

**Title of standing committee:** Program committee

**Date of report:** March 21, 2007

**Name of report preparer:** Don Schaffner, Rutgers University – Chair

**Committee charge:** According to the 2006 Constitution and Bylaws “The Program Committee shall assist the Executive Director and Conference Chair in planning and arranging all Conference meetings and shall assist the Executive Director in the preparation of programs for each Conference meeting.”

In actual fact, the job of the Program Committee is to plan and organize the Saturday workshop which occurs before the Conference starts on Sunday. Other duties include moderating the Reports and Updates session as well as arranging for the federal agency reports (although this last item was handled by the Executive Director in 2006).

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**Progress report:** Much of Program Committee Chairs time since the last annual meeting has been spent “learning the ropes” and getting up to speed on how the Program Committee actually functions. For example, although the existence of a committee

implies that planning the program will be done by the committee, in actual practice, historically, the bulk of the work is done by the committee chair.

- **Budget**

Another significant hurdle has been learning how the workshop budget is developed.

According to the Executive Director the biennial meeting budget allocates \$2,000 for the Workshop. Food and beverage for the morning break is about \$1,000 and the other \$1,000 is used for hosting a speaker dinner the evening before the Workshop (Friday night). There are additional cost for AV (In 2006 these were \$810, shared with opening session), printing and CEU's (In 2006 these were \$350 combined). These costs are part of the workshop, but not the workshop budget.

Since the speakers are invited to attend the Opening Session on Saturday from 4:00 to 6:00 and the Welcome Reception that follows (without charge), these are additional costs that are not reflected in the workshop budget.

The Executive Director was kind enough to provide a historical perspective on the workshop:

2002: Workshop had 71 participants; receipts of \$12,000; \$1,500 was budgeted and \$1,895 was expended.

2004: Workshop had 127 participants; receipts of \$20,150; \$2,000 was budgeted and \$670 was expended.

2006: Workshop had 227 participants; receipts were \$22,275; \$2,000 was budgeted and \$1,925 was expended

As noted by the Executive Director, workshop participation and revenue has been steadily increasing. He further notes that it has been a major fund-raiser to support the work of the Conference and has allowed us to maintain registration fees to foster attendance.

While I have no problem with using the workshop to support the work of the conference, as well as further the education of its members, there is one aspect of the workshop budget that just doesn't make sense to me.

No travel costs (either air-fare or hotel) are provided for any of the speakers. While this saves money it also limits potential speakers to those who are either attending the conference anyway, and are willing to commit one night's hotel from their personal funds or professional travel budget or those willing to underwrite all costs associated with speaking at the workshop.

I do think it's time the board gives some serious thought to the purpose of the workshop, and design a more reasonable budget framework that will allow us to achieve both fundraising and education objectives as well as insure high quality speakers without resorting to external funding.

Fortunately the Program Committee includes Mr. David Tharp of IAFP. David's background is in finance and he brings many years of experience with budgeting of workshops in advance of the IAFP annual meeting. David has kindly provided the workshop pricing spreadsheet that IAFP uses it setting the prices for its annual meeting workshops. A copy of the spreadsheet is being sent along with this report.

- **Workshop Topics**

There are a whole host of good topics, but I think the one that is most likely to draw a good crowd and stimulate discussion would be the topic of fresh fruit and vegetable safety.

We could draw in experts to speak on the spinach, and Mexican fast food outbreaks. We could also bring in people from the entire food chain from agriculture through distribution to retail and foodservice.

A rough outline is shown below:

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
7:30 AM	Registration	
8:00 AM	Welcome	Workshop Chair
8:15 AM	CDC perspective on produce outbreak investigations	CDC
9:00 AM	FDA perspective on produce outbreaks	FDA
9:45 AM	State perspective on produce outbreaks	NJ? MN?
10:30 AM	<b>Break</b>	
11:00 AM	Agricultural production	Processor
11:45 AM	Fresh cut issues	Trade Assoc
12:30 PM	<b>Lunch (on your own)</b>	
2:00 PM	Microbial standards	Foodservice or retail?
2:45 PM	Sanitizers and other controls	Sanitizer company
3:30 PM	Roundtable Q&A	
4:00 PM	<b>End</b>	

This idea is only a first draft and I would welcome board comments on the any aspect of the program, including topics, speaking, timing, etc.

**Requested Board (or other) actions**

1. Approve the workshop topic of fresh fruit and vegetable safety for further development.
2. Charge a standing committee (Audit? Strategic Planning?), or create an ad-hoc committee to investigate changes to the workshop budget structure.
3. Charge the Constitution and By-Laws/Procedures committee to review the job of Program Committee Chair, and consider changes to the by-laws to reflect actual practice. The same committee (CBL/P) should also consider changing the title Program Committee Chair to something more in keeping with reflect current practice. This same committee should also insure that the CBL/P reference the full "Position Descriptions" located on the conference website.

**Recommendation(s) for future charge**

See item #3 above for possible changes to the charge.