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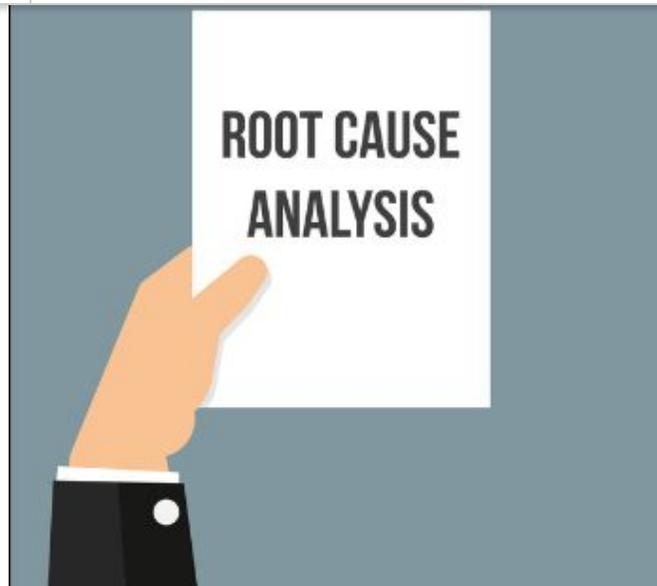
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Pew Charitable Trust Publishes Root Cause Analysis Guide and Supporting Documents



Earlier this month, the Food and Drug Administration released an [action plan](#) to improve the safety of romaine lettuce and other leafy greens. FDA had already initiated vital research and a year-long testing program for newly harvested romaine lettuce that could help the agency uncover root causes of foodborne outbreaks.

Romaine from the Salinas, California, region tainted with *E.coli* sickened more than 200 people in the United States and Canada during three overlapping foodborne outbreaks last fall, and had been a recurrent issue even before then. Although FDA declared in January that the outbreaks appeared to be over, the agency also [said](#) that it will continue to investigate the underlying root causes throughout this year's growing season.

In situations such as these, root cause analysis (RCA) can inform crucial improvements to an industry's food safety system and stop recurring outbreaks. That's because this investigative approach aims to answer not just *what* things went wrong but *why* they did, and which actions could prevent these problems from recurring. A new publication from The Pew Charitable Trusts, "[A Guide for Conducting a Food Safety Root Cause Analysis](#)," describes how food businesses and public health agencies of any size can design and execute effective RCAs and benefit from their findings, even when analyses leave some questions unresolved. Also released is an article and a Q&A with Frank Yiannas, FDA deputy commissioner for food policy and response.

[Root Cause Analyses Are 'Critical to Preventing Foodborne Illnesses'](#)
[FDA Adapts Its Investigation of Romaine Contamination to Address Key Challenges](#)

In April, AFDO will be hosting an upcoming webinar about the guide and the overall release by Pew. Watch for details.

Safety



On Monday, March 23rd, Texan Mindy Brashears was confirmed as the undersecretary of food safety. She previously served as Deputy Undersecretary from January, 2019 until Monday when she became the 5th Senate-Confirmed Undersecretary of Food Safety.

Brashears now holds the highest food safety job in the U.S. government. The Under Secretary chairs the U.S. Codex Steering Committee, which provides guidance to U.S. delegations to the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Brashears is a past-chair of the National Alliance for Food Safety and Security. In this post, Brashears is responsible for oversight of the Food Safety and Inspection Service, including policies and programs. FSIS regulates the nation's meat, poultry, certain egg products, and catfish.

Brashears is a past-chair of the National Alliance for Food Safety and Security. Learn more about Brashears [here](#).

Salmonella After-Action Report Released by FSIS



FSIS has posted on its website an [after-action review report](#) for the investigation of a 2018 outbreak of *Salmonella* Enteritidis illnesses associated with raw, breaded chicken. During May–September 2018, public health officials in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and FSIS investigated an outbreak of 13 *Salmonella* Enteritidis illnesses linked to raw, breaded chicken products obtained primarily from a food pantry and sourced from an FSIS-regulated establishment. The products may have appeared to be cooked but were, in fact, raw. The lack of safe handling and cooking instructions after repackaging may have led to inadequate cooking by consumers.

To help prevent future illnesses, FSIS is developing educational materials for food recovery operations, including promotion of proper product labeling.

To view the full report, please visit <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/recalls-and-public-health-alerts/foodborne-outbreak-investigation/outbreak-raw-breaded-chicken-2018>. The purpose of FSIS after-action review reports is to share lessons learned with industry and public health partners from outbreak investigations to help prevent illness and improve response. To view additional reports and learn more about outcomes of FSIS outbreak investigations, please visit <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/OutbreakOutcomes>.

Risk factors, safety precautions for carry out foods during pandemic



Food Safety News has shared a great resource from [Ben Chapman](#), associate professor and food safety extension specialist at North Carolina State University. Chapman posted [this tip sheet for dining outside the home](#) during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and it was shared by FSN. Thanks to the publication and Chapman for the information.

Consumer Brands Association Develops Employee Test Positive Protocol



Consumer Brands Association, formerly Grocery Manufacturers Association, has developed guidance to address when employees test positive for the coronavirus. [Food Industry Recommended Protocols When Employee/Customer Tests Positive for COVID-19](#) has been reviewed by FDA and CDC. Food production facilities, distributors, retailers and wholesalers are part of our nation's "critical infrastructure" and must remain operational to feed the country. Inconsistent approaches to reacting to an employee who tests positive for COVID-19 has the potential to jeopardize our food system. This document recommends a consistent approach in how a company can continue operations in the event an individual has tested positive, given the global COVID-19 pandemic and high transmissibility of this respiratory virus from person to person. This is a living document that will be updated as CDC/FDA/FSIS/OSHA guidances are updated.

FDA Fact Sheet on Safety Distributing Unused Human

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions on in-store dining, restaurants and restaurant suppliers may have surplus food that they cannot use and are looking for ways to repurpose their inventory. The preferred option is to use this food as human food and [FDA has provided some regulatory flexibility for that redistribution](#). Another option is to send the unused food for use as animal food. Unused restaurant and grocery store food is commonly repurposed as animal food and is a valuable way to re-use food in a way that limits the impact on the environment.

If you can't redistribute the unused food for human food use, FDA has developed a [new Fact Sheet](#) on how to safely distribute it for animal food use during COVID-19.

FDA Continues to Answer COVID-19 Questions & Update Documents



On Friday, March 20, the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Food and Cosmetic Information Center (FCIC)/Technical Assistance Network (TAN) released responses for questions of interest to AFDO members that were posed during the recent webinar on COVID-19. [These answers can be found here.](#)

This is in addition to updating its [COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions](#) page to include guidance regarding food products. Real time updates of the FDA's Food Safety and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) page can be found at <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/food-safety-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>. Updates are dated so you are able to tell what information has been added each time.

As part of the AFDO commitment to providing information and resources to members and the those we serve, we continue to add resources to the [COVID-19 Resource Page](#). We continue to offer links

be shared with other members, please email them or the link to bbenschoter@afdo.org. We appreciate everyone who helps us be more prepared.

Winners of Early-Bird Membership Renewal Contest

Grant Prize Winner (1 Free 2020 conference registration): Jessica Rankin, MDMR-Mississippi Dept. of Marine Resources

1st Prize Winner (\$100 worth of AFDO publications): Harold McDowell, Retired- North Carolina Department of Agriculture Food & Drug Protection Division

2nd Prize Winner (free conference event ticket – up to \$60): Andrea Riley, Georgia Department of Agriculture

Congratulations to the winners!!

StateFoodSafety launches free online food safety course for volunteers

By News Desk on Mar 26, 2020 12:03 am StateFoodSafety has launched a free online training course to instruct charitable feeding and disaster relief volunteers in vital food safety principles. After a year of development, the 22-minute course has been released just in time to help train volunteers on how to safely serve food in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Food training is... [Continue Reading](#)

COVID-19: News You Should Know

How To Regulate Distilleries and Others Nationwide Diverting Production to Fill Hand Sanitizer Need

Licensed commercial distilleries are diverting their production lines to develop alcohol-based sanitizers. Many of these distilleries are indicating that they have received FDA and ATTB approval to do so. With the best intention, there is still a need for oversight. The FDA has received a number of

Guidance for Industry: Temporary Policy for Preparation of Certain Alcohol-Based Hand Sanitizer Products During the Public Health Emergency (COVID-19) can be found [here](#).

In addition, the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (ATTB) has waived provisions of internal revenue law with regard to distilled spirits, and therefore is providing certain exemptions and authorizations to distilled spirits permittees who wish to produce ethanol-based hand sanitizers to address the demand for such products during this emergency. Any existing Distilled Spirits Permittee (DSP) therefore can immediately commence production of hand sanitizer or distilled spirits (ethanol) for use in hand sanitizer, as described below, without having to obtain authorization first initially approved through June 30, 2020. More details can be found [here](#).

Defining Critical Worker Positions in the COVID-19 Crisis

There are reports of food manufacturing personnel not being allowed to go to work by law enforcement and similar situations. This guidance document can be helpful in helping identify those who can and should be working. The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency or CISA developed an initial list of “Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers” to help state and local officials as they work to protect their communities, while ensuring continuity of functions critical to public health and safety, as well as economic and national security. The list can also inform critical infrastructure community decision-making to determine the sectors, sub-sectors, segments, or critical functions that should continue normal operations, appropriately modified to account for Centers for Disease Control (CDC) workforce and customer protection guidance. This guidance document can be found on the AFDO COVID-19 Resources Page at www.afdo.org or by clicking [here](#).

ASTHO List of Restaurant Restrictions Available

The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials has created a resource that has the list of restaurant restrictions. The ASTHO link below summarizes recent updates on state and territorial intervention actions for restaurant restrictions because of the COVID-19 outbreak. This snapshot will be updated periodically as new information is available. Many jurisdictions have mandated restrictions or limitations for on-site consumption of food and/or beverages. All jurisdictions with mandated restaurant closures offer alternative options for patrons to purchase food and beverages for offsite consumption. <https://astho.org/COVID-19/Restaurant-Restrictions/>

How to Communicate During The COVID-19 Crisis Guidance Available

Clear messaging from health agencies is essential to keep the public informed during the COVID-19 outbreak. The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials has created a guidance document to help. See [ASTHO's new crisis communications guide](#) for concise, easily digestible answers to 45 pressing COVID-19 questions. This document is being update as the situation unfolds.

- Complete Training ([see sample list](#))
- Clean, vacuum, and wash state vehicles
- Work on data clean up projects (inventory, past dues, not inspected, etc)
- Take additional new online training such as general education courses ([see list](#))
- Listen to free AFDO podcasts or webcasts
- Assist in updating policies
- Complete paper audits of inspections
- Do the employee response portions of employee evaluations
- Read food safety books that help inspire staff such as “[Poisoned](#)” and “[Poisoned Squad](#)”

Do you have ideas or activities you have identified? Please send them to afdo@afdo.org for inclusion in our ongoing list.

AFDO Rolls Out Professional Development

Later this week AFDO will be announcing additional virtual training opportunities available in April. This offerings are in addition to topical webinars like the one below. Be looking for this announcement and plan now to attend.

AFDO Professional Development Series Kicked Off

AFDO is offering a series of FREE webinars and web-based training courses that can be utilized for staff development. AFDO anticipates providing a variety of courses and webinars along with our regular podcasts over the next several weeks. Because we are continuously developing new offerings, please [visit this webpage](#) on a regular basis to look for the latest training courses.

In addition, you can access the AFDO podcast catalog at the following links. Videos can be found at <https://afdo.podbean.com/> and audio podcasts at <https://afdoaudio.podbean.com/>. Or download the AFDO app (IT'S FREE) so you can listen or watch on the go. The app is available for iPhone and Android.

No CEU's or Certificates of Attendance will be available for these sessions.

Webinar: Boots on the Ground Reports from State and Local Food Safety Agencies on COVID-19 Response

A panel of state and local food safety agencies will present on how they have been handling COVID-19 Response including materials developed and best practices while inspections have largely stopped. Join these food safety leaders to learn more!

Date: Friday, April 3, 2020

Time: 2:00PM - 3:30PM ET

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- Brendalee Viveiros, MPH, Principal Public Health Promotion Specialist, Rhode Island Department of Health
- Lauren DiPrete, MPH, REHS, Senior Environmental Health Specialist, Southern Nevada Health District
- Danny Ripley, Environmental Health Specialist, Communicable and Environmental Diseases and Emergency Preparedness, Tennessee Department of Health
- DJ Irving, Environmental Health Specialist, Communicable and Environmental Diseases and Emergency Preparedness, Tennessee Department of Health

[Register Now](#)

Webinar: Outbreak -- Foodborne Illness and the Struggle for Food Safety -- a chat with author Timothy Lytton

Timothy D. Lytton is Distinguished University Professor and Professor of Law and currently serves as the Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development at Georgia State University College of Law. Lytton's research examines health and safety regulation, with a focus on food policy, gun violence, and sexual abuse. Lytton's most recent book, *Outbreak: Foodborne Illness and the Struggle for Food Safety* (University of Chicago Press 2019) analyzes the complex interaction of government regulation, industry supply-chain management, and civil liability in the U.S. food safety system. His food policy research also covers obesity, nutrition labeling, and school food.

Date: Friday, April 6, 2020

Time: 2:00PM - 3:00PM ET

Who: Timothy D. Lytton is Distinguished University Professor and Professor of Law and currently serves as the Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development at Georgia State University College of Law

[Register Now](#)

Webinar: Food Safety Legislation Now and Future -- a chat with Doug Farquhar

In 2019, state legislatures introduced more than 700 bills regarding food and food safety in 2019, with 132 being enacted and 17 adopted into law. Laws in 42 of the 50 states, Puerto Rico and the District

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Alaska and Ohio, which had no bills regarding food safety. **So what does that mean for the year 2020 at the state legislative level?** Doug Farquhar, director of Government Affairs at National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) , will provide insight to what happened last year and how that will inform what could happen this year.

Webinar: Food Safety Legislation Now and Future -- a chat with Doug Farquhar

Who: Doug Farquhar, J.D.

Director of Government Affairs at National Environmental Health Association (NEHA)

When: April 10, 2020

Time: 1 p.m. EDT/10 a.m. PDT

[Register Now](#)



AFDO Announces Availability of FDA Scientific Conference Grant Program Scholarships

The Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) will apply for a scientific conference grant from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The purpose of the award is to provide scholarships to state and local food & drug regulatory personnel to attend the 2020 AFDO Annual Educational Conference (AEC). This year's AEC is being held June 27 – July 1, 2020 at the Renaissance in Glendale, AZ.

We will be able to fund a **limited** number of representatives to the conference. All applications must be submitted no later than the close of business on **Friday, April 3, 2020**.

[Apply Now](#)

What You Need to Know Now

AFDO Registration is Open!



This year's annual educational conference will be co-hosted by the Western Association of Food and Drug Officials and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The Conference will take place in Phoenix, AZ from June 27 - July 1, 2020

Get ready for five days of educational sessions focused on five content tracks. Make new connections with peers and find out how they are managing common challenges.

In addition, several training opportunities will be offered the Friday before the conference, June 26th, including an active managerial train the trainer session and a workshop for new program managers among others. If you have interest in the additional learning opportunities, announcements will be out shortly so don't make your travel plans just yet.

Come Early. Stay Late. Experience More at Conference

Now is the time to book your participation in pre-conference training opportunities and tours. Spaces will go fast and available for an additional \$50 fee beyond the conference registration.

Visit <https://afdoconference.org/registration-2020/> to register for conference and get your seat in these great opportunities listed below. Learn more by clicking [here](#).

- **2020 Active Managerial Control 4-Hour Workshop**, Saturday morning, June 27
- **Mutual Reliance: Utilization of State Lab Analytical Packages** Saturday morning, June 27
- **The Art and Science of Storytelling**, Saturday morning, June 27

Wednesday, July 1, 50 people will be able to participate in the special AFDO cannabis offsite tour. This is a unique opportunity to increase your awareness and education by touring a cannabis facility.

opportunities.

AFDO Continuing Education Tuition Reimbursement Awards

In 2017, AFDO established a non-traditional continuing education tuition reimbursement fund to be awarded annually to worthy officials who are currently employed at a state, local, tribal, or territorial government agency and are returning to college or continuing their education to seek better career and work opportunities. Each award amount is not to exceed \$1500 and is not renewable. This scholarship is coordinated for AFDO by the Professional Development Committee.

All applications must be received by **April 15 of the current year** to be considered for the current year's award.

[Read more and apply](#)

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FDA Updates

FDA Reopens Comment Period on Use of Ultrafiltered Milk in Certain Cheeses

The FDA is reopening the comment period on the proposed rule to permit the use of ultrafiltered milk in certain cheeses and related cheese products to provide stakeholders an additional 120 days to submit comments. The current comment period will close on March 30, 2020; the new comment period will close 120 days following publication of the notice in the Federal Register. FDA will notify stakeholders when the Federal Register notice publishes.

[View the Permit and Submit Comments](#)

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Job Opportunities

Regulatory) - McDonald's

- Work Collaboratively To Align McDonald's Food Safety Standards And Procedures For The Restaurants With The Current Version Of The FDA Model Food Code And Other Changes To State And Local Food Code Regulations.
- Provide Food Safety Regulatory Support And Guidance To Our Field Operations Teams And Owner Operators To Help Resolve Health Department Opportunities And Help Protect The Brand.
- Identify Standard Methodologies And Solutions To Mitigate Or Resolve Current Regulatory Compliance Opportunities.
- Maintain A Health Department Inspection Results Scorecard To Track And Report To Leadership On Food Safety Results And Trends.
- Proactively Anticipate And Recognize Compliance Opportunities, Major Performance Trends, Regulatory Developments That Could Adversely Affect Food Safety.
- Summarize And Communicate Key Changes To State Food Code Regulations To Help Our Restaurants Be In Compliance.
- Form Relationships And Trust With Our Network Of Key Health Department Officials By Participating In Regulatory Meetings And Conferences.
- Help Provide Training And Support Related To Health Department Regulations And Interactions To Our Network Of Operations Food Safety Leads
- Apply For Variances To Gain Approval Of McDonald's Procedures When Necessary Or Requested By A Health Department Jurisdiction.
- Work Collaboratively In A Cross Functional Environment To Mitigate Food Safety Opportunities As Needed.
- Assist In Integrating Food Safety Into New Equipment, Food Procedures And Products.

[View more and/or Apply](#)

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Other Training Opportunities



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Supplier Verification Programs

Preventive Controls for Human Foods Course (PCQI)

[Course Information](#)

Foreign Supplier Verification Programs Course (FSVP)

[Course Information](#)

Intentional Adulteration Conducting Vulnerability Assessments (IAVA)

[Course Information](#)



EAS Consulting Group Training

Dietary Supplement Labeling Compliance Seminar

April 14 - 15, 2020 - Long Island, NY

Food Labeling Compliance Seminar

April 16 - 17, 2020 - Long Island, NY

EAS Complimentary On-Demand Webinar Understanding GRAS Submissions and Avoiding Data Pitfalls

April 16, 2020, 1:00PM ET

Lockout-Tagout



The Food Safety Doctor LLC

Promoting Public Health and Food Safety through Training and FSMA Awareness

FSPCA Intentional Adulteration Vulnerability Assessments Qualified Individuals (IAVA-QI) Certificate Training.

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- October 14, 2020: Grand Prairie
- Date TBD: Singapore

<https://thefoodsafetydoctorllc.com/fspca-iava-qi-course-sc>

FSPCA Preventive Controls for Human Foods Qualified Individuals (PCQI) Certificate Training. & International HACCP Alliance (HACCP) Deep Dive Training

- February 25-27, 2020: PCQI: Online (No travel required)
- April 21-23, 2020: PCQI: Grand Prairie, Texas
- June 16-18, 2020 : HACCP Deep Dive Grand Prairie, Texas
- September 8-9, 2020: HACCP Deep Dive Grand Prairie, Texas

<https://thefoodsafetydoctorllc.com/fspca-pcqi-training-1>

FSPCA Foreign Supplier Verification Program Qualified Individuals (FSVP-QI) Certificate Training.

- August 11-12, 2020: FSVP-QI: Grand Prairie, Texas

<https://thefoodsafetydoctorllc.com/fspca-fsvp-qi-training>

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Laws and Regulations Committee Updates

Laws and Regulations Committee Update

A collection of current food, drug, device, and consumer product regulatory issues and news

[March 23 - 24, 2020](#)

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[March 27, 2020](#)

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