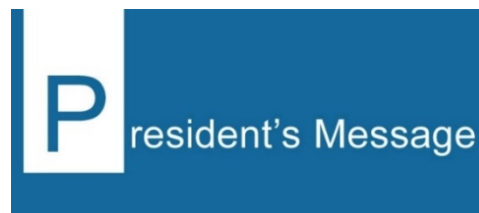


THE BELL RINGER

The Newsletter of the Philadelphia Conference of the Central Atlantic States
Association of Food and Drug Officials

Summer 2019



Happy summer! Foodborne illnesses increase during the summer months as bacteria multiply faster in warmer temperatures. Preparing food outdoors makes safe food handling more difficult. We all know this, so instead of writing about safe grilling and safe food temperatures, I am going to tell everyone about a real event that occurred in the summer a few years ago.

Montgomery County Office of Public Health, divisions of Environmental Field Services (EFS), and Communicable Disease Control (CDC) often work together on investigations. The most unique scenario had to do with a fungus found in bananas.

This particular situation started with a call for the health department through the county's on-call system on a weeknight. The details included a child that took a few bites of a banana that appeared to have blood in it. The concerned



parents took their child to the hospital and the Emergency Room doctor also thought the banana looked to have blood in it. Then the call came to our department from a physician stating that someone was injecting blood in bananas.

The situation was now a possible "food tampering" event. This claim led to several different agencies becoming involved. The FBI, the state's Rapid Response Team, Department of Agriculture, PA Department of Health, etc. As the day progressed and many phone calls were made and emails exchanged, we learned that bananas can have a red fungus that could resemble blood. This occurs as streaks of red in the banana or red in the center of the banana. The Department of Agriculture agreed to have the banana tested for tampering and funguses. The end result concluded a fungus was present in the banana.

There are a variety of plant diseases that can cause the inside of bananas to take on a red discoloration. This discoloration has led to false claims of bananas containing blood. Nigrospora is a fungal disease that causes the center of the banana to turn dark red. Nigrospora can infect the fruit in tropical climates where bananas are grown. Pictures of the fungus are shown below:



Have a great summer and hopefully we will see everyone at our next CASA Training Meeting on June 21st in New Jersey, and the following one on September 20th in Philadelphia. Please reach out to me or any of the board members if you have ideas for topics and speakers. Continue to support the Philadelphia Conference, spread the word, and bring your colleagues.



Pam Lawn, President
Philadelphia Conference of CASA

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!

--Please mark your calendars for the 104th Annual Education and Training Seminar, hosted by our colleagues from the Pittsburgh Conference in Pittsburgh, PA on May 4-7, 2020. Consult the [CASA website](#) in the coming weeks for more information.

--Please note the following tentative schedule for upcoming Philadelphia Conference Educational Seminars:

- June 21, 2019 in Westampton, NJ (see agenda at the end of this newsletter)
- September 20, 2019 in Philadelphia, PA
- December 13, 2019 in Trevoose, PA



Previous Educational Seminar

Our SPRING EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR was held on March 29, 2019 at the Montgomery County Public Safety Training Campus Auditorium, 1175 Conshohocken Road, Conshohocken, PA 19428.



The morning session was unconventional for a CASA seminar, in a good way! A seven-person panel was organized to discuss **Boiled Water Advisories** and moderated by Pam Lawn. Representatives included Aqua Pennsylvania, Montgomery and Bucks Counties, City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, and Summerwood Corporation. Regulatory, industry, and treatment plant perspectives were

shared to gain insight into how different organizations react when there is a potential microbiological concern for municipal water. Special attention was given to foodservice establishments (such as restaurants), how they are notified of an advisory, and what conditions they must meet in order to continue operations. The panel was a microcosm of CASA itself – a partnership among regulatory and industry officials with common goals of food safety and consumer protection.

The afternoon session was covered by Paster Training and focused on two final rules issued by FDA under the Food Safety Modernization Act. Senior Consultant Barry Parsons provided a great overview of **Preventive Controls for Human Food**. VP of Consulting Melissa Vaccaro did the same for the **Foreign Supplier Verification Program**. Barry and Melissa are lead instructors for standardized curricula offered by the Food Safety Preventive Controls Alliance.



Philadelphia Conference of CASA Officers

Pam Lawn, Montgomery County Health Dept.	President
Nancy Wilson, Wawa Inc.	Vice President
Dennis Bauer, Retired, Bucks County Health Dept.	Executive Officer
Megan Lauff, U.S. FDA	Treasurer
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Anitra Brown-Reed, U.S. FDA	Member-At-Large
Matthew Noonan, U.S. FDA	Member-At-Large
Danielle Bytheway, NJ Department of Health	CASA Representative
Lynn Bonner, Retired, U.S. FDA	Past President
Caroline Friel, Wawa, Inc.	Associate Representative

Editor's Note

Share your interests, information, and announcements with your fellow professionals. If you take great notes, contribute to the Bell Ringer and recount your training or meeting adventures. Please email: Matthew.Noonan@fda.hhs.gov or Daniel.Johnson@fda.hhs.gov.

Space is available for advertising in the Bell Ringer.

We look forward to your feedback and participation.

FDA News

Food Safety vs. Food Waste - A summary of the U.S Food and Drug website article: **What does that Best By date mean?** By Daniel Johnson (U.S. FDA)

Did you know America tosses about one-third of its food in the trash between industry and consumers? That amounts to approximately \$161 billion worth of food annually. How can this be?

There are many factors that contribute to food waste, including:

Waste at each step from farm to fork such as disposing of raw ingredients due to unfavorable appearance

- Consumer confusion of what those dates mean on food packaging
- Consumer uncertainty about how long leftovers, perhaps from dining out, may last



What is FDA doing about it?

With the exception of infant formula, there is no expiration date labeling requirement for food. However, in an effort to reduce consumer confusion with expiration dates, FDA is supporting industry's efforts to apply the "best if used by" statement as opposed to other statements such as: Sell by, Best By, Expires on, etc. Determining when food is no longer of acceptable quality is tricky and there is no law that requires that food manufacturers conduct testing to determine such timeframe for packaged food, excluding infant formula.

What can we do about it as consumers?

The best by dates that consumers see on food packages are typically an estimation of when the food quality begins to decline and do not have any bearing on when the food may become unsafe to eat. To aide consumers with determining when it is time to throw it out, the FDA has posted the following two resources on its website:

- The [FoodKeeper App](#), designed to promote understanding of food and beverage storage to maximize freshness and quality.
- The FDA has also made available the [Refrigerator and Freezer Storage Chart on page 4 of the FDA's Food Facts brochure](#) available on the FDA website.

Why should we care?

Reducing our food waste can have a lasting impact on our natural resources, our environment, and our wallets. As a nation, it takes 80 percent of our freshwater, 10 percent of our energy, and half of our land to produce the food we eat. After we are done with the food, it ends up in landfills which are the third largest producers of methane emissions and a major contributor to global warming. Lastly, the 30 to 40 percent of food we consistently toss in the trash is equivalent to \$165 billion annually.

The take away

As food processors, we should be frequently evaluating our process to save on food waste which ultimately saves money. As regulators, we should increase awareness with consumers about what those best by dates really mean to help consumers reduce food waste and save money. Lastly, as consumers, we should think twice before throwing away food goods and when dining out, ask our ourselves before ordering "am I really that hungry?" The impacts of conscientious producing and consuming go far beyond how much is on America's plate.

PHILADELPHIA CONFERENCE

FOUNDED AUGUST 3, 1923

OF THE CENTRAL ATLANTIC STATES ASSOCIATION OF FOOD AND DRUG OFFICIALS
IN ASSOCIATION WITH A.F.D.O.

June 21, 2019 Friday

SUMMER EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR

NJ CEU's 5 APPROVED

Burlington County Emergency Services Training Center
53 Academy Drive
Westampton, NJ 08060

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 08:00 – 09:00 | Registration |
| 09:00 – 10:15 | “Ongoing Hepatitis A Outbreak: Implications for New Jersey and the CASA Region”
Brett Nance, MPH/Regional Epidemiologist
Julia Wells, MPH/Regional Epidemiologist
New Jersey Department of Health/Communicable Disease Service
Trenton, New Jersey |
| 10:15 – 10:45 | Break |
| 10:45 – 12:00 | “Food Safety Auditing from the Other Side”
Caroline Friel, QA Regulatory & Compliance Manager
Stacey Leibensperger, QA Field Specialist
Wawa, Inc., Wawa, PA |
| 12:00 - 1:00 | LUNCH ON YOUR OWN |
| 1:00 – 2:15 | “Shellfishian Rhapsody: Temperature Really Matters to Us”
Virginia Wheatley, Environmental Scientist 4
Danielle Bytheway, Registered Environmental Health Inspector 2
New Jersey Department of Health/Trenton, New Jersey |
| 2:15 - 2:30 | Break |
| 2:30 – 3:45 | “Shellfishian Rhapsody: Temperature Really Matters To Us”
Continued. |
| 3:45-4:15 | Q & A and Evaluation |

NOTE: To register please send your name, affiliation & contact information. *Pre-Registration is required no later than close of business, Friday, – June 14, 2019. Register with Lynn Bonner preferably at LSBonner@comcast.net or you may call her at 609-519-0926.*

COST: *The following fees apply:*

Current 2019 Members – Registration Fee of \$5.00

Non-members/Delinquent Members–Dues plus Registration Fee of \$5.00

Dues: Regulator - \$15.00

Associate - \$35.00

Academic - \$10.00

Student - \$10.00

Retired - \$10.00

CEUs: *A New Jersey continuing education credit application has been submitted to NJLMN for this course and is approved for 5.0 CEU's. This course is listed on NJLMN web site and you can now register for the CEU's.*

*(<https://njlmn.njlics.net>). **You still must register with Lynn Bonner at LSBonner@comcast.net***

***Don't forget to bring items for donation for our quarterly CASA food drive to help the needy. All items will be donated to "The Unforgotten Haven" in Blackwood, NJ. Check them out on Facebook to see all that they do.**

Food Items: baby food, instant coffee, bottled water, canned foods, juice/drink mixes, peanut butter & jelly, jello/pudding, pasta, tomato sauce, hamburger helper, rice, pancake mix, syrup, cereal, condiments, etc. (Basically, any type of canned or dry goods food).

Paper products: diapers, toilet paper, paper towels, tissues, women's hygiene products such as sanitary pads, tampax, etc.

Toiletries – soap, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, disposable razors, toothbrushes*

Thank you! ☺