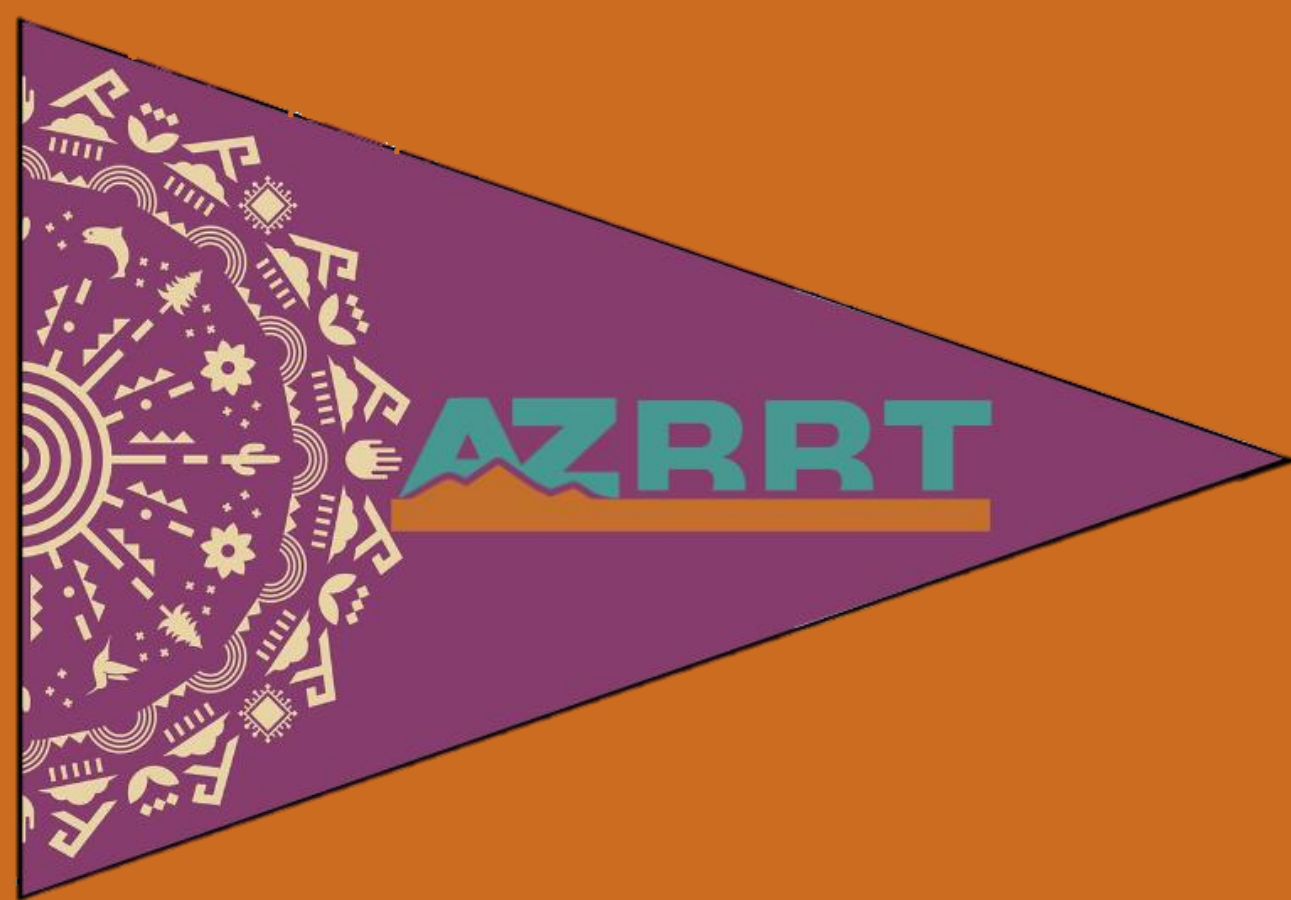


# Arizona Rapid Response Team

## “Bases Loaded”

Jill Miller<sup>1</sup>, Reshma Neupane<sup>2</sup>, Norman Barnett<sup>1</sup>, Jacob Van Diepen<sup>2</sup>  
Arizona Department of Agriculture<sup>1</sup>, Arizona Department of Health Services<sup>2</sup>



### Developments

- Bi-weekly Foodborne Illness Meetings  
FoodSHIELD
- RRT Monthly Meetings
  - Shared Documents
- Joint Trainings
- Epi-ready, ER324 09/2024
  - Ag Water Workshop between AZDA and UA 09/2024
- Joint Meetings
- ADHS’ Sanitarians Conference, Joint Panel 11/2024
  - 6-State Regional Meeting 10/2024
- Subject Matter Experts



ADHS - EH, Maricopa County EH, and AZDA/AZRRT attended the 6-State Meeting (West 4 regional) in Lakewood, CO Oct 29-30, 2024

### AZDA- Department of Agriculture

#### Out of State Sample

September of 2024 is the beginning of AZDA’s Produce Safety Rule (PSR) receiving notice of AZ produce (cantaloupe) having positive pathogen testing out of state. The AZRRT was able to be involved in the notification of the firm for the preliminary results and assisting with the recall process by conversing with the FDA and the firm regarding the recall of product.

This was a new experience for the PSR team and gave us an idea of things to focus on due to our new connection with the RRT community.

#### Possible Egg Adulteration

Nov 21<sup>st</sup> AZDA received a complaint from La Paz County regarding a possible exposure to human end use eggs with Provox Powder.

The AZDA’s egg program conducted an onsite visit Nov 22<sup>nd</sup> and a follow-up visit the following Monday, Nov 25<sup>th</sup>. No eggs were on site, but the use of the oxidizer was discussed with plant management as well food and employee safety.

### Arizona’s Rapid Response Team



#### Figure 1. AZRRT Line-up

Pitcher: Arizona Rapid Response Team (AZRRT)

1st Base: AZ Department of Agriculture (AZDA)

2nd Base: AZ Department of Health Services (ADHS) - Environmental Health

3rd Base: AZ Department of Health Services (ADHS) - Epidemiology

Left Outfield: Local Health Departments (LHDs)

Center field: University of Arizona (UA) – Department of Environmental Science Cooperative Extension

Right outfield: FDA West 4, State Liaisons and Emergency Response Coordinators

### AZRRT- Joint Response

#### AZDA, ADHS and LHD

##### Salmonella Enteritidis Suspected in Eggs

The ADHS, multiple LHDs and the AZDA worked jointly for a suspected egg cluster. This investigation highlighted for the AZRRT how various agencies would be able to work together toward a common goal.

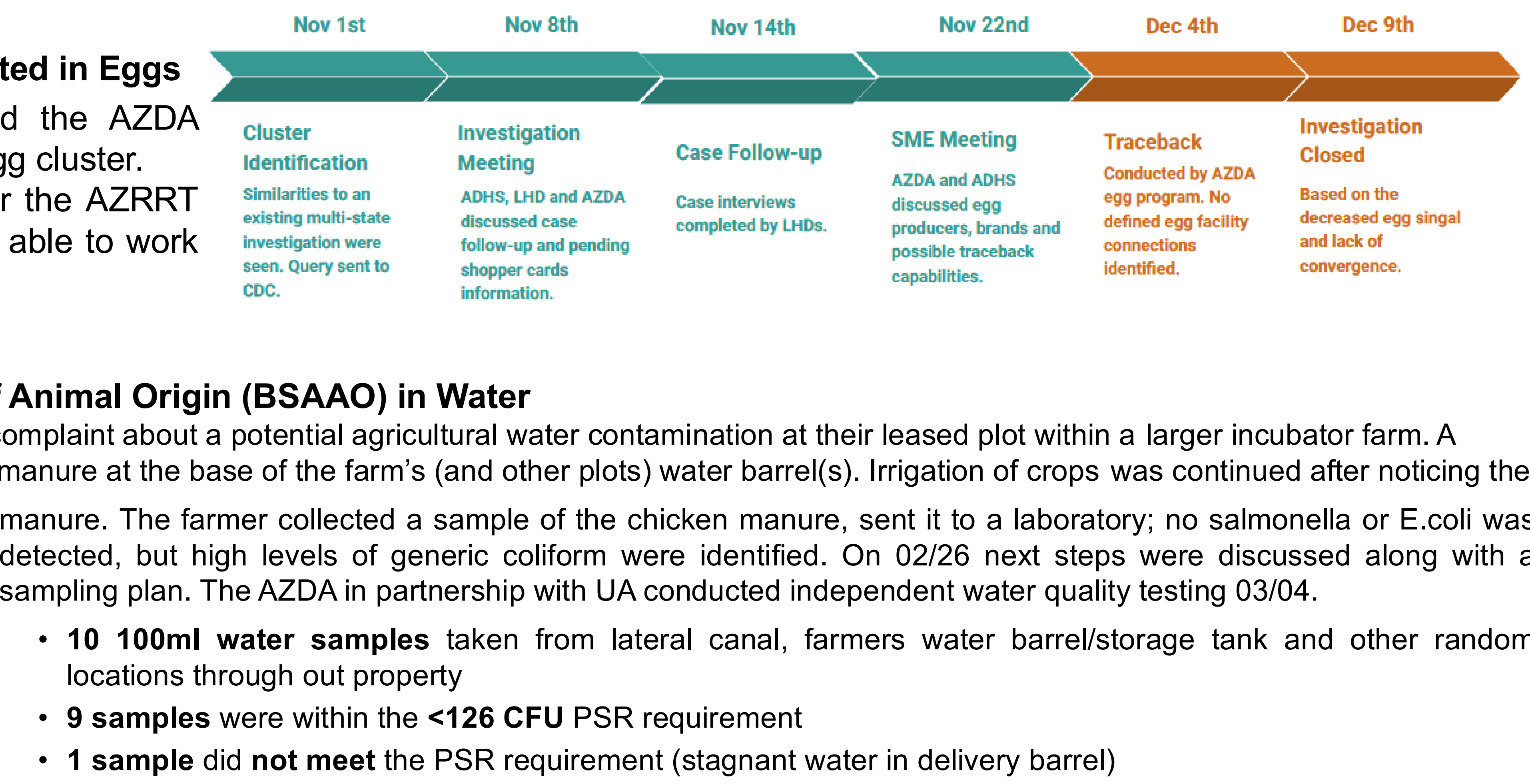
#### AZDA and UA

##### Biological Soil Amendments of Animal Origin (BSAAO) in Water

On 02/24/2024 the AZDA received a complaint about a potential agricultural water contamination at their leased plot within a larger incubator farm. A fellow grower distributed raw chicken manure at the base of the farm’s (and other plots) water barrel(s). Irrigation of crops was continued after noticing the manure. The farmer collected a sample of the chicken manure, sent it to a laboratory; no salmonella or E.coli was detected, but high levels of generic coliform were identified. On 02/26 next steps were discussed along with a sampling plan. The AZDA in partnership with UA conducted independent water quality testing 03/04.



Photo of BSAAO near water barrel.



- **10 100ml water samples** taken from lateral canal, farmers water barrel/storage tank and other random locations through out property
- **9 samples** were within the **<126 CFU** PSR requirement
- **1 sample** did **not meet** the PSR requirement (stagnant water in delivery barrel)

UA recommended flushing the barrel with stagnant water. AZDA recommended a waiting period between manure application and harvest, and worked with the farm to remove the manure. This incident provided an opportunity for the incubator farm’s general manager to attend a Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training 04/16 & 17.

### ADHS- Department of Health

#### Epidemiology Tabletop Exercise

ADHS hosted a tabletop exercise focused on botulism outbreak during the 2024 Arizona Infectious Disease (AZID) Conference. It was successfully exercised with Tribal and County Epi & EH, Providers, Infection Preventionists, State Laboratory, State EH, and Poison Control partners.



**Left-** Epi Program Manager Reshma Neupane briefing the Botulism Outbreak Exercise. **Right-** The ADHS epi team at AZID 2024.



#### Outbreak Training

ADHS successfully hosted an Applied Outbreak Training with the Colorado Food Safety Center of Excellence in February 2024.

#### Environmental Health/ Food Safety Prison Risk Factor Study

The EH team is on its second round of a Prison Risk Factor Study that identified the most common Foodborne Illness Risk Factor in the AZ Prison System. An intervention program with the goal of reducing the frequency of this violation in future inspections was implemented. The second round of the study is showing clear reductions in the frequency of warewashing violations in all Prison kitchens.

#### Cottage Foods

In response to state-wide legislation, the EH team reworked the Cottage Food Program, writing rules that greatly expanded the types of foods allowed to be produced to include TCS foods with a few exceptions. In response to a concern of increased illness, EH coordinated with RRT members to fortify internal response as well as communications and coordination with LHD on Cottage Food related complaints.