

Interagency Risk Assessment Consortium Fall Technical and Policy Quarterly Meeting Report December 13, 2010

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Interagency Risk Assessment Consortium (IRAC) held its winter quarterly meeting of the technical committee December 13 in College Park Maryland. Chair Isabel Walls welcomed the group and asked for self introductions. Technical and policy representatives and risk assessors from various agencies (Table 1) participated on site or by the phone.

“5-MINUTE” AGENCY UPDATES

Technical representatives in attendance gave a brief overview of food safety risk analysis issues in their agencies that may be of interest to other agencies.

IRAC WORK GROUP UPDATES AND DISCUSSION

***L. monocytogenes* Dose Response Workgroup**

Sherri Dennis reported that the interagency Steering Committee for the workshop has been very active in putting the workshop together. The dates for the workshop will be March 17 and 18, 2011. IRAC and JIFSAN are co-sponsoring the workshop. An agenda has been set with presentations for approx. half of day-1 and breakout sessions for day-1 afternoon and day-2 morning. The focus of the workshop will be on a scientific dialogue among leading experts on the latest data, pathology, state-of-the-art modeling, and better characterization of uncertainty. Janell Kause added that a better characterization of Lm dose response will become more important as we move from quantifying relative risk reduction to food safety metrics to measure food safety progress. Sherri indicated that questions for the breakout sessions have been drafted and will be finalized January. Invitations have been sent to participants and 48 people have accepted. All speakers and moderators have been confirmed. Sherri noted that the maximum capacity for the workshop is 50 participants. Outcomes of the workshop, including presentations, will be made available on FoodRisk.org.

Susceptible Population Workshop

On behalf of Jane Van Doren, Sherri Denis noted that Jane is working with two other IRAC members to draft a manuscript based on the workshop.

ANNUAL PLAN FOR FY2011

Updating the IRAC Charter – signing ceremony

Isabel Walls noted that the latest version of the revised charter incorporated edits suggested by CFSAN. IRAC members present reviewed the charter and made an additional suggestion for clarification. Signatories from CFSAN (Michael Landa) and FSIS (Alfred Almanza) have been confirmed. The signing ceremony will be on February 8th at the USDA Whitten Building. The head of each IRAC participating agency is the appropriate person to sign the new charter. Dr. Walls requested that IRAC representatives from other agencies forward their signatory information by January 31. She also requested that each agency review their representative(s) on the Technical Committee and Policy Council and send any updated names to her.

The new charter reflects a recent recommendation from the President’s Food Safety Working Group that a Risk Assessment Coordinating Council be formed. Currently the IRAC Policy Council is co-chaired by CFSAN and FSIS. The possibility of having a third co-chair from CDC was discussed. Andy Maccabe noted CDC had an internal discussion on co-chairing, and decided the current status of two co-chairs from CFSAN and FSIS works well for CDC. CDC is comfortable with the current status of representation on

the Policy Council and Technical Committee and does not wish to change it. There was a suggestion for reaching out the AMS to participate in IRAC since AMS has two large surveys ongoing to collect data for the Pesticide Database Program and the Microbiological Database Program. Isabel Walls will reach out to AMS and seek participation on IRAC and the signing ceremony.

There was a request to make a change to the language in IRAC goals as written in the charter. Current language is: “Develop or oversee the development of interagency risk assessments.” There was concern that this was prescriptive, so this was changed to “Provide a forum to collaborate and share technical expertise in the development of interagency risk assessments.”

Updating the Website

Sherri Dennis noted at the fall meeting we have discussed a mechanism for IRAC agencies to contribute to funding the FoodRisk.org website. The current IRAC page on the website needs improvement to include all work products as well as presenting the contents in a more exciting format. Several IRAC members have reviewed the website and made initial suggestions for improvement. She suggested that a small workgroup be established to review the current website and make recommendations for IRAC consideration (including contents, presentation, and external links to IRAC agencies and others). Yuhuan Chen volunteered to coordinate the workgroup activity. IRAC members interested in participating in the workgroup can forward the information to Isabel Walls.

David Hrdy noted that EPA has a database on food commodity intake that is made available on a CD upon request. The database contains searchable recipes and other information, which Aaron Niman will present in his talk. Attendees recognized that the database would be extremely helpful for foodborne illness attribution and developing consumption estimates for risk assessments in general. We agreed that posting the database on FoodRisk.org would be extremely beneficial to the risk analysis community and will try to work out a mechanism to post the database.

WORKSHOPS/ OTHER ACTIVITIES

IRAC presented a certificate of appreciate to Sharon Edelson-Mammel, who served as the previous Executive Secretary.

Isabel Walls noted that there are opportunities to incorporate food safety into two broad government initiatives: the Feed the Future Initiative and the Global Health Initiative. Recently, food and water safety has been incorporated into the Feed the Future Initiative as part of the strategy to improve food preservation and food safety at the local community level around the world to combat hunger.

Janell Kause indicated that USDA has initiated efforts to develop guidelines for scientific integrity and she would have more update at the Spring IRAC Meeting.

Sherri Dennis suggested that we explore the idea of a joint IRAC/IFSAC workshop on attribution models and the role of risk assessment. A linkage between the two approaches can serve to “validate” each other. David Hrdy noted that the traceability aspect can also be considered. There was a great deal of support for the idea and we decide to put this on the agenda for the Spring Meeting for further discussion to develop an outline for a proposed workshop.

PRESENTATIONS

There were two presentations at the meeting. (1) Aaron Niman from the EPA Office of Pesticide Programs gave a presentation on the “Food Commodity Intake Database”, and (2) Isabel Walls gave a talk on “Ensuring the Safety of the Food Supply while Facilitating International Trade,” which she

recently presented at a Food Safety Conference and Expo in Shanghai, China. The presentation slides will be posted on FoodRisk.org

Table 1. Attendance (* participated by phone):

Aaron Niman	EPA OPP
Andrew Maccabe*	DHHS CDC
David Hrdy	EPA OPP
Denise Eblen	USDA FSIS
Hoshing Chang*	FDA CFSAN
Isabel Walls	USDA NIFA
Janell Kause	USDA FSIS
Julie Panalski	USDA FNS
Karin Hoelzer	FDA CFSAN
Kerry Dearfield	USDA FSIS
Meryl Lubran	USDA FSIS
Mary Torrence*	USDA ARS
Mike Broder*	EPA
Ram Rao	USDA NIFA
Régis Pouillot	FDA CFSAN
Sharon Edelson-Mammel	FDA CFSAN
Sherri Dennis	FDA CFSAN
Yuhuan Chen	FDA CFSAN
Wen Zou*	FDA NCTR
