

Conference for Food Protection Committee FINAL Report

COMMITTEE NAME: Report - National Voluntary Environmental Assessment Information System

Council II

DATE OF REPORT: December 2, 2009

SUBMITTED BY: Ric Mathis, Committee Chair

COMMITTEE CHARGE(s):

Charge 1: Review the concept of a National Voluntary Environmental Assessment Information System (NVEAIS) as proposed in the attached CDC NVEAIS Background Paper

Charge 2: Determine how a NVEAIS could be best supported by the Conference for Food Protection.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Charge 1) *Review the concept of a NVEAIS as proposed in the attached CDC NVEAIS Background Paper*

The committee reviewed the concept of NVEAIS via teleconference, a web-based live meeting, and a face to face meeting. The following is the results of these meeting:

(a) a brief description of a NVEAIS was developed as follows:

The NVEAIS is a detailed environmental assessment database that seeks to identify factors that can be routinely monitored by food safety programs to prevent or reduce the risk for foodborne outbreaks associated with food service establishments.

This system recognizes that although much has been done to focus inspection activities within a hazard surveillance framework, many food control authorities do not have the information necessary from foodborne outbreak investigations to understand the context of reported contributing factors or the food vehicles involved. This process elicits the critical thinking skills necessary to describe exposure events by focusing on the food flow and the performance of an environmental assessment, which integrates contributing factors (what happened) with environmental antecedents (why it happened). The NVEAIS will:

- provide a detailed characterization of food vehicles and monitor food vehicle trends;
- identify and monitor contributing factors and their environmental antecedents;
- establish the basis for hypothesis generation regarding factors that may support foodborne outbreak events; and
- guide the planning, implementation and evaluation of food safety programs.

Once fully developed, the data gathered into the system seeks to provide local jurisdictions with the ability to monitor the effectiveness of control and intervention measures and allow state regulatory jurisdictions the ability to demonstrate the need for food safety programs and resources and the allocation of those resources.

(b) a survey was developed to determine usefulness of a NVEAIS to food safety programs, the feasibility of reporting environmental assessment data to CDC by food safety programs, and the acceptability of a NVEAIS by food safety program managers. The results of the survey are contained in the Attachment 1 titled NVEAIS Survey Results Charge 1

The survey results, which are based on the responses of seven of the nine State EHS-Net Food Coordinators and other deliberations, allowed the NVEAIS committee to conclude that:

1. NVEAIS is useful to food safety programs.
2. NVEAIS is a feasible mechanism for reporting environmental assessment data to CDC.
3. NVEAIS is an acceptable tool for investigating foodborne disease outbreaks on the state level and has the potential to be a valuable resource in foodborne outbreak investigation training for local health departments.

Charge 2) *determine how a NVEAIS could be best supported by the Conference for Food Protection*

In addressing this charge, the committee explored:

(a) the appropriateness of an amendment to Standard 5, Foodborne Illness and Food security Preparedness and Response and,

(b) the development of a recommendation and/or issue for the 2010 CFP Biennial Meeting

The committee concluded that instead of incorporating into the Program Standards (FDA Voluntary Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards) criteria, an issue will be submitted that proposes adding the following additional language (indicated in underline format) be included in the Standard 5 OUTCOME Section:

A food regulatory program has a systematic approach for the detection, investigation, response, documentation, and analysis of alleged food-related incidents that involve illness, injury, unintentional, or deliberate food contamination.

Regulatory programs are encouraged to also participate in the CDC National Voluntary Environmental Assessment Information System (NVEAIS). NVEAIS is designed to provide a more comprehensive approach to foodborne disease outbreak investigation and response and will provide a data source to measure the impact of food safety programs to further research and understand foodborne illness causes and prevention
(The following link provides additional information regarding NVEAIS:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/>.

See Attachment 2 titled: **NVEAIS and CFP Support Charge 2**

REQUESTED ACTION: The NVEAIS committee will submit two (2) issues at the 2010 Conference based on the recommendations of the committee. The issues are:

1. Report - Acknowledgement of the National Voluntary Environmental Assessment Information System (NVEAIS) Committee
2. Amend OUTCOME Section of Program Standards #5

Attachment:

ATTACHMENT #1 NVEAIS Survey Results Charge 1

ATTACHMENT #2 NVEAIS and CFP Support Charge 2

CDC NVEAIS Background Paper

NVEAIS Committee Roster