

# **Interagency Risk Assessment Consortium Technical Committee Winter Meeting Report**

December 6, 2012

## **Welcome and Introductions**

The Interagency Risk Assessment Consortium (IRAC) held its 2012 winter quarterly meeting of the Technical Committee December 6, 2012. The meeting was hosted by the Joint Institute for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (JIFSAN) in College Park, Maryland. Technical and policy representatives and guests from various agencies (Table 1) participated on site or by phone.

## **“5 minute” Agency Updates**

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

## **IRAC Work Group Updates**

### IRAC-IFSAC Risk Assessment as a Method for Determining Attribution to Foodborne Illness

Sandy Hoffmann reported the workgroup completed the draft document “Leveraging Epidemiological and Risk Assessment Methods to Improve the Quality of Information for Making Risk-based Decisions in Regulating Food Safety”. The ~10-page draft was sent in November to IRAC members for review and comment. The workgroup developed this white paper based on the joint IRAC/ Interagency Food Safety Analytics Committee (IFSAC) webinars/workshop held in 2011/2012. The report is very important and it is intended for distribution within the IFSAC agencies (FDA, FSIS and CDC) to help increase understanding among decision makers at these agencies on epidemiological and risk assessment methodology, and the potential value of initiating some collaborative projects. Several suggested projects are included in this paper. The workgroup also intends to develop this into a publishable manuscript as a next step, so that it would lead to broader distribution.

### Clarification of the Various Approaches for Assessing Risk

Kerry Dearfield reported the workgroup had made very good progress on drafting a revision of the white paper on the topic. Janell Kaue has come on board as a co-author and provided a lot of good inputs. Frank Hearl might have several points to add. The key message of the paper is that various approaches (qualitative or quantitative) can be useful and may be adequate to inform decisions, depending on the risk management questions. The workgroup plans to finalize a draft and send it to IRAC for one more round of review by the end of December/January. Isabel thanks Kerry for his leadership for the workgroup and for developing the white paper.

### *L. monocytogenes* Dose Response Workgroup

The manuscript based on the outcomes of the *Listeria* Dose Response Workshop, co-sponsored by IRAC and JIFSAN, was published in the *Risk Analysis Journal* (link to paper <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/risa.12005/abstract>).

### **Transition in Leadership**

Kerry Dearfield, also on behalf of Policy Council co-Chair Sherri Dennis, presented a certificate of appreciation to Isabel Walls for serving as Chair of the Technical Committee for the past several years. Much appreciation was expressed to Isabel for undertaking the leadership of the IRAC. Among the many accomplishments during Isabel's tenure, she helped advance the network of IRAC participants, adding additional members and keeping them better informed during the meetings and in the intervals between the meetings; improve the visibility of IRAC through several workshops, co-sponsoring symposia, and giving presentations on the work of IRAC; and put in other efforts that might often go unnoticed (such as developing meeting agendas and recruiting interesting speakers). Through her leadership, IRAC re-energized the consortium and brought increased attention to its value, as evidence of the re-signed charter in February 2011 (see photos in Appendix). New Chair of Technical Committee Yuhuan Chen indicated that she would try to follow Isabel's example and carry on coordinating the work of IRAC members to achieve our goals in the coming year. Jane van Doren from CFSAN assumed the role of Executive Secretary.

### **Discussions of New Activities**

In September, IRAC and the Capital Area Food Protection Association (CAFPA, the local chapter of IAFP) successfully co-sponsored a symposium titled "The Interagency Risk Assessment Consortium's Role in Federal Government Risk Assessment and Related Activities" that included speakers from five IRAC member agencies. We also submitted a proposal titled "Integrating Different Risk Assessments into Policy Context" to the 2013 IAFP annual meeting. The proposal was not accepted because the IAFP Program Committee indicated that the subject had been covered in recent IAFP meetings. One issue raised was the lack of diversity from different organizations in the proposed speakers. We plan to discuss and revise the proposal to include speakers from a greater number of agencies and resubmit it for 2014 IAFP meeting.

We also discussed ideas for new activities for 2013, including an idea proposed by Linda Abbott for a mini-SRA meeting in the DC area. IRAC members in attendance expressed a great deal of interest and support for co-sponsoring the symposium with the National Capital Area Chapter of SRA. Members that may have speakers include FDA OFVM, CFSAN, ERS, EPA, NIOSH, CTP, FSIS and ORACBA. Sandy Hoffmann suggested several possible venues downtown; FDA can also identify meeting room in the CFSAN Wiley building. An April timeframe was suggested and we will circle back to Linda Abbott and the NCAC SRA chair to develop a draft agenda.

## Presentation

Dr. Clare Narrod from JIFSAN, Manager of Risk Analysis Program, gave a presentation titled “Partnership: Key for Success in Food Safety Education and Training.” Clare gave an overview of recent successes and new initiatives at JIFSAN and Foodrisk.org, including training programs on risk analysis, GAPs and GAGPs, low-acid canned food, food inspection, and train-the-trainer. JIFSAN partners with FDA CFSAN and CVM and offers training in the U.S. and in many countries around the world. It has established global collaborating centers in several countries. JIFSAN has an ongoing project that aims to evaluate the impact of its various training programs. Foodrisk.org hosts the IRAC website. It was recently re-structured to better communicate risk projects, including IRAC products and exclusives risk tools and reports at <http://foodrisk.org/exclusives/>.

**Table 1. Attendance (\* participated by phone)**

Barry Hooberman	FDA OFVM
Beth Calvey*	FDA CFSAN
Denise Eblen	USDA FSIS
David Hrdy	EPA OPP
Fan Wang-Cahill	USDA APHIS
Frank Hearl*	CDC NIOSH
Isabel Walls	USDA NIFA
Jane van Doren	FDA CFSAN
Janell Kause	USDA FSIS
Kerry Dearfield	USDA FSIS
Mark Powell*	USDA ORACBA
Mary Bartholomew*	FDA CVM
Mike Broder*	EPA
Neil Stiber	FDA ORA
Phil Yaeger*	FDA CTP
Sandra Hoffmann	USDA ERS
Sharon Edelson-Mammel	FDA CFSAN
Wendy Hall	USDA APHIS
Yuhuan Chen	FDA CFSAN

Appendix. Photos from signing ceremony for IRAC new Charter, February 8, 2011.

