

Food Safety Advisory Meeting

June 2nd, 2020

10 am to 11:08 am

Meeting Summary

Attendees

Frank Barcellos - ODA

Robert Beck - Norpac

John Burr - ODA

Paul Cieslak -DHS/OHA

Vicki Esqueda - Safeway

Danny Faccinetti – Oregon Food Bank

Mark Fountain – Food Northwest

Gail Greenman - Oregon Farm Bureau Federation

Buck Jones - Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission

Tami Kerr - Oregon Dairy Farmers

Sarah Kaplan - ODA

Rebecca Landis – Oregon Farmers Market Association

David McMullen - Oregon Food Bank

Shawn Miller - NWGA

Allison Neiderhauser – Safeway/Albertsons

Kathryn Nelson - ODA

John Noble - ODA

Susan Pearlstein - ODA

Steve Ramsey – Safeway/Albertsons

Karel Smit - ODA

Isaak Stapleton - ODA

Hillery Styles – Pacific Seafood Group

Madeline Unger

Joy Wait-Cusic - OSU

Mark Wustenberg

Karen Semek - Darigold

Budget - Jack Noble and Kathryn Nelson

It is difficult to utilize historical information to make projections at this point. All cash balance projections have downhill slopes. With the loss of general funds, a fee increase of 3 percent per licensing year will result in a cash balance dropping below operating reserves. The preferred is restoration of general fund funding and federal contract work with only 3% fee increases each year. If both Food Safety's requests for fee and general fund increases fail the program will have to re-evaluate the level services provided.

Inspections - John Burr

A guidance was released for making phone contact with firms to determine how they were addressing the COVID-19 requirements of the Governor's executive orders and provide firms with guidance. The number of routine inspections decreased from March to April due to a decrease in in-person inspections. In-person inspections and initial approvals are still being done, however, all inspections are being scheduled beforehand.

Complaints that have to do with social distancing of employees are being triaged to Oregon OSHA. Complaints involving customers not following social distancing requirements are being handled by Food Safety. Food Safety is working on its own guidance for reopening. This guidance will help address differences between ODA and OHA licenses in operations and requirements such as self-service in grocery stores versus restaurants.

In March the FDA put a stop on FDA contract work. At the time this was enacted Food Safety had about half of annual contracts completed. The upcoming year, which it is believe will start on time on September 1st, will see a decrease in GMP inspections from 332 to 200 and an increase in PC inspections from 16 to 40. The FDA has canceled all PC trainings through the end of September. However, ODA hopes to have 15 more staff fully trained on PC inspections.

The entire agency is tracking time spent on COVID related work.

Shellfish – Frank Barcellos

ODA was notified early that FDA certification inspections were suspended until COVID-19 was over. Shellfish shippers that have state issued certifications on the Interstate Certified Shellfish Shippers List will be allowed extensions until December 31, 2020. This allows inspectors time to get testing and inspections done without a bunching up of expiration dates. ODA continues to do biotoxin testing and responding to illness reports.

Dairy – Frank Barcellos

The program was granted an emergency consideration from FDA in March. The emergency consideration allowed food safety to ignore some certification expiration dates. This allows inspectors to continue to test and allow product to continue to get to the stores. It appears that Oregon's dairy industry wasn't as heavily impacted by COVID as some other states.

Like shellfish the program is working to spread out expiration dates. FDA has offered an additional 90 days of the emergency consideration which the agency will accept.

Processor Playbook – Isaak Stapleton

The Food Safety Program has been working on the food processor playbook which is designed to provide guidance and consistency in how local health programs deal with COVID-19 outbreaks at processing facilities. This playbook is designed to prevent long closures of processing facilities. ODA took OHA's long term care home guidance and altered it to help agencies collaborate to avoid long closures while protecting workers.

Within this playbook a tool kit was created with lots of information from the CDC. It assists facilities in considering things like preventative screening and monitoring, assists in preparing the work force with trainings, and preparing the facility for possible reduced work forces.

Food Safety hopes to have the documents finalized and available on-line by the end of the week.

Farm Worker Playbook - Isaak Stapleton

Food Safety has also helped create a similar playbook for farms workers. It is very similar in how it clearly lays out each agency's roles and responsibilities. The only difference with the farm workers playbook is that the Produce Safety program is the point of contact for ODA.

State Meat Inspection – Frank Barcellos

There have been issues with meat processing in plants due to the nature of those plants and the close proximity between workers. For many years the ODA has been looking at starting a state meat inspection program. This program would allow for the processing of meats for local clients and would help avoid some of the processing bottle neck plants are currently seeing. All of the USDA plants in Oregon are very booked.

There is support from the director's office and bipartisan support in the last legislative sessions. Food Safety talked with and got advice from Utah, Montana and Minnesota which all have state meat inspection programs. Those states advise food safety on what to expect as the program moves forward.

It has been made very clear that this program must have general funds to support it. There is some looking at support for the custom facilities in the state to assist them in upgrading to meet federal standards. ODA is also working to have the product be able to move across state lines.

Closing – Isaak Stapleton

Due to COVID-19 taking a large amount of time and resources many projects and rulemaking processes are not being advanced at this time. There is not enough time to focus on, and address those issues properly. In addition, it is not fair to subject the industry to additional changes while they continue to deal with COVID-19.

The next meeting will be held in late August or early September.