

GEORGIA FOOD SAFETY AND DEFENSE TASK FORCE
Meeting Minutes – June 17, 2015

This meeting was held at the Dobbins Air Force Base in Marietta, Cobb County. Priya Nair called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. Please see the attachment “Sign In Sheet” for the full list of attendees. There was an estimated 35 people in attendance.

1. Opening Remarks by Priya Nair.

- Thanks to Pam Blackwell with DPH Cobb/Douglas County and Christine Engelmann with Dobbins who set up the meeting for us on the base.
- Read the mission and objectives for any new members; we come together in a platform for communication sharing and networking.
- Roundtable introduction of all attendees.

2. Briefing from Col. Wilson, Chief of Public Affairs for Dobbins Air Force Base.

- Welcoming remarks to the group, overview of the base and mission. The public affairs mission is to communicate and they have six full time staff. The base is extremely busy and they work to provide outreach on the missions they conduct.
- A video was shown, highlighting aspects of the base, including neighboring contractor Lockheed Martin, which has about 6,000 employees, and is considered a national asset to the base. Their primary production is the C130J, a new model (on base they have C130 and C130H). The base provides support to the Georgia Dept. of Defense, which includes more than \$1.5 million in support.
- There has been presence here since WWII and the base was established in the 80s. The air force owns the real estate here at Dobbins. It serves as a regional disaster response area for the metro Atlanta area, with easy access to the airport, GEMA/FEMA, Public Health, CDC, etc. Dobbins has a lot of activity during emergencies; recent responses have included Hurricane Katrina and Rita, Haiti, the Atlanta ice storms, etc.

3. GDA – Food Safety Division Updates from Natalie Adan & Rapid Response Team Updates from Brandon Saucedo

- No legislative updates at this time, no major laws were passed this year that impact food safety/defense.
- GDA is in the process of adopting the 2013 Food Code and just finished accepting comments. It is the first time the Departments of Agriculture and Public Health will both be working on the same current code.
- RRT recently conducted a functional exercise and established an incident command with a unified response with ag, health, FDA, USDA and others. The RRT is currently in the third, and last, year of the project and will be reapplying for three more years of funding. A major goal of that will be to further engage local and district health departments in the statewide response effort.

4. Environmental Public Health Update from Cameron Wiggins & Epidemiological Update from Hope Dishman.

- May 26 a hearing was held for the new 2013 Food Code rules and regulations. Public comments were received and are being addressed; this is the first time Georgia has updated to the most recent version of the Food Code.
- 2015 outbreaks so far this year in Georgia: Most of what happened in the first quarter was norovirus, as expected, often small outbreaks in restaurants associated with ill food workers. Biggest outbreak for norovirus was in Upson County elementary school, with about 105 children reported sick and there were likely ill food workers in the cafeteria. In South Georgia, Erwin County, a *Clostridium perfringens* outbreak of 76 ill occurred likely as a result of temperature abuse for food products.

- Nationally, Georgia had one case associated with the caramel apple *Listeria* outbreak. It was included in the outbreak due to a match in the genome sequencing, but the epidemiological evidence seemed to be unrelated because it was a nursing home patient who did not eat any caramel apples.
- A *Salmonella* outbreak of campers in Colorado included a group from Cobb County who attended the camp, with one child becoming ill. There are others ill from TN and OK. Colorado has been conducting an investigation on site and is testing camp ground staff. DPH is in the process of running PFGE on ill patients and staff.

5. Presentation: Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza.

- **David Inall, Senior Vice President, [United Egg Producers](#).**
- UEP is based in Alpharetta, Ga. It's a volunteer farmer cooperative, 93% of members are egg farmers. There are 300 million layers across the country. Average farm size is about 1.5 million layers, up to 6 million layers. There is an annual production of about 82 billion eggs in the U.S.
- In the mid-70's there was 10,000 egg farmers. There are only a few hundred commercial egg farmers left in the U.S. today; in 2014, 177 egg companies represented 99% of all eggs produced in the U.S. The benefit to this is you can get everyone in the same room and develop policy quickly.
- AI was detected at the end of 2014 in Washington, likely in wild birds (waterfowl, geese) that migrated from Asian to U.S. and moved down the West Coast impacting backyard flocks.
- In April 20, 2015, the first large egg farm was detected with AI. There is high path and low path and high path (HPAI) is what we are facing, last seen in the 1980s. Wild birds propagate it and are passing it on, but they very rarely die from the illness and do not exhibit identifiable symptoms.
- The virus moved into California and then the birds began migrating up the Mississippi flyaway, which is when Iowa (74 detections) and Minnesota (105 detections, mostly turkey farms) were hit. There have been 222 detections reported in 15 states with 47 million birds affected. Ten percent of the industry is gone. As of today, there has not been any new detection in 10 days; the heat wave moving across the country right now is helping but there is no false hope that this is over. It is expected to move into Canada and then return to the East Coast in the fall.
- UEP has had daily conference calls. They share general information with members about where the virus had been detected via counties, and some members have admitted it was on their farms and provided updates about where they were with their response; the collaboration has been excellent.
- Biggest terms surrounding this topic right now: Biosecurity, depopulation, vaccinations (government has not approved as of today, but it's an ongoing dialogue), and indemnity. Vaccines are very complicated; there is one available for one-day-old chicks at the hatchery. Efficacy of this is deemed "not good enough" by USDA-APHIS; potential negative ramifications outweigh the industry benefits. To date, no vaccines have been approved for use.
- 5 P's: Prior planning prevents poor performance. Trust your instincts.
- Meeting with industry and Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack, he is describing it as an "unprecedented event" with a lateral spread. USDA-APHIS has completed its epi report for the turkey industry and they are talking about transmission person to person, entry and exit vehicles, machinery shared farm to farm, etc. But even farms with shower in/shower out procedures have gotten AI. Some breeding sheds are using air filters but it will be difficult for the industry to do this across the board.
- There have been waves of media interest: Stage 1: this is terrible for farmers and sad for the birds. Stage 2: how does this affect me, egg shortages, and how much will price of eggs go up? Stage 3: the new epi report for turkeys is pushing biosecurity, what have we done before what are we doing moving forward. UEP has specific media points they have been pushing out. (Request pending for a copy of these.)
- It is a bird issue, not a human issue. Once you get a presumptive positive, you stop pushing eggs into the market so the food/human health is not (should not) be a major concern. Media has seemed to understand this and there is no mass hysteria. Expected recovery period is a complicated issue. You want to keep

servicing customers but repopulation takes a long time for laying hens. No one has started repopulating at this time and it could theoretically take 8-12 months to repopulate farms that were depopulated.

- Impact on food manufacturers using eggs for production is uncertain. Many of the farms impacted were those who provide eggs to the processing industry, they are estimated to have lost 30% of this. Imports of eggs could help but the Netherlands is the only place that is currently open for imports.

6. Additional HPAI remarks – on behalf of State Vet Dr. Robert Cobb.

- There is no AI in Georgia currently. In March, the GDA announced an emergency rule that requires AI testing on all live poultry entering the state; you can review the order on our website, agr.georgia.gov. We have received three mail order imports of poultry from Iowa that came from an infected flock. The three sites have been quarantined and are in the process of being depopulated.
- In April, three GDA livestock poultry spent 3 weeks in Minnesota assisting in the AI response in turkey flocks. This provided valuable experience that they have brought back to Georgia.
- Ongoing activities include meeting, planning and training with USDA, public health, and other states to be ready for when AI arrives in Georgia. There have been increased biosecurity awareness campaigns for backyard poultry flocks from GDA animal health field forces. Our public affairs staff is continuing to work on both an internal and external communications strategy for our response, because we have been receiving media inquiries already about how AI may impact Georgia, which is a huge poultry state. It will be good for the task force members to work together on a unified message about AI in Georgia.
- GDA has helpful info and links on our website under the Animal Industry/Animal Health section, see the [Avian Influenza section](#).

7. GaFSTF updates – Jessica Badour.

- The [website](#) has undergone a major revision for an updated look that FoodSHIELD has rolled out and Georgia's site now matches other state task forces around the country.
- A mobile application is under development to correspond with the website and a "skeleton" outline should be available soon for the task force members to review and provide input on. Concepts include providing information about upcoming meetings, conferences, trainings, grant opportunities, job opportunities, etc.; food recalls; food safety tips both seasonally and during emergencies, etc.
- Task Force grant – Was successfully submitted on June 26, status of application is still pending. If we receive the grant, it will provide funding through 2018 to help us coordinate expanded meetings.

8. Additional Comments:

- Group comments...
- **Karen Bremer**, GA Restaurant Association – Reiterated that the association is working with local health departments (Fulton, Chatham) and they are there to help coordinate webinars for local health departments. Any health department is able to work with them on this for training. Help spread the word that inspectors recommend to the restaurants to go to GRA, it's free training and they do not have to be a member. Register for upcoming webinars listed on their [calendar of events](#).
- **Laurie Farmer**, FDA Cooperative Programs –
 - Grade A milk firms have biosecurity protocols online, there are many protocols available for egg laying issues. Grade A Milk Seminar is coming up the week of Sept. 13 in Charlotte or Asheville, held every two years.
 - FDA conducts training seminars tailored for state standards, for state program managers and industry attends those meetings as well. Gulf and South Atlantic Shellfish Conference was recently held in Texas, it was a technical meeting and included a field trip for harvest control and food safety controls surrounding *Vibrio*. Next year's conference is in Louisiana, please reach out to her about attending.

- Staffing at FDA: The SE Region has hired one additional shellfish specialist in Tallahassee and an additional milk specialist from GDA, Curt Griner, starts at the end of this month out of the Tifton resident post.
 - Partnership funds in Grade A milk and shellfish are working with the Office of General Council to support states to go to specific training and provide funding.
 - **Chris Smith**, FDA Retail Specialist –
 - There is funding for counties and state agencies for retail program standards work available in the fall. A [mentorship program](#) is available for local agencies to sign up and work as a mentor or mentee with funding provided for participating. AFDO also has funding available for projects (small \$3,000 to midsize \$10,000), or funding for travel to training. Consider applying for that.
 - Several people attended the regional food safety seminar in Savannah in December. The next seminar is going to be in Baton Rouge, LA, the week of Nov. 30. The seminar itself will be Dec. 1-3 and the theme is “Networking.” Be on the lookout for the save the date announcement.
 - Cameron and Natalie mentioned GDA/DPH updating the Food Code. Let’s publicly compliment them on the great, hard work on this big accomplishment! This is no small task. It is a big deal to have the entire state on the same Food Code.
 - **Natalie Adan**, GDA –
 - Krissa Jones has just started in the Manufactured Food Program Manager position, which encompasses the Dairy Division.
 - Thanks to Brandon for his work on the RRT; very helpful to come together and see how we can work through incidents, which will come in handy for HPAI in Georgia. Information comes from various sources, need to come together and share the basics so we’re all on the same page and have the same deliverables.
 - Chad McCord has been promoted to Field Training Coordinator.
9. **Closing remarks:** Next meeting dates for 2015 TBD, looking at October.
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.



Sign-In Sheet
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