GEORGIA FOOD SAFETY AND DEFENSE TASK FORCE

**Meeting Minutes – October 29, 2014**

This meeting was held at the East Metro Health District office in Lawrenceville. Jason Reagan called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m. Please see the attachment “Sign In Sheet” for the full list of attendees. There was an estimated 35 people in attendance, including those on teleconference.

1. **Opening Remarks by Jason Reagan.**
2. **GDA – Rapid Response Team, Legislative Update by Jessica Badour, Recall Outreach Specialist.**
	1. No legislative updates at this time.
	2. GDA will host a **FSMA Listening Session** with FDA on Wed., Nov. 19 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., focusing on the updated rules on Fresh Produce Safety and Preventive Controls in Human Foods. [The invitation has been posted to the FSTF website, under “Events.”](https://ga.foodprotectiontaskforce.com/events/2014-fsma-listening-session/)
	3. RRT: There have been recent recalls impacting Georgia, giving the RRT an opportunity to stand up and use the incident command system to respond and work some recall effectiveness checks with FDA. The RRT held its quarterly meeting Oct. 15 in Macon. Topics included food defense, risk assessment, tracebacks, sampling and communications. Some members of the RRT attended the National Food Defense Conference in Minnesota in September, and met with MN’s RRT while there. Some members are at a training this week.
3. **Presentation.**
	1. **Jason Reagan**, GCEHD, presented on Standard 4, “Does your Quality Assurance Program live up to its name?” which looked at what the program standards are, specifically what Standard 4 is, how to meet it and some of the benefits to a food program once the Standard has been achieved. Final presentations will be available on the website, <https://ga.foodsafetytaskforce.com>.
4. **Epidemiological Update by Hope Dishman.**
	1. No major news to report.
	2. Karen Bremer with the Georgia Restaurant Association asked about any illnesses associated with restaurants.
5. **Presentation.**
	1. **Dr. Arthur Liang**, Senior Advisor with the National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Food Safety Office, presented on “Cyclosporiasis Outbreak Investigations in the U.S. in 2014.” Final presentations will be available on the website, <https://ga.foodsafetytaskforce.com>.
	2. Additionally, Dr. Liang was one of the authors of the ***attached*** “Interagency Coordination and Communication During Multi-State Foodborne Illness Outbreaks.” While never formally published, this was created by CDC and FDA as a guidance document that may be helpful to members to consider reviewing and incorporating into future policies and procedures.
	3. Note: CDC has scheduled a call to discuss their ongoing efforts to respond to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa for TOMORROW, Nov. 6, from 2-3 p.m. Call-in information is ***attached***.
6. **GEMA Update by Dr. Paul Williams from GEMA.**
	1. GEMA is busy conducting trainings with food companies from around the U.S., with a focus on best practices and continuity of operations. There is also more training available now to address workplace violence and active shooter training.
	2. Nov. 18th GEMA is hosting a training at Georgia Tech, industry interested in attending should reach out to Mark Hodges at mark.hodges@gtri.gatech.edu.
	3. Next summer, GEMA is planning a fully-functional exercise covering a biological event. Two days will be food-specific and GEMA could use help from our task force members to highlight what exercise deliverables would be most helpful.
	4. Georgia has an Ebola Task Force looking at the way this virus is impacting the state. They are looking at various issues, including what foods may come from the hot zone into GA. Bush meat is the most commonly discussed issue. Bush meat is also generically called wildmeat and game meat, referring to meat from non-domesticated mammals, reptiles, amphibians and birds hunted for food in tropical forests in Africa. Most of what is found is already processed. FDA Voice recently published a blog about the task force, you can read it [here](http://blogs.fda.gov/fdavoice/index.php/2014/10/fda-as-part-of-a-coordinated-global-response-on-ebola/).
7. **Additional Comments:**
	1. Kenneth Cash from USDA and Chief Paris Hawkins from U.S. Customs and Border Patrol also added to the discussion on Ebola – USDA has been dealing with some bush meat issues on the retail level, and CBP said this is not a new issue; bush meat is always a priority at the border. Officials treat any found products with the most restrictive action.
	2. Cameron Wiggins from DPH – Georgia is currently responding to comments on the 2013 Food Code rule, and is hoping to implement the changes in the early part of 2015. Georgia Dept. of Agriculture is also on a 2015 timeline for implementation. Additionally, he welcomed Public Health Associate Program fellow Fabiola Flemens to the team, who will be assisting DPH as more counties in Georgia work to meet the retail standards.
	3. Karen Bremer from the Georgia Restaurant Association – GRA is working with district health offices to provide quarterly food code webinars for GRA members. The webinars will highlight most commonly missed items during inspections. This was sparked in part by great success in Chatham County.
	4. Angie Corder with Georgia Dept. of Ag – Reminder that the **FDA Southeast Regional Retail Food Safety Seminar** will be held Dec. 8-11 in Savannah, Ga. [Event registration and details are available on the task force website under “Events,”](https://ga.foodprotectiontaskforce.com/events/2014-fda-se-retail-seminar/) remember the hotel block will close on Nov. 8th, so register today and book your hotel soon!
	5. Laurie Farmer from FDA – FDA is having Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) “chats” weekly via FoodSHIELD and any commissioned officials are invited to participate. The approach of FMSA on the regulatory level will be much more “educate as you regulate.” She also reminded the group that AFDO has funding available for retail standards program implementation via a simple grant process, learn more [here](http://afdo.org/retailstandards).
	6. Laurie & Chris Smith pointed out there is going to be an open Retail Food Specialist position available with FDA, and they are looking for candidates to interview. The position can be based anywhere in the SE region. Once the position is posted on USA Jobs, a link will also be added to the task force website.
	7. Erik Coleman from CDC – There are two new exciting food safety tools available, please [share](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/News/Features/2014/food-safety-tools.html)! Erik has examples of tweets that can be shared, and encourages task force members to share these tools via any outlets your agency offers that might be useful. Email him for any additional information at hye1@cdc.gov. The tools include:
* The [e-Learning on Environmental Assessment of Foodborne Illness Outbreaks](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/elearn/ea_fio/index.htm), a free interactive online course to help prepare individuals to serve on a team that investigates foodborne illness outbreaks in restaurants and other food service venues.
* The [National Voluntary Environmental Assessment Information System (NVEAIS)](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/nveais/index.htm), a new surveillance system targeted to jurisdictions that inspect and regulate restaurants and other food venues such as banquet facilities, schools, and other institutions. The system provides an avenue to capture underlying environmental assessment data that describes what happened and how events most likely led to a foodborne illness outbreak.
1. **Closing remarks:** Next meeting dates for 2015 TBD. *Specific location TBD; if your organization can host, please contact Priya Nair or Jessica Badour to confirm. The task force is also in need of any interested speakers to provide 30-minute presentations on relevant food defense and food safety topics.*