



Voyager

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Executive Board Report

It's hard to believe that in less than 3 months, not only will we have warmer weather, but CASA will be celebrating its 100 year anniversary. The annual educational and training seminar will be held April 25-28, 2016. Check out the CASA website for more information. If you plan on attending, please make your room reservations early.



The announcement for funding applications in order to attend the Annual Educational and Training Seminar has been emailed. Also, please make sure you register your email on the CASA website as there will be three very important positions up for election this year, Secretary, Executive Officer and Treasurer.

At the end of the conference, I will officially be the CASA President and am already planning for a very busy year. It will begin with representing CASA at the AFDO conference to be held in Pittsburgh in June. We will have our summer board meeting in Saratoga in July and set the agenda for the 2017 annual educational and training seminar, which will be hosted by NENY at the Holiday Inn in Saratoga, May 1-4, 2017. If you are available to help out, please contact me.

As a reminder, 2016 membership dues can be paid either on the CASA website or given to Marianne Stone at the February meeting.

I look forward to a great year. Thank you to everyone on the board who dedicate so much time to making each training session successful. We're always looking to see new faces at our meetings and would like to hear your input on training ideas. If you have a topic that is related to Public Health that you would like to hear about or if you feel you need training on some aspect of your job, please contact anyone who is on the E-board.

Thank you so much!

Erin Sawyer

NENY Executive Board Representative

2016—2017

Officers

President - Nichola Miller
Albany County Health Department

Vice President - Marcia Galka
Schenectady County Health Department

Secretary-Treasurer - Marianne Stone
Albany County Health Department

Executive Board Rep. - Erin Sawyer
NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets

Executive Board Members

Tara Becker
Columbia County Health Department

Sharon Pretel
NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets

Dominick DiCarlo
Schenectady County Health Department

Erin Lockhart
NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets

NENY CASA Member David Nicholas Honored

NENY CASA is proud to announce that one of our members, David Nicholas, NYSDOH Research Scientist and NENY CASA Past President was recently honored to receive the John Guzewich Environmental Health Award for his work in food borne disease outbreak surveillance at The Integrated Foodborne Outbreak Response and Management (InFORM) Conference held in Phoenix Arizona November 2015.

InFORM brings together laboratorians, epidemiologists and environmental health specialists involved with foodborne and enteric disease outbreak response. Congratulations David!



NENY CASA Presenter in Forbes



Colleen Costello, 25 year old co-founder of Vital Vio and a past CASA presenter has made the Forbes "30 Under 30" list in the Enterprise Tech category for 2016. She is one of 600 who made the esteemed list this year. Vital Vito is a Troy-based company specializing in the design of lighting that kills dangerous bacteria like MRSA, Salmonella and e.Coli, using white

spectrum light as a disinfectant. The lighting is a safe continuous use alternative to ultra-violet light which can be harmful to humans with repeated exposure. Colleen is a graduate of the RPI School of Engineering. Congratulations Colleen!



CASA Website

The CASA organization has a newly designed website that has up to date information on all conference information, meetings, events, newsletters etc. All membership renewals and news updates will be sent via email. If you have not already done so, please register your email address so that you do not miss out on current information at: www.casafdo.org. CASA also has a Facebook page that can be linked to through the CASA website, so be sure to "like" us on Facebook!



Antibiotics, Food Animals, and Antibiotic Resistance

Although most illnesses from antibiotic resistant bacteria are acquired in health care settings, it is estimated that antibiotic resistant infections from food borne germs cause approximately 430,000 illnesses in the United States each year. Where do these resistant strains of bacteria come from? Many point to the farms where our food animals are raised. Why? Because food animals – from chickens to pigs to cattle – are frequently given low levels of antibiotics throughout their lives, not to fight infection, but to promote growth. These low doses can lead to the growth of bacteria that are resistant to the drug being used, as they kill off other competing, more susceptible microorganisms. Bacteria from the animal's carcass can contaminate meat products, which in turn can cause illness in consumers.

Not all antibiotics used for growth promotion in animal feed can result in antibiotic resistant infections, because not all of these drugs target organisms that cause human disease, and not all are used to treat infections in humans. Researchers and lawmakers have focused on drugs that are considered medically important – meaning, they are important in treating human disease. In December of 2013, the FDA released Guidance for Industry #213, which asked animal pharmaceutical companies to voluntarily remove growth-promotion claims from the labels of products containing medically important drugs. By March of 2014, all affected companies had contacted the FDA and indicated that they would do so, and 32 of the 292 affected products were removed from sale. However, concerns were raised by a Pew Charitable Trust analysis which indicated that drugs targeted by Guidance for Industry #213 could still be used at the same doses under the banner of “disease prevention” instead of growth promotion.

Membership Dues

If you have not already paid your annual dues, please forward payment as soon as possible to Marianne Stone, Albany County Health Department PO Box 678, Albany NY or you can pay at our next quarterly meeting. Payment can also be forwarded to Central Atlantic States Association of Food and Drug Officials, 200 Chestnut Street, Room 900, Philadelphia, PA 19106-2973. Annual dues are: \$15.00 for Regulatory members; \$35.00 for Associate members; and \$10.00 for Retirees and Academic memberships.

Tell us your ideas!

If you have any ideas or topics that you would like to hear about or suggestions for speakers, please let one of our officers or e-board members know. As always, all ideas are appreciated.

Other countries have also taken measures to combat the risk of antibiotic resistance. In Sweden, animal welfare policy already dictates that antibiotics only be used when animals are ill, with officials pushing for similar reforms throughout the European Union. In the summer of 2014, France's Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety released a risk assessment for the emergence of antimicrobial resistance related to antibiotic use in veterinary medicine. The assessment offered guidance for all sectors of the animal industry intended to supplement the country's Ecoantibio 2017 – a plan to reduce the usage of antibiotics in veterinary medicine which began in 2012.

In the US, some companies are already looking ahead and announcing policies which limit or eliminate antibiotic use on their farms. In early 2014, Chick-fil-a announced a plan to phase out serving meat from chickens raised with antibiotics over the next five years. Cargill announced it intended to stop using antibiotics for growth promotion on turkey farms, and Perdue and Tyson stated that they no longer use antibiotics in their chicken hatcheries.

Sources:

<http://www.foodsafetymagazine.com/magazine-archive1/december-2013january-2014/public-health-risk-of-antibiotic-use-in-food-animals/>

<http://www.foodsafetynews.com/2014/12/2014-in-review-animal-antibiotics/#.VOd9O9F0z5o>

<https://www.anses.fr/en/content/anses-publishes-its-assessment-risks-emergence-antimicrobial-resistance-related-patterns>

<http://www.fda.gov/downloads/AnimalVeterinary/GuidanceComplianceEnforcement/GuidanceforIndustry/UCM299624.pdf>

Way Out Weird Foods!

By Erin Lockhart



Greetings All! Our second installment of Weird Foods is a Sardinian delicacy known as Casu Marzu. For all of the cheese lovers out there, it is a specialty prepared from sheep's milk Pecorino. What sets this particular Italian cheese apart is a secondary fermentation, propagated by the larvae of the Cheese Fly, *Piophilha casei*. That's right, maggots. The digestive action of these industrious little larvae bring the cheese to a state of decomposition and breakdown of the natural cheese fats. The cheese is also found in Northern Italy's Piedmont and Bergamo regions, a variation of Casu Marzu is found in nearby Corsica (France), and similar regional cheeses are found in other areas of Italy and throughout Europe. Technically, the European Union has made this cheese illegal in the past for hygienic reasons, however it can still be found on the black market for those who look hard enough.

The method used to prepare classic Casu Marzu starts with whole Pecorino cheeses. Part of the rind is removed from each cheese to allow the cheese fly access to lay its eggs. A single female *Piophilha casei* can lay hundreds of eggs at a time, which hatch into translucent maggots approximately 1/3 inch long. After the maggots hatch, they begin to eat their way through the cheese, and the acidic fermentation caused by the digestive action of the maggots breaks down the fats and structure in the cheese. The texture of the cheese becomes very soft and gooey, and a fully mature and ready to eat Casu Marzu can contain thousands of live maggots. Most Casu Marzu is only considered edible while the maggots are still viable, so if the maggots are dead, it has "gone bad", unless the cheese was refrigerated- this can cause the larvae to die.

The traditional way to eat Casu Marzu is to slice it thinly and spread it on brown Sardinian flatbread, called Pane carasau, which is often sprinkled with water to soften the texture and make it easier to fold. The delicacy is typically consumed at the end of a meal and accompanied by a

strong red wine. Because the maggots in the cheese are still alive at time of consumption, one either eats the live maggots or has to evacuate them from the cheese before eating. For those who do prefer to eat the maggots, they typically hold their hands over the cheese while eating. This is because larvae of the *Piophilha casei* can and will jump when agitated, up to six inches. They accomplish this by bending themselves so tightly that the force created when they release propels them into the air. If one does not prefer to consume live leaping larvae with their cheese, Casu Marzu can be placed in a sealed paper bag for several minutes before consumption. The larvae, starved for oxygen, will leap out of the cheese and against the bag while they suffocate. The cheese is ready to eat when the tapping "tac tac tac" sound of the suffocating maggots has ceased.

The smell of Casu Marzu is considered to be very sharp, and the taste is often described as spicy and ripe, and even as a "burning sensation". It is consumed at major events and milestones, and many Sardinians regard it as an important part of their culture. The cheese has even been called an aphrodisiac by some. Despite being illegal, this cheese has developed a large cult following and is still widely, if somewhat secretly, enjoyed by many.



Sources:

Trofimov, Yaroslav (23 October 2000). "As a Cheese Turns, So Turns This Tale Of Many a Maggot --- Crawling With Worms and Illicit, Sardinia's Ripe Pecorinos Fly In the Face of Edible Reason". *Wall Street Journal (Eastern Edition)*

Loomis, Susan Herrmann (May 2002). "Sardinia, Italy". *Bon Appétit*. Overstreet, Robin M (December 2003). "Presidential Address: Flavor Buds and Other Delights". *Journal of Parasitology (Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada: American Society of Parasitologists)* 89 (6): 1093-1107.

"A Desperate Search for Casu Marzu, Sardinia's Illegal Maggot Cheese." *FWX*. Web. 05 Feb. 2016. <<http://www.foodandwine.com/fwx/desperate-search-casu-marzu-sardinias-illegal-maggot-cheese>>.

"Casu Marzu Is a Dish Widely Made in Sardinia Although Illegal, People Love to Have This Dish - Buzzing Wheels." *Buzzing Wheels*. Web. 05 Feb. 2016. <<http://www.buzzingwheels.com/15-delicacies-which-will-make-your-stomach-upset-by-just-looking-at-it/casu-marzu-is-a-dish-widely-made-in-sardinia-although-illegal-people-love-to-have-this-dish/>>.