



**OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE**

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Food Safety, Animal Health & ID Program

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Food Safety Advisory Committee Meeting

April 03, 2023

11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Facilitator:

Rusty Rock, Oregon Department of Agriculture

Attendees:

Josh Baruch – Oregon Food Bank

Paul Cieslak – Public Health Physician Oregon Health Authority Tammy

Dennee – Oregon Cattleman's Association

Tammy Keer – Oregon Dairy Farmers Association

Timindra Pratico – Oregon Department of Agriculture

Paul Sherman – Oregon Department of Agriculture

Erin Lockett – Oregon Department of Agriculture

Allison Neiderhauser – Safeway/Albertsons

Jovana Kovacevic – Oregon State University

Kathryn Nelson – Oregon Department of Agriculture

Susanna Pearlstein – Oregon Department of Agriculture

Housekeeping- Rusty Rock

Shawn Miller with Northwest Grocery Association, Chair of Food Safety Advisory Committee is unable to attend today's meeting, he had a scheduling conflict. Next meeting planned for July or August 2023. At that meeting a topic up for discussion will address nomination of co-chair. Typically, the Food Safety Advisory Committee has both a Chair and Co-Chair. If you are interested in the position, please reach out to Shawn Miller.



General Program Status & Budget – Rusty Rock

Two weeks ago, ODA presented agency budget to legislature. The budget was well received. ODA is currently working off the Governors Recommended Budget. A handout of the budget breakdown for ODA was presented via screen share. Take aways to note, the service level budget is focused at approximately \$31.9 million, this is a flat amount.

Specific to the Food Safety Program, monies plan to be allotted to fund and support the Food Safety Racial Equity Impact Statement Pilot to support and advance the State's DEI Action Plan. The package will include funds to support one new Program Analyst position. The program's goal is to better connect with underserved communities and focus on how the Food Safety program can be more adaptive to providing food safety information to communities and how best to receive feedback from Oregon communities that may be underrepresented/underserved and to potentially bring them onto the Food Safety Advisory Committee to learn how to provide better service to communities we have not reached in the past.

Budget monies also planned to be allocated towards the Food Safety Modernization Act which is related to produce safety to provide educational outreach to farm communities that are raising raw agricultural commodities that would fall under traditional food safety program licensing. Currently that program for FSMA is strictly educational and not regulatory.

Agency Status Update – Rusty Rock

Lauren Henderson currently acting director, he has been with ODA for many years. After previous agency director, Alexis Taylor was asked to join USDA as Under Secretary for Foreign Trade and Commerce, Lauren Henderson who was ODA deputy director at the time, was promoted into acting director role and continues to fill ODA Agency Director role. DAS has hired a recruitment firm to hire new ODA director, the recruitment has been posted. More information to come, interviews for the position anticipated for May or June. The ODA director's office is working with the firm to help them get a better understanding of ODA so that with the hire of a new director, the agency will retain continuity moving forward.

Slideshow presentation on Food Safety Budget – Kathryn Nelson

The 1.5 million in general funds from 21-23 will phase out for 23-25, this will result in decrease in General Fund budget which will affect our cash balance. Other items which will affect the cash balance is the uptick of agency staff out-of-state travel as business operations return to normal and the filling of vacant positions across the agency.

Agency will focus on the target balance for the program moving forward. The target balance is \$6.25-6.5 million. This is taking into consideration an average of money incurred throughout the year. There are scenarios which may impact the cash balance and/or effect Food Safety fee increases. The program will closely track these possible scenarios, updates to follow in future meetings.

There was a 7% fee increase effective 7/1/2022. The program will not utilize the ability to raise fees by 7% which could have gone into effect 7/1/2023, as current cash balances are within targeted range.

Rusty Rock noted that the program is seeing a lot more in-person conferences and trainings resulting in more out-of-state travel. It is important for Food Safety staff to attend these conferences as Oregon plays a heavy role in many national organizations.

Staff Updates: John Burr retired as of February 28th, 2023. Recruitment to fill his position closed 3/19 and hope to begin the interview process over the next two weeks. In last quarter the program has hired two new inspectors and will soon hire a third, once hired the program will be at full staff for food safety inspectors.

Program Focus: Food Safety Aged list, which is any inspection over 90 days old routine wise. Since coming out of Covid we are seeing the aged list slowly decrease as we can get back to business as normal and conduct routine inspections. The inspectors are focusing on maintaining at least one day a week to conduct routine inspections to help maintain focus. This is working well to bring the aged list back down.



Currently there are 2980 aged inspections, down from 5,000. Inspectors are working to prioritize the highest risk firms. Program goal is to get the aged list down to 500-700.

Retail and State Meat Inspection Program Status – Staff

Recent roll out of reusable container rules (OAR 603-025-0030). This is an option for industry to use reusable containers, it is not a mandatory program. Food Establishments will have the ability to allow the public to bring in reusable containers for certain food product purchases. Erin Lockett, Food Safety Program Manager for Retail noted that the program is currently working on creating a handout which will visually break down each letter section of the rule with a picture of what each letter means. The goal is to help the public understand what is allowed and not allowed in the new Reusable Container Rules. More information pertaining to the new rules can be found on the Security of State website.

Paul Sherman, Meat Program Specialist with the State Meat Inspection Program noted as of July 2022 the program signed the cooperative agreement with USDA FSIS which gives equal to USDA inspection for the Oregon Meat Inspection Program. In August 2022 the first official state inspected meat establishment, a small charcuterie operation located in Hillsboro/Beaverton was inspected by ODA State Meat Inspection Program. Our second firm to participate joined the program in March 2023, a meat slaughter facility out of Hillsboro, all their products go directly to their retail outlet, also in Hillsboro. ODA suspects four more facilities to join the program this summer. We are seeing a very good start and the program has been well received. Paul Sherman notes that all meat that is inspected by the ODA Meat Inspection Program can only be sold in Oregon. For a business to sell across state lines their facility would need to be inspected by the USDA, however he is happy to work with Oregon business owners to prepare all the required paperwork and help them prepare their facility/business operations for USDA inspection. Overall goal is to serve Oregon producers. Over next 12-18 months, Sherman believes that we will have firms in all quarters of the state. The program is funded through the general fund and does not have any cross over with the ODA Food Safety Program. This passed through legislature during the 2019 session. Rusty Rock noted that because the program is approved by USDA FSIS, USDA will reimburse 50% of the cost the State Meat Inspection Program incurs. There is also potential for federal grants possible in the future to help fund growth of the industry. Funding is still young, currently working on how to best explain the value of the program.

FDA Program Status – Rusty Rock

With the recent retirement of John Burr, we are working on understanding the program deeper. Erin Lockett and Karel Smit met with John before he retired to review the program and get tutorials. The intention for the next contract cycle which begins in October is to remain the same as the prior year, about 140 GMP inspections and 40 PC inspections. Erin Lockett noted that ODA was also asked to take on additional seafood HACCP inspections for FDA. Rusty Rock noted that several ODA Food Safety inspectors are fully trained on how to complete seafood HACCP inspections, however up until recently the FDA has never asked ODA to do them. We have been asked to begin with 3-5 inspections as a trial. Three of the five are anticipated to be warehouse inspections which are much simpler and the other two will be more complex operations, those two will be the focus to ensure that ODA is correct in the assumption the workload balance is fair and that ODA is charging the correct amount for those inspections.

Next meeting either in July or August, ODA Food Safety staff will send out a Doodle Poll for possible meeting dates.

Meeting Concluded

