

2025 RRT Speaker List — Alphabetical by Last Name



Talisha Bacon

Talisha Bacon works at the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food as the Utah Rapid Response Team/Recall Program Manager. Talisha is also a licensed Environmental Health Scientist; she currently serves as a member of the NEHA Preparedness Committee, is a co-lead on the AFDO HP 2030 Norovirus EH Assessment Tool Subgroup and is a Mentor for the NEHA Environmental Health Leadership Academy. Talisha received her Master's Degree from Westminster in Public Health.



Christian Bond

Christian Bond is the CalFERT Rapid Response Team Coordinator, a position he has held for two years. Christian has been with CDPH for nearly ten years, eight of which he spent as a member of the CalFERT RRT. He served for six years in the US Navy, graduating from Naval Nuclear Power School, before attending UC Davis and earning a B.S. in Biochemistry.



Laurel Burall

Dr. Laurel S. Burall is a Research Microbiologist at OAMT in the Human Foods Program. She received her B.A. in Biology from St. Mary's College of Maryland in 1998 and her Ph.D. in Microbiology & Immunology in 2004 from the University of Maryland, Baltimore. Her research focuses on genomics, methods development, and eco-physiology for *Listeria monocytogenes*, a leading cause of death from foodborne illness. Her current research works to better understand survival in produce cultivation environments, such as those producing enoki mushrooms and lettuce.

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Michael Burke

Michael Burke has been with the Hawai'i State Department of Health for almost 18 years, with the past three years as the Food and Drug Branch Program Manager. He has been tasked with reestablishing FDB, and implementing MFRPS is our next undertaking (he invites any MFRPS coordinators to come visit to provide in-person consultation!).



Kellie Burris

Dr. Kellie Burris is a Research Biologist in the Environmental Microbiology Branch in the Division of Food and Environmental Safety in the Office of Applied Microbiology and Technology in FDA's Human Foods Program. Kellie received B.S. degrees in animal science (2000), poultry science (2000) and food science (2001) from North Carolina State University and M.S. degrees in food microbiology (2004) and plant biotechnology (2006) from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. She received her Ph.D. in food microbiology from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 2011, where she studied natural antimicrobials for use in foods. Dr. Burris joined the FDA in 2020 and continues to work to identify how bacterial enteric pathogens are capable of colonizing and internalizing in a wide variety of fresh produce commodities through relevant environmental routes of contamination.

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Allie Busbee

Allie Busbee is an Epidemiologist at the CDC. Joining in 2022, she served as an ORISE Epidemiologist in the Division of Foodborne, Waterborne, and Environmental Diseases on the Foodborne Outbreak Response Team where she primarily investigated outbreaks of listeriosis. In October 2024, Allie joined the Influenza Division at CDC on the Domestic Surveillance Team. She is currently on a 120-day detail with the Foodborne Outbreak Response team where she helps with outbreaks of listeriosis.



Meghan Cahill

Meghan Cahill is an Analytical Chemist at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. She specializes in the elemental analysis, primarily heavy metals and nutrients, of Food, Feed, and Environmental samples by ICP-OES and ICP-MS. Miss Cahill works closely with the RRT and LFFM programs in this capacity and as the Chemistry Department's Sample Manager.



Lauren Carey

Dr. Lauren Carey is a Veterinary Medical Officer in the FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine's Complaint Emergency and Recall Branch. Her FDA work focuses on animal food complaint responses, and she continues to practice veterinary medicine on the weekend to keep her clinical work sharp.

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Isaac Carney

Isaac Carney serves as Director of the Division of Food Compliance within the Office of Surveillance and Compliance at the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM). In this capacity, he oversees CVM's animal food safety and illegal drug residue programs, which are critical for ensuring both animal food safety for pets and livestock, and the safety of the human food supply through prevention of contamination in animal-derived products including milk, meat, eggs, and honey. His primary responsibilities encompass developing and implementing comprehensive compliance strategies, coordinating product recalls, initiating enforcement actions as warranted, and supervising scientific staff to support evidence-based regulatory decision-making. The division collaborates extensively with federal and state investigative personnel to advance the Agency's mission of protecting public and animal health through effective regulatory oversight. Mr. Carney began his FDA career in 2008 as an Import Investigator, subsequently transitioning to domestic operations before joining headquarters staff in 2018. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Vermont and a degree in Criminal Justice from Champlain College.



Yi Chen

Dr. Yi Chen is a research microbiologist in OAMT of FDA Human Foods Program. He received his Ph.D. in Food Science from the Department of Food Science at the Pennsylvania State University in 2007. He has been working on the method development and validation for the detection, enumeration and whole genome sequencing analysis of *L. monocytogenes* and *Cronobacter*. He is author of the *Listeria* and *Cronobacter* chapters of FDA's Bacteriological Analytical Manual.

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Tishara Coleman

Tishara Coleman REHS/RS is the Texas Rapid Response Team Coordinator and has held the position for several years. She coordinates traceback investigations and large-scale foodborne illness response in Texas. She has a BA in Sociology/Criminology from Ohio University and a Master of Public Administration from Cleveland State University.



Josh Davis

Joshua Davis serves as a Customer Success Manager at Datastream Connexion, where he supports public health partners through the FoodSHIELD portal and the Rapid Response Team (RRT) platform. He works closely with federal, state, and local agencies to ensure these tools drive collaboration, efficiency, and preparedness in food and feed safety. With a strong focus on customer engagement, Joshua helps bridge technology and mission-critical response needs, enabling teams to act quickly and effectively in the face of emerging challenges.



Theresa Dulski

Theresa Dulski is the CDC Career Epidemiology Field Officer assigned to the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH). She received her Bachelor of Science from the University of Miami, her Masters in Public Health from Drexel University, and her Doctor of Medicine from Emory University. Dr. Dulski completed her pediatrics residency at the University of Washington and served as a primary care pediatrician in Anchorage, Alaska & Madison, Wisconsin. She started at the CDC/ADH in 2021 as an Epidemic Intelligence Service Officer before transitioning to her current role.

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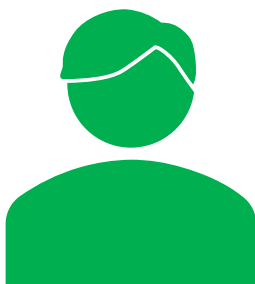
Ashlee-Rose Ferguson

Ashlee-Rose Ferguson, R.S. is the Program Manager for the Animal Feed Program at Washington State Department of Agriculture. She is an Officer for the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) as their Secretary-Treasurer, Finance Committee Chair, as well as on the Board of the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) as the AAFCO Liaison. Ashlee-Rose has her Bachelor of Science from State University of New York: College of Environmental Science and Forestry and Syracuse University and is a graduate of the International Food Protection Training Institute (IFPTI) Fellowship in Food Protection. While she's not working she enjoys spending time at home, in a temperate rain forest and salmon-spawning creek in her front yard, with her husband (Vladimir), cats (Koca, Luna, Mickey) and dog (Pepper).



Sally Flowers

Sally Flowers brings more than 20 years of experience in government, industry, and academic laboratory environments. She holds a BS in Animal Science from the University of Florida, an MS in Animal Science and a PhD in Food Science from Penn State, and a BS in Clinical Laboratory Science from the University of Nebraska Medical Center and has directed both commercial and state agricultural laboratories. In her role as AFDO Scientific Affairs Director, she provides leadership on regulatory science, survey research, training, and AFDO's Retail HACCP Plan Review Service.



Herminio Francisco

Emergency Response Coordinator, Office of Inspection and Investigations, U.S. Food and Drug Administration



Tong-Jen Fu

Dr. Fu is a Research Chemical Engineer with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Human Foods Program, Division of Food Processing Science and Technology. She conducts a wide range of research related to produce safety and food allergens. Her sprout research focuses on examining factors affecting pathogen growth during sprout production and postharvest storage, developing methods for sampling and detection of pathogens, and evaluating the efficacy of seed treatments. Dr. Fu received her Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from the Pennsylvania State University.



Mark Glover

BS in Nursing from Univ. of Missouri in 1996, moved to Florida and practiced nursing until he became a commissioned officer in the United States Public Health Service in 2003. He soon moved to North Carolina to work at the federal prison as an oncology nurse at Butner, NC. In Dec. of 2010, he transferred to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in Kansas City, KS. and served as the District Emergency Response Coordinator. He retired from The United States Public Health Service after 30 Years in 2023. He currently serves as the FDA CVM Emergency Response Lead within the Division of Compliance, Complaint Emergency Recall Branch.

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Remedios Gose

Remedios Gose, Remie for short, holds a bachelor's degree in public health and a Master of Science in public health, major in Medical Microbiology. She joined the State Laboratories Division, Hawaii Department Health as a Supervisory Microbiologist in 2002, during the post 9/11 expansion of the Laboratory Response Network. She has contributed to numerous projects, including several "white powder" incidents, the 2009 influenza outbreak, Zika outbreak, the COVID pandemic and several local (Hawaii) outbreaks: the 2015–2016 Dengue outbreak, the 2017–2018 mumps outbreak and the 2014 measles outbreak. One of her most rewarding achievements came in 2024, when her team isolated *Listeria monocytogenes* from cotija cheese, bringing closure to a decade-long outbreak.



Alexa Gunter

Alexa Gunter has worked at the Missouri State Public Health Laboratory (MSPHL) within the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services for 10 years and is currently the Chemistry Laboratory Manager. Alexa also serves as the MSPHL's Radiation Safety Officer, Worksite Wellness Committee Chair and the Strategic Planning Committee Co-Chair. Her food safety experience is rooted in the FDA's Laboratory Flexible Funding Module Grant and the USDA's Food Emergency Response Network grant as well as childhood elevated blood lead exposures.



April Hodges

Dr. April Yvonne Hodges is a distinguished public health leader with over 15 years of federal service dedicated to protecting human and animal health on a global scale. She currently serves as Branch Chief and Supervisory Consumer Safety Officer at the FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine, where she leads the award-winning Complaint Emergency Recall Branch. Dr. Hodges holds a Ph.D. and Master's degree in Nutritional Sciences from Howard University, in Washington, D.C. and a Bachelor of Science in Biology with a strong concentration in Chemistry from Bennett College, in Greensboro, North Carolina, both HBCUs. Throughout her career, she has been recognized with numerous FDA awards including the CVM Excellence in Mentoring Award (2024), Excellence in Leadership Award (2019), High Performance Organization Award (2016) and is an Excellence in Government Fellow from the Partnership for Public Service. Dr. Hodges has been instrumental in emergency response efforts for national and international incidents. Her expertise spans regulatory compliance for human and animal foods, drugs, tobacco, and devices, emergency management, consumer complaints, product recalls, public health communications, strategic planning, SCIF debriefs due to her Top-Secret security clearance while actively mentoring the next generation of STEM professionals. She is a wife and mother of three daughters, two of whom are twins. They live in Gaithersburg, Maryland with their parakeet, Duke and their AI powered robotic pet dog, Loona

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Stephan Hughes

Stephen Hughes works in FDA's Human Foods Program, in the Office of Applied Microbiology and Technology, where he supports efforts to align regulatory science activities with the needs of food safety stakeholders inside and outside of FDA. Before joining FDA in 2012, he worked for the Virginia Department of Health, supervising a team of Environmental Health Specialists responsible for building and implementing public health programs in the areas of food safety, indoor air quality, recreational water safety, and general environmental health. Stephen has a Masters of Science in Epidemiology and Biostatistics from George Mason University.



Lisa Joseph

Lisa Joseph started as a CSO in Detroit District Office conducting domestic food inspections for five years, before joining the international cadre for one year. Next, Lisa served as a Supervisory Consumer Safety Officer for three years before she became the Detroit District Emergency Response Coordinator in 2014. As ERC, she worked closely with Michigan and Indiana RRTs on many outbreaks and investigations for six years, served as the Incident Commander on multiple high profile responses, and as Planning Section Chief in multiple regional-level NSSEs.

Lisa joined the Office of Partnerships as a Rapid Response Teams Technical Lead in September 2020, working with the other technical leads to improve the effectiveness of multi-jurisdictional food/feed emergency responses through facilitating capability and capacity development and capturing best practices from 24 funded and two voluntary RRTs. She is also actively engaged in the geographical Incident Management Team, and in many other projects related to incident response. Lisa is currently serving as the Branch Chief for the RRT and MFRPS technical leads in Branch II of the Division of Domestic Partnerships, Coordination, and Integration.

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Erin Kafka

Erin has served as the RRT Coordinator for Maryland for the past 5 years after a career in industry.



Margaret Kirchner

Dr. Margaret Kirchner works at the US FDA Office of CORE+EP. She has worked at CORE+EP for five years and assisted or coordinated the response to many outbreaks and incidents associated with food products on an interdisciplinary team. She received a BS from Penn State and a MS and PhD from NC State in Food Science with minors in Microbiology, Biotechnology, and Food Safety. Dr. Kirchner specializes in using integrative methodology and multidimensional information to investigate foodborne outbreaks.



Megan Miller

Megan received her bachelor's degree in microbiology from NMSU, where she got involved in vector-virus research. After graduation, she completed a year-long post-bac at NIH Rocky Mountain Laboratory, where I started working in biosafety levels 3 and 4, mainly worked with SARS-CoV-1 and Ebola viruses. Then she pursued a Ph.D. at Colorado State University, focusing on virus transmission. Before joining the FDA, she completed a year-long post-doc at the University of Florida, continuing virus work while also contributing to malaria vaccine research. She had been with Vet-LIRN at the Center of Veterinary Medicine for three years working with the Vet-LIRN Network on grants project and proficiency exercises. She is also involved in most situations involving emerging pathogens, particularly viruses at the FDA.

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David Minor

David Minor serves as the WA State Department of Agriculture Rapid Response Team Coordinator. The WARRT protects public health by improving human food, animal feed, and produce programs statewide. To include surveillance, prevention, adulteration, and emergency response coordination with federal, state and local agencies. The WARRT is within the WSDA Food Safety & Consumer Service (FS&CS) division.

Previous accomplishments include a 23-year career in the US Navy Submarine Service and 11 years managing and training at a DOD Tactical Trauma Response training center. David has a Masters degree from the University of Washington in Infrastructure Planning and Management and a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice with Homeland Security.



Doug Noveroske

Doug Noveroske is a senior epidemiologist with the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service's Office of Public Health Science. Since joining FSIS in 2016, he has led the FSIS response to numerous outbreak investigations potentially involving regulated meat, poultry, and egg products. Prior to joining FSIS, he served with the Peace Corps in rural Paraguay focusing on community health projects.



Oliver Ou

CDR Ou was commissioned as a scientist officer in the US Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps in 2013. He served as a regulatory scientist with the USDA, Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) from 2013 to 2020. In March 2020, he joined the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), where he currently serves as a Consumer Complaint Coordinator within the Human Foods Program. He received his PhD in pharmacology from State University of New York-Buffalo. CDR Ou subsequently completed 5 years of postdoctoral training at the University of Maryland,

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Baltimore and National Institutes of Health.



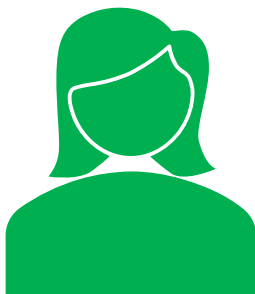
Lee Anne Palmer

Dr. Palmer has been with FDA CVM for 22 years and has served in several roles, including 12 years leading a team that performed post-market safety surveillance for a wide variety of FDA-regulated products including large/production animal drugs, animal food products, and Intentionally Genetically Altered (IGA) animals. Additionally, Dr. Palmer helped to develop adverse event monitoring systems that comprise parts of FDA's Early Warning and Surveillance System for Pet/Animal Foods. She continues to work on these systems and serves as FDA CVM's Liaison to CDC.



Alicia Pell

I began my career in 2002 as a Lab Technician with MDARD. Since then, I have also held scientist, senior scientist, and Chemistry Section manager positions with MDARD's Laboratory Division before my most recent role as Deputy Director.



Lynn Post

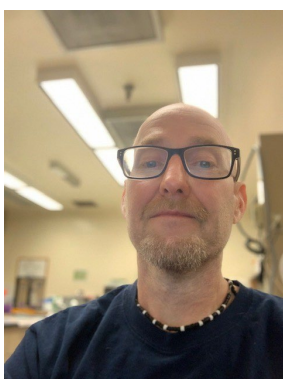
Lynn Post has worked for the Center for Veterinary Medicine for 30 years with experience in both the animal drug and food programs. As a veterinary toxicologist, Dr. Post's main area of expertise is toxicology but has also provided scientific support to microbiological issues, such as highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). Presently, his duties are within of the Division of Food Compliance, Science Policy Branch but formerly was in the Division of Food Ingredients.

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Kathleen Proia

Dr. Kathleen Proia graduated from the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine with her DVM in 2014 and worked as a companion animal clinical practitioner until joining the FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) in 2020 as a veterinary medical officer with the Veterinary Laboratory Investigation and Response Network (Vet-LIRN). Dr. Proia serves as the lead for Vet-LIRN's response to consumer complaints of animal foodborne illness received by FDA-CVM.



David Rostein

I am a member of the Complaint Emergency Recall Branch at the FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine. My activities include liaison to the Center for Veterinary Medicine Laboratory Investigation and Response Network (Vet-LIRN), secondary emergency response coordinator, and scientific support. I am also a veterinary pathologist and provide support as needed to CVM and other FDA centers. I have a background in outbreak response in wildlife prior to coming to CVM.



Thao Schlichte

Thao Schlichte is the Rapid Response Team Coordinator for the Iowa Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licensing (DIAL), Food Safety Bureau. Her background includes a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Iowa State University. Thao began her career in Public Health with Johnson County Public Health as an Environmental Health Specialist. She has been with the DIAL Food Safety Bureau since 2013. Today she manages the complaint program, recalls, emergency response, and oversees foodborne illness investigations.



Sheryl Shaw

Dr. Sheryl Shaw was named chief public health veterinarian for the Office of Public Health Science (OPHS) in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) in January 2025. She also serves as Acting Executive Associate for Regulatory Operations. She previously served as Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for OPHS and as director of OPHS' Applied Epidemiology Staff. Under the authority of USDA, FSIS has oversight for ensuring that meat, poultry and egg products are safe, wholesome and properly labeled. In her roles, Dr. Shaw provides veterinary and epidemiological expertise in domestic and international food safety issues involving zoonoses, antimicrobial resistance and One Health related operations.

Prior to her current roles, Dr. Shaw held positions within USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) including export veterinary medical officer, area epidemiology officer, export service center director and area veterinarian in charge. During her tenure at APHIS, Dr. Shaw also gained proficiency as a foreign animal disease diagnostician at the Plum Island Animal Disease Center and served as a deputy incident commander on National Incident Management Teams for the 2014 to 2015 outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza and the 2016 to 2017 outbreak of New World screwworm. Her prior roles at FSIS include multiple supervisory field positions.

Dr. Shaw earned her doctorate degree in veterinary medicine from Washington State University. She is a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine with an epidemiology specialty certification and a senior executive fellow of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Dr. Shaw also holds a Master of Public Health from the University of Minnesota School of Public Health and a Bachelor of Science in Veterinary Science from Washington State University.

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Joan Sims

Joan Sims is the current Compliance and Preparedness Manager at NC Dept. of Agriculture; she has been with the Food & Drug Protection Division for 19 years and counting. Her professional achievements and experiences have been mainly in the areas of public health, food safety, food compliance and regulations. Joan graduated from North Carolina State University with a degree in food science & technology. After graduation, she worked at Kellogg's dba Austin Quality Foods and at Con Agra and gathered 16 years of work experience in various departments including quality control, training programs, R&D as well as packaging & ingredient purchasing. Because of her industry background, Joan enjoys interacting with food entrepreneurs and encouraging them to gain a better understanding of applicable regulatory standards necessary for their business success and stability.



Tim Slawinski

Tim Slawinski is the director of the Bureau of Food Safety and Animal Health at the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD). With 25 years of combined experience in the private sector and state government, he oversees efforts to protect animal health and ensure a safe food supply. Slawinski joined MDARD in 2012, specializing in food safety, and assumed leadership roles culminating in his current position as Bureau Director. He holds a bachelor's degree in microbiology from Michigan State University.

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Erin Smilanich

Erin has been in the Public Health sector since 2005. Starting as an Environmental Sanitarian, moving to the Body Art Program Manager to working in Pesticide Education and finally landing as the RRT Coordinator for MDA. In her free time, Erin enjoys watching her daughter play volleyball, traveling to warm places and pretending to be good at pickleball.



Eyamba Sowers Scott

Eyamba Sowers Scott has been proudly serving as the South Carolina Department of Agriculture Rapid Response Team (SCDA RRT) Coordinator since August 2023, bringing a strong dedication to public health and emergency response. A 27-year retired Army Veteran, Eyamba also spent 25 years as a Respiratory Therapist, caring for others and making a difference in people's lives. With a master's degree in Homeland Security and Emergency Management, she is passionate about keeping communities safe and prepared. When not working, she loves exploring new places, especially vacationing in the Caribbean, where she can relax and recharge.



Quynh Anh Tran

Quynh Anh H. Tran, PharmD, MPH, CPH, is a Commander in the U.S. Public Health Service and serves as the Rapid Response Teams Technical Lead.

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Dr. Sin Urban

Sin Urban, Ph.D. is Chief of Environmental Sciences at MDH Laboratories Administration. With ~70 scientists in ~18 laboratories, the Division is the largest of the Maryland public health laboratory. Dr Urban earned his Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge (UK), and held faculty appointments at Harvard University and Johns Hopkins University before being recruited to the Maryland public health laboratory. Under his direction, Maryland implemented PFAS testing, brought on large-scale food testing across all disciplines, and is modernizing its electronic data reporting.



Richie Villegas

Richard Villegas has been with Datastream Connexion as a Technical Operations Manager for over three years. Prior to this, he spent more than 11 years in a third-party food safety laboratory, where he gained expertise in Chemistry, Instrumentation, and Quality Control, while also managing the day-to-day operations of the local laboratory. Richard audited multiple company locations and played a key role in building and implementing the corporate LIMS system. His combined technical, quality, and operational experience underscores a strong commitment to process improvement and operational excellence.



Kelsey Volkman

LCDR Volkman was commissioned as an Environmental Health Officer in the U.S. Public Health Service in 2007. She served as an Environmental Health Specialist with Indian Health Service, from 2007 to 2016, in both Alaska and Arizona. In 2016, she accepted a position with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as a Consumer Safety Officer. Since September 2019, she has served as the Emergency Response Coordinator covering the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Alaska.

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Summer Williams

Summer Williams is currently the Food Safety Division Deputy Director at the Georgia Department of Agriculture. She leads the Georgia Food Safety and Food Defense Task Force alongside overseeing the Georgia Rapid Response Team & Recalls Program. Summer is the current AFDOSS Board President and AFDOSS affiliate advisor to the AFDO Board. Prior to her work with the State of Georgia, Summer worked with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services in Food Safety and Agricultural Law Enforcement for over 13 years.



Lauren Yeung

Lauren Yeung is a Health Scientist with the External Laboratories team in the FDA HFP Office of Regulatory Testing and Surveillance. She serves as the Technical Program Manager for the Laboratory Flexible Funding Model (LFFM) Cooperative Agreement Program. Prior to joining the LFFM team in 2021, Lauren served as a RRT Program Coordinator with the (then) Office of Partnerships. She is proud to work on initiatives that support integration of federal, state, and local agencies in our shared mission to protect public health.



Nicole Yuen

Nicole Yuen is a Field Emergency Response Coordinator for the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). She serves as the FDA's primary point of contact for coordinating emergency response activities involving FDA regulated products. Nicole has been with the FDA for over 22 years and has held several positions in the FDA San Francisco District, including Supervisory Investigator and Consumer Safety Officer. Prior to FDA, Nicole worked in private food industries as Quality Assurance Manager and Microbiologist.