, more diffuse and more systems

based than asset based (e.g. a bridge or power plant). FASCAT (Food and Ag Sector Criticality Assessment Tool) is an effort and a tool to systematically identify and delineate the sub-systems that need to be protected, the threats to those sub-systems and the scope and scale of negative outcomes to the Food and Ag sector, within States and across State and National borders. This project is intended to help attract funding from DHS to protect these assets. This year 26 States are involved in this effort. DHS has officially called for all Food and Ag data to be submitted via this tool. Funding will be issued by DHS to help “buy down” risks on a weighted basis from the output of this tool.

Dr. Jerry Ramirez, FDA, presented “FDA Regulatory Activities Associated with Salmonella in Foods”: Based on data from FoodNet and PHLIS, the U.S. experiences 17,883 lab confirmed cases of food borne infection annually, Salmonella accounted for largest percentage, SE was, by far the largest serotype. SE is second most commonly reported serotype from human sources. Hens are normally asymptomatic carriers and their eggs are commonly correlated with SE. The SE Egg Rule from the FDA is meant to be the first step in a roadmap for SE mitigation including monitoring, mitigation and treatment. Treatment is defined as a 5-log destruction of SE (pasteurization). Biosecurity, sanitation, record keeping, monitoring of pullets and suppliers, environment and egg testing are all key components of the plan. July is the deadline for large scale laying operations (over 50,000 birds). Guidance will include answers to many of the critical details, but is not required, by law, to be issued until 24 months after the rule is posted. Testing capacity, testing windows, where to divert eggs, integration with MPIP, rapid test approval are all questions that need to be answered.

Jon Caspers, Chairman, U.S. Meat Export Federation, presented, “International Trade Limitations Caused by Salmonella Status in the U.S.” International sanitation standards and philosophies vary widely are opaque and are often used as a trade barrier, despite WTO’s efforts to standardize food safety through CODEX. Core message is to work with international standard setting bodies to set science-based, achievable standards and transparent testing protocols and to implement those standards domestically to mitigate pathogenic contamination on the farm and at processing locations.

This was a joint session with Animal Health and International Trade.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Reaffirmed two resolutions by voice vote:

- Farm-to-Fork Food Safety Resolution
- Direct Funding for Food System Emergency Preparedness Resolution

Committee Session adjourned at 11:11 am.