

Conference for Food Protection (CFP) Food Allergen Committee Mid-Term Report

Date of Committee Report: *March 2009*

Submitted by:

Tony Flood – co-chair

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The Conference for Food Protection Food Allergen Committee recognizes the current environment regarding food allergy. Recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows an increase in food allergy among targeted populations and more attention is being given to individuals with celiac disease. Awareness, management and education among all stakeholders, including consumers, are critical to the success of any proposed activity or project. Under the current and new Administration, we expect an increased awareness regarding food safety and related issues, including increased awareness about food allergy. Under Section 113 of the *FDA Food Safety Modernization Act of 2009*, special emphasis is given to food allergy management for children in schools and early childhood education programs. Additionally, CDC, USDA and other stakeholders are working to identify strategies to manage food allergies through programs such as the School Lunch Program. Also, we will pay close attention to celiac disease. The media will continue to play a key role in heightening awareness and bringing food allergy issues to the forefront, especially in regards to the public health, emerging research and the health and well being of children. Partnerships with external stakeholders will play a key role in the success of any suggested outreach or education project and we recommend the Conference recognize our willingness to engage appropriate partners as necessary.

Committee Charge:

- **Work directly with FDA pertaining to the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA) of 2004 (continuation charge of 2004 biennial meeting)**

Progress on Charge:

- The CFP committee is currently working with FDA to provide input and review of several resource and educational documents. These documents will help increase awareness about food allergy for the respective audiences as well as provide information and education for state / local regulatory officials; food managers; and food employees. The proposed projects for review include the following:
 - Provide input and review of the DRAFT allergen guide (not the official name of the draft document) developed and written by FDA staff. The overall purpose of this “guide” is to serve as a resource for identifying and managing potential allergens that are present in foods at the food service level. It is also designed to complement the current food safety strategies

that are already in place. We expect awareness will increase among users of this “guide”.

- Timeline for completion – TBD
- Provide review of the Allergen Management Course as recommended by the CFP Certification of Food Safety Regulatory Professionals (CFSRP) Workgroup. At the present time FDA’s Division of Human Resource Development (DHRD), Office of Regulatory Affairs University (ORAU) is in the process of developing an allergen management course that will be available on its Web site. The work group agrees an allergen management course should be required training in the program standards but the review of the course should be completed by the Allergen Committee. The CFP CFSRP Work Group thinks that the appropriate expertise for reviewing the content of this course lies within the Allergen Committee rather than the CFSRP work group. Once the review of this course is complete, the CFP CFSRP work group is prepared to renew its deliberation as to how it fits in with the Program Standard 2 - Trained Regulatory Staff Curriculum.
 - Timeline for completion – December 31, 2009

Committee Charge:

- **Work with industry and deliver food allergen information to state / local regulatory officials; food managers; health professionals; and food employees through appropriate marketing / outreach channels.**

Progress Report:

- The Committee discussed developing a food allergy resource page of education materials suitable for state / local regulatory officials, food managers and food employees.
 - Members of the Committee have provided input to different types of food allergy resource materials which have been developed for their respective audiences. We will seek to better understand how we might be helpful in crafting new allergy resources or repackaging existing resource materials that are useful to the target audiences. By identifying what is currently available in regards to food allergy resources and educational materials, we understand and ultimately are able to identify specific gaps in food allergy resources. By participating in this exercise, we will be better equipped to develop or recommend the development of a tangible product that would address the very essence of the committee charge.
 - This activity will also provide an opportunity for the Committee to better understand and identify possible marketing and outreach strategies for the project. The Committee also discussed ideas to extend the outreach of the project and to engage stakeholders such as NEHA, FMI, NRA, IFIC, IFT Extension, FAAN and others as identified by the committee as possible venues for marketing and outreach strategies.

- The Committee would like to provide outreach to the “health professional” community through network established by members of the Committee. IFIC has a long standing relationship with the American Dietetic Association (ADA), American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) and the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI) and is well positioned to coordinate the identification and development of a food allergy outreach and educational project to either of these groups. Additionally, we will seek input and collaboration with FAAN, FDA, the Conference and other key stakeholders.

Committee Charge:

- **The Conference further recommends that the Food Allergen Committee work with the FDA to develop an appropriate educational component regarding food allergen awareness.**

Progress Report:

- The Committee discussed options to address the charge. As discussed, the Committee identified “regulators and industry that is regulated” as the target audience in this charge. We feel it is important for this Committee to increase its awareness of the current FDA food allergen activities as outlined in the Food Allergen Labeling and Food Protection Act (FALCPA). We will continue to reach out to our FDA representatives and identify opportunities to broaden the FDA engagement to better align ourselves with the current thinking, communication and education strategies regarding food allergy overall.

Additional discussions:

- The Committee felt it necessary to reach out to the Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN) a resource organization in the event we have issues or questions or needed clarification regarding consumer-related / advocacy issues. The Committee co-chair Tony Flood is scheduled to meet with FAAN staff in early April 2009 and will provide an update at the next scheduled CFP Allergen Committee conference call.
- We would also like to reach out to CDC and possibly include a representative on the food allergen committee. Several contacts have been made and the Committee will make an attempt to identify an appropriate CDC representative. This particular contact will be beneficial in our outreach efforts to the health professional community.

Committee Members:

- Members of the CFP Food Allergen Committee were selected by categories. The categories include: regulatory / federal; regulatory / state; regulatory / local; restaurant; retail; retail / convenience; industry / manufacturing; academic; expert / advisory resource.