

130th AFDO Educational Conference Agenda Outline

	Track	Day	Duration	Start Time (EDT)	End Time (EDT)	Title	Description
FRIDAY - June 5, 2026 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. EDT							
Workshop	AI	Fri	450	9:00 a.m.	4:30 p.m.	Data & AI in Food Safety Workshop	Explore how data and artificial intelligence are transforming food safety. This full-day workshop features expert presentations, case studies, and interactive sessions designed to provide practical insights and actionable strategies for industry and regulatory professionals.
SATURDAY - June 6, 2026 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. EDT							
Pre-Conference Activities	General	Sat	120	8:00 a.m.	10:00 a.m.	Joint - Retail & MFG Foods Program Managers Roundtable Discussion (INVITE ONLY)	
	General	Sat	120	10:00 a.m.	12:00 p.m.	Retail Foods Program Managers Roundtable Discussion (INVITE ONLY)	
	General	Sat	120	8:00 a.m.	10:00 a.m.	The AFDO Conference is Just Beginning: Use the Time to Create and Building Your Network	
	General	Sat	120	10:00 a.m.	12:00 p.m.	Managing Change in Regulatory Work: How AI Is Shifting the Way We Work	Change is a constant in regulatory and public service work—new policies, new systems, and evolving expectations. The rise of AI represents a different kind of change, not because of the technology itself, but because of how quickly it is reshaping daily work, decision-making, and communication. This interactive session focuses on AI as a change management challenge, not a technical training. Designed for inspectors, program staff, supervisors, and office-based professionals alike, the session explores how AI is influencing roles, workflows, and professional judgment—and why managing the human side of change is essential. Participants will examine common reactions to change, including uncertainty, resistance, and skill anxiety, and learn practical strategies for adapting while maintaining consistency, fairness, and public trust.
	General	Sat	210	8:00 a.m.	11:30 a.m.	Food Safety School: Preparing Food Businesses for Preventive Controls for Human Food Rule Compliance	This session will provide an introduction to Food Safety School, a science-based food safety training aimed at equipping beginning, small, and growing food producers to comply with the Preventive Controls for Human Food Rule. Learn about the structure of the course, an overview of the content, how it's preparing food producers, and strategies for bringing the course to your state.
	General	Sat	60	11:30 a.m.	12:30 p.m.	Lunch	
	General	Sat	60	12:30 p.m.	1:30 p.m.	TBD - Potential Podcast	
	General	Sat	90	1:30 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	FDA Update	
	General	Sat	60	3:00 p.m.	4:00 p.m.	First-Timers Meet & Greet	AFDO considers first-time attendees to be VIPs at the Annual AFDO Conference. If this is your first AFDO meeting, you're invited to attend a First-Timers Meet & Greet. During the session, you'll have the opportunity to meet AFDO alumni, fellows, and other first-time attendees; learn about AFDO and its affiliate organizations; and find out about the exciting events taking place during the 2026 conference.
Opening Session	General	Sat	120	4:30 p.m.	6:30 p.m.	Opening Session	Introductory Remarks and Welcomes President's Address Glenn W. Kilpatrick Memorial Conversation - FSMA @ 15
Event	Event	Sat	60	6:30 p.m.	7:30 p.m.	Welcome Reception & Exhibitor Showcase	
	Event	Sat	120	8:00 p.m.	10:00 p.m.	Endowment Foundation Benefit	
SUNDAY - June 7, 2026 8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. EDT							
General Session	General	Sun	75	8:00 a.m.	9:15 a.m.	6 Thinking Hats for Better, Faster, Safer Decision-Making in Public Health	From inspections to policy decisions, public health work requires clear thinking under pressure. This keynote shows how a simple, structured thinking approach helps teams avoid blind spots, reduce rework, and make safer decisions, especially when information is incomplete and time matters. Attendees will gain practical techniques they can use immediately in their daily work.
	General	Sun	45	9:15 a.m.	10:00 a.m.	From the C-Suite to the Front Line: A CEO Conversation on Food Safety Collaboration	Join this moderated general session for a CEO-led discussion on Kwik Trip's food safety leadership and its strong partnerships with state and local regulators. The conversation will focus on how executive leadership shapes food safety culture, drives continuous improvement, and fosters productive collaboration between industry and regulatory agencies.
	General	Sun	30	10:00 a.m.	10:30 a.m.	Break	
	General	Sun	90	10:30 a.m.	12:00 p.m.	Driving Food Safety Culture Together: Strengthening Trust and Accountability	Strong food safety culture doesn't happen by accident — it requires commitment, collaboration, and clear expectations. This session explores the critical role regulators play in fostering food safety culture and how industry partners are working side by side to embed culture into everyday practices. Hear success stories, challenges, and strategies for creating lasting improvements beyond short-term compliance.

Food Track	Food	Sun	90	1:30 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	The Story of an Emerging Contaminant: The Past, Present, and Future of PFAS in Food	PFAS, often called “forever chemicals,” are everywhere, but where do they come from? This session will cover their origins and uses. An expert panel will discuss PFAS monitoring, the latest in their impact on the food supply and our communities, plus current approaches to policy. We'll conclude with interactive Q&A.
	Food	Sun	30	3:00 p.m.	3:30 p.m.	Break	
	Food	Sun	120	3:30 p.m.	5:30 p.m.	Innovation and Technology in the Foods Industry	Have you ever walked into a food establishment, and you see something you know you are supposed to know, but you don't? Then, it hits you, this overwhelming stress, and you quickly try to figure it out, so you are not embarrassed. Or have you ever found yourself looking at a food product, scratching your head, and saying, “What in the world is this?” If you have ever felt this way, this is the session for you! This interactive experience explores innovation, technology, and new products from around the world! Adding to the excitement, we have a “pushing the limits” section too! We are challenging you to think outside the box on how we CAN integrate.
Retail Track	Retail	Sun	90	1:30 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	Cleaning Up Our Act: Fun & Fresh Resources to Fight Norovirus	This session will highlight the work of the AFDO Healthy People 2030 Norovirus at Retail project, its successes of the project and the collaborative model for the project. The Environmental Contaminants workgroup as well as collaboration with the CFP Food Safety Management Systems Committee will be emphasized. Panelists represent key contributors from regulatory agencies, industry, and public health organizations participating in both groups. Attendees will work through several hands-on activities related to environmental cleanup and tools available to assist in retail establishments.
	Retail	Sun	30	3:00 p.m.	3:30 p.m.	Break	
Produce Track	Produce	Sun	90	1:30 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	Clear Waters, Clear Roles: Inspection Training and Navigation Strategies and Grower Readiness	Equip inspectors with the knowledge and confidence to conduct agricultural water inspections effectively while fostering clear communication with growers. Explore how to train an inspection team, use inspectional approaches, and know what to look for during an inspection. Learn how you can engage growers in a constructive and collaborative manner by preparing growers for compliance, which ensures that inspections are not only educational but also supportive of industry readiness.
	Produce	Sun	30	3:00 p.m.	3:30 p.m.	Break	
	Produce	Sun	60	3:30 p.m.	4:30 p.m.	Lessons in Resilience: What State Produce Programs Learned From Funding Cuts	Explore the real-world impact of funding cuts on state produce programs and the strategies being used to recover, adapt, and prepare for future uncertainties. States share candid perspectives on what it takes to rebuild from the ground up, manage change effectively, and prioritize resources when funding is limited. Attendees will gain insight into how these cuts affected program operations, the lessons learned during recovery, and practical approaches to proceed with caution while planning for the next priorities. The discussion will also include change management stories, innovative survival strategies, and a preview of what the next Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) may look like.
	Produce	Sun	60	4:30 p.m.	5:30 p.m.	Closing the Gap: Why Buyer Awareness Matters Regarding the Produce Safety Rule	Buyer awareness is a critical yet often overlooked component of produce safety. Explore the role buyers play in ensuring compliance with the FDA's Produce Safety Rule (PSR) and how their understanding – or misunderstanding – impacts growers and the industry as a whole. Participants will discuss the PSR and how it differs from traditional audits, as well as any known methods buyers use to verify that the produce they purchase comes from covered farms meeting the FDA FSMA rule. The discussion will also address the ripple effect on growers and strategies to close the knowledge gap.
Event	Event	Sun	60	5:45 p.m.	6:45 p.m.	President's Reception	
MONDAY - June 8, 2026 8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. EDT							
	General	Mon	60	8:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	Food Safety: From Z to Alpha	In this future-looking session, Dr. Evans provides new insights on the Gen Z workforce and imagines how the rise of Generation Alpha – and the technologies, ideals, and perspectives that define them – might impact allthings food and food safety.
	General	Mon	60	9:00 a.m.	10:00 a.m.	Who Doesn't Get Licensed – and Why.	Some entrepreneurs won't get licenses. Whether they're in the shadows or in full public view, their reasons vary, and some of them are connected to illegal activities. In this panel, hear from two FBI experts about human trafficking and homegrown extremists. Discover what frontline food inspectors should be aware of and looking for, and how local and state food programs can connect with law enforcement partners through state fusion centers. Also, learn how the FBI's Weapons of Mass Destruction Coordinators are involved in food safety and defense.
	General	Mon	30	10:00 a.m.	10:30 a.m.	Break	

General Session	General	Mon	90	10:30 a.m.	12:00 p.m.	De-escalation Strategies for YOU!! Enhancing Safety and Communication in Everyday Living	<p>Whether you are experienced or new to your role, this presentation will equip you with tools to maintain control, reduce stress, and build trust during challenging encounters in everyday living.</p> <p>In our demanding lives frequently, we frequently encounter complex situations that require clear communication, sound judgment, and a calm approach. This 60- to 90-minute presentation is designed to provide practical guidance on recognizing, responding to, and de-escalating tense or potentially volatile encounters.</p> <p>Participants will learn effective de-escalation techniques tailored to regulatory settings, including strategies for managing confrontational interactions with staff, the public, or other stakeholders. The session will cover verbal and nonverbal communication skills, situational awareness, and the importance of empathy and professionalism. Through interactive scenarios and discussion, attendees will gain confidence in diffusing conflict, protecting personal safety, and fostering positive outcomes during inspections, enforcement actions, and routine operations.</p>
	General	Mon	90	12:00 p.m.	1:30 p.m.	Wiley Awards Luncheon - Included with Registration	
Food Track	Food	Mon	60	1:30 p.m.	2:30 p.m.	Cottage Food: How Social Media and Food Freedom Activists Have Changed Our Laws, Impacted Our Food Supply, and Kept Us on Our Toes	Join us for an overview of regulatory perspectives from states that are navigating these new (and old) laws, including elements such as training requirements, how to navigate these inspections, variations in permitted foods, and tracking these firms to ensure a safe food supply. We will delve into lessons learned from states that have implemented these laws and how they are regulating an industry that doesn't always want to be regulated.
	Food	Mon	30	2:30 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	Clean AND Safe? Navigating Clean-Label Formulation Trade-Offs	Clean-label and so-called natural formulations are increasingly expected by consumers, yet removing or replacing conventional antimicrobials can fundamentally alter microbial behavior. This session explores how ingredient simplification, use of natural antimicrobials, and process adjustments interact with product chemistry and structure to influence food safety outcomes. Drawing on applied research evaluating <i>Clostridium perfringens</i> and <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> growth in complex meat matrices, the session highlights why clean-label products cannot be treated as simplified systems. Practical examples will illustrate how natural antimicrobials perform under real processing and storage conditions.
	Food	Mon	30	3:00 p.m.	3:30 p.m.	Break	
	Food	Mon	60	3:30 p.m.	4:30 p.m.	Novel "drugs" on kava, kratom, mushrooms, etc.	
	Food	Mon	60	4:30 p.m.	5:30 p.m.	From Alert to Action: Strengthening Recall Readiness Through the ByHeart Experience	<p>The ByHeart infant formula recall highlighted important opportunities to strengthen how we communicate and act during rapidly evolving events. As information emerged and guidance expanded, families and frontline teams needed clearer, faster alignment. The presence of recalled product on shelves highlighted opportunities to further strengthen prioritization and readiness across the system.</p> <p>This session focuses on practical, solutions oriented actions to build a stronger recall response: accelerating information flow across partners, maintaining clear and consistent public messaging as guidance evolves, and reinforcing disciplined recall execution at the point of sale and across online marketplaces. Attendees will leave with concrete insights and strategies to enhance coordination, confidence, and effectiveness when recall response matters most.</p>
Retail Track	Retail	Mon	90	1:30 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	Behind the Booth: Regulating Temporary Food Businesses	Industry leaders and federal, state, and local regulators come together to discuss common challenges, successes, and lessons learned in managing temporary food events. The session focuses on real-world coordination, food safety, and practical solutions from all sides.
	Retail	Mon	30	3:00 p.m.	3:30 p.m.	Break	
	Retail	Mon	60	3:30 p.m.	4:30 p.m.	Is Food Safety One Size Fits All? A Comparison of Small vs. Large Brands	
	Retail	Mon	60	4:30 p.m.	5:30 p.m.	Food Safety on the Move – Mobile Food Operations: Aligning Policy, Practice, and Public Health	Mobile food operations continue to expand nationwide, reshaping the retail food/food service landscape and presenting distinct regulatory and operational challenges. This multidisciplinary panel brings together regulators and industry leaders to examine jurisdictional oversight, infrastructure constraints, inspection trends, and risk factors unique to mobile operations. Panelists will explore policy alignment across jurisdictions and practical strategies that promote compliance while supporting innovation. Attendees will gain insight into collaborative approaches that strengthen public health protection in an increasingly mobile marketplace.

Produce Track	Produce	Mon	60	1:30 p.m.	2:30 p.m.	Decoding VAI and OAI: Educating and Understanding Inspection Ratings for Path B and C States	Gain clarity on FDA inspection ratings – Voluntary Action Indicated (VAI) and Official Action Indicated (OAI) – and the differences in Path B and Path C states. FDA experts will explain the distinctions between these ratings, the implications for compliance, and the processes behind determining them. Special emphasis will be placed on helping Path B states understand FDA’s approach and expectations, while offering education on how both ratings impact enforcement and corrective actions.
	Produce	Mon	30	2:30 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	From Farm to Investigation: How FDA Core Is Integrating Produce Programs Into all Investigations Involving Produce	Produce safety programs play a critical role in foodborne illness investigations, yet historically they have not always been engaged early in the process. This session will highlight FDA CORE’s commitment to integrating produce programs into every investigation where produce is implicated. Attendees will learn why early involvement is important, how collaboration improves outcomes, and what produce programs should expect moving forward.
	Produce	Mon	30	3:00 p.m.	3:30 p.m.	Break	
	Produce	Mon	75	3:30 p.m.	4:45 p.m.	Building Bridges: FDA and State Collaboration for Understanding Needs, Challenges, and Solutions	This interactive session is designed to strengthen cooperation between FDA and state produce programs by fostering open dialogue and mutual understanding. The focus will be on identifying state-specific needs, challenges, and obstacles that impact regulatory activities and public health initiatives. FDA representatives will have the opportunity to ask and answer questions, listen to state perspectives, and explore collaborative solutions that enhance efficiency and consistency.
	Produce	Mon	45	4:45 p.m.	5:30 p.m.	Navigating IT Challenges in State Produce Programs: Overcoming Obstacles in FDA Reporting and Data Sharing	State produce programs face ongoing IT challenges as FDA reporting requirements evolve rapidly, often outpacing the ability of state database systems to adapt. This session will provide a candid look at what states are experiencing and the obstacles created by frequent changes in FDA reporting criteria, the complexities of integrating with the enhanced FDA data sharing system, and practical solutions for maintaining compliance under these constraints.
TUESDAY - June 9, 2026 8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. EDT							
Food Track	Food	Tues	120	8:00 a.m.	10:00 a.m.	Manufactured Foods Program Managers Roundtable Discussion (INVITE ONLY)	
Retail Track	Retail	Tues	60	8:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	The Next Chapter in Retail Food Safety: 2026 FDA Food Code and Deli Data Insights	This session will highlight current developments related to the 2026 FDA Food Code, including key areas of focus and progress toward the next edition. The role of stakeholder engagement and collaboration in shaping Food Code provisions will be emphasized, with discussion of how these updates support modern retail food safety practices. The session will also highlight recent deli data collection efforts from the FDA’s Retail Food Risk Factor Study, including how data are gathered, areas of emphasis within deli operations, and how findings contribute to identifying and reducing foodborne illness risk factors in retail settings. Presenters will represent regulatory and public health partners involved in Food Code development and retail food safety data collection.
	Retail	Tues	60	9:00 a.m.	10:00 a.m.	Data on the Menu: A Fresh Look at Retail Food Survey Results	
	Retail	Tues	30	10:00 a.m.	10:30 a.m.	Break	
	Retail	Tues	90	10:30 a.m.	12:00 p.m.	Small Plates, Big Impact: Retail Food Safety Resources	This interactive, speed dating–style session connects participants with practical retail food safety tools and resources through brief, focused table discussions. Attendees will rotate between stations featuring real-world solutions such as live translation tools, translated outreach materials, allergen awareness campaigns, emergency response resources, and national food safety organizations. Participants will leave with actionable ideas and connections they can immediately apply in their programs.
Additional Details provided on the AFDO Conference website: https://www.afdo.org/events/130th-afdo-annual-educational-conference/							