

FDA Report to CFP Executive Board Meeting
August 29, 2007
Rockville, MD

The following is a summary of FDA's report provided by Kevin Smith to the Fall 2007 meeting of the Executive Board of the Conference for Food Protection (CFP) and a description of recent FDA activities of interest to the CFP.

1. A representative from the Office of the Center Director at CFSAN will be invited to present on behalf of FDA at the Opening Session of the 2008 CFP meeting in San Antonio.
2. Dr. Nega Beru, Director of CFSAN's Office of Food Safety has agreed to present at the CFP pre-conference workshop on produce safety.
3. CFSAN is in the process of filling two vacancies in the Retail Food Protection Team. The open hiring period for those positions has closed and selections should be made in the coming weeks. Kevin Smith was selected as Director, Retail Food and Cooperative Programs Coordination Staff in July.
4. On August 17, the Associate Commissioner, Office of Regulatory Affairs announced that the plan to roll out a transformation of ORA in FY08 has been suspended in favor of taking a fresh look at the options for structuring FDA's field component to best address the challenges it faces. This means the plans to consolidate lab and district office operations is on hold.
5. Issuance of the Supplement to the 2005 Food Code has been delayed slightly but is expected to be available on the CFSAN website by the end of September 2007. An overview of the revisions to be included in the Supplement was provided at the Spring Executive Board Meeting.
6. A brief overview was provided of the voluntary nationwide recall of dozens of canned food and pet food products manufactured by Castleberry Food Company that was initiated in July in response to cases of Botulism linked to the product. Kevin expressed his appreciation to the representatives of regulatory agencies and companies in the room for their significant efforts in working to get millions of cans of product out of distribution and off consumer's shelves. The scale of the recall was massive and while there were many lessons learned about how to best get the message out and deploy personnel and technology on such a large scale, the coordinated efforts between industry and Federal, State and local agencies may have been important in limiting the number of botulism cases to eight thus far.
7. CFSAN continues to work on the development of an on-line searchable data base of interpretations of the Food Code and related Food Safety information. Such a database will at first be made available to FDA personnel only, with the intention of eventually making it more widely available.
8. Starting in October/November 2008, FDA Retail Food Specialists will be visiting close to 1000 food establishments in various areas around the US to collect data on the occurrence

of foodborne illness risk factors at retail and foodservice. Specialists will contact the State and local agencies where those establishments are located to help optimize cooperation and participation. Data from that effort will go into a report to be published in 2009 as follow up to the similar 2000 and 2004 reports.

9. At the biennial meeting of the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference in August, interest was expressed at various committee meetings in having ISSC continue to work with CFP on issues related to the sale and service of molluscan shellfish at retail and food service. A new CFP representative to the ISSC Traceback Committee is still needed.
10. In October, CFSAN will host a meeting of the CFP ad-hoc workgroup on Food Defense established by the CFP Executive Board. FDA appreciates CFP involvement in enhancing the existing CARVER+ Shock software tool that FDA made available this year. The intent is to make available a Phase 2 version that is geared more specifically to Retail and Foodservice applications.
11. FDA will soon be rolling out a follow up to its ALERT campaign that will be directed at helping food establishments and facilities inform employees that they are the first line of defense and what they can do to prevent intentional attacks of the food supply.
12. FDA will soon issue an advisory for retailers and food service operators, as well as consumers, about the hazards associated with the sale, service and consumption of Pufferfish from un approved sources. This advisory comes in response to several recent incidents in which patrons have experienced severe reactions to the toxins that are commonly found in pufferfish, a product that is seeing increased popularity, particularly in Asian markets and restaurants.