



**BALTIMORE CONFERENCE**  
OF  
CENTRAL ATLANTIC STATES ASSOCIATION  
OF  
FOOD and DRUG OFFICIALS

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# SKIPJACK

*NEWSLETTER OF THE BALTIMORE CONFERENCE OF CASA*

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WINTER EDITION

VOL 2011-1

## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Greetings to you all. Welcome to the winter 2011 edition of the *Skipjack*.

We have had a busy and exciting year at CASA, with the highlight being CASA's Annual Conference in Towson May 17-19, 2011. There was a great turnout for the CASA Conference and for the FDA Drug presentations later in the week. Many members generously volunteered their time to make this effort a great success. With budget restrictions, we were fortunate that Mama CASA was able to provide scholarships for many who otherwise would not have been able to attend. A number of speakers were willing to share their presentation information which has been posted at: <http://casafdo.org/annual2011/index.cfm>. The 2012 Annual Conference will be held in Pittsburgh on May 9-11. Information about that conference can be found at the CASA website: <http://casafdo.org/annual2012/index.cfm>.

Attendance at our quarterly meetings has been great, showing that you have been able to continue to support CASA through the challenging time of budget constrains that we have all experienced over the last few years. CASA has been able to thrive and provide educational opportunities for us to expand our knowledge, as well as obtain CEUs needed for licensing.

I am including, in this edition of the *Skipjack*, an opportunity for you to provide suggestions for topics and speakers. Let us know if you would like to work with fellow CASA members to share your talents and time for the behind the scenes activities that are required for CASA to function. We are a volunteer organization and need the strengths and knowledge of our members to keep CASA a dynamic, growing organization. Consider speakers that you have heard or programs or interesting challenges that your organization has faced that might be of interest to other CASA members. A simple survey is included below. You are welcome to return the questionnaire by mail, e-mail or just give me or another board member a call.

I look forward to seeing all of you in the coming year, and please also remember to renew your membership for 2012. (See Page 4)

Martha Defibaugh

### **FDA establishes foodborne illness outbreak response network**

*Aims at increased coordination, using lessons learned*

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced today a streamlined, integrated approach to effectively and rapidly respond to human and animal foodborne illness outbreaks: the FDA Coordinated Outbreak Response and Evaluation (CORE) Network.

The CORE Network is comprised of a multi-disciplinary team of epidemiologists, veterinarians, microbiologists, environmental health specialists, emergency coordinators, and risk communications specialists. Working full-time on outbreak prevention and response at headquarters, the CORE is complemented by trained, experienced investigators in FDA field offices nationwide. CORE will coordinate closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and state public health and agriculture agencies in human and animal foodborne illness outbreaks.

Dr. Kathleen F. Gensheimer, M.D., M.P.H., a nationally recognized public health leader who most recently was the state epidemiologist for Maine, serves in the new position of chief medical officer/outbreak director. In this capacity, she leads the CORE Network and has responsibility for all FDA preparedness, outbreak response and post-response activities.

“The CORE Network builds on the best practices FDA has already implemented in its outbreak response efforts,” said Mike Taylor, FDA deputy commissioner of foods. “And, in keeping with the reforms of the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act, CORE activities will learn from outbreaks to develop preventive systems, in an effort to reduce them from happening in the future.

“CORE will also allow for more consistency in monitoring and investigating outbreaks, as well as streamline decision making and improve food safety practices,” Taylor added.

“The centralized staff of the CORE Network will work closely with FDA’s field emergency response coordinators and the investigative and analytical teams in the District offices and associated laboratories,” said Dara Corrigan, associate commissioner for regulatory affairs. “Working together will help to both standardize and strengthen how we conduct foodborne outbreak activities in the field.”

“A real benefit of the network approach is enhancing communication and coordination with federal, state and local food safety agencies, as well as industry and consumers,” said Dr. Gensheimer. “Given my background at the state public health level, this is a major priority for me.” “Our day-to-day working relationship with FDA has been a major focus by the senior leadership in both agencies,” said Christopher Braden, M.D., director,

Division of Foodborne, Waterborne, and Environmental Diseases at CDC. “We have built a solid foundation, and the CORE Network helps take us to the next level.”

“USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and FDA share the common goal to make our Nation’s food supply the safest in the world,” said David Goldman, M.D., M.P.H., acting Chief Medical Officer at USDA and FSIS Assistant Administrator for the Office of Public Health Science. “The CORE Network focuses on learning from outbreaks and applying those lessons to help make this goal a reality. FSIS, FDA and CDC have been working collaboratively over the past year to streamline investigations of multi-state foodborne outbreaks, and the development of the FDA’s CORE Network will enhance that effort.”

**- FDA working with Mexico to protect safety of imported papayas**

*Joint effort to find sources of contamination and improve food safety systems is broadened* The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and its counterpart agencies in the Mexican government, the National Service for Agroalimentary Public Health, Safety and Quality (SENASICA) and the Federal Commission for the Protection against Sanitary Risks (COFEPRIS), are expanding their collaboration to reduce the risk of contamination of food that moves across the U.S.-Mexican border. This new level of collaboration has added importance as papayas from Mexico have been linked to approximately 100 cases of Salmonella agona in 23 U.S. states.

U.S. and Mexican officials have been working closely together to find the source or sources of contamination of Salmonella in fresh papayas entering the U.S. from Mexico. From May 12, 2011, to August 18, 2011, FDA analysis found a 15.6 percent Salmonella contamination rate. The positive samples were from 28 different firms and include nearly all the major papaya producing regions in Mexico.

Now, under an FDA Import Alert, papayas from each source in Mexico may be denied admission into the United States unless the importer shows they are not contaminated with Salmonella, such as by using private laboratories to test the papayas. FDA may consider five consecutive commercial shipments over a period of time, analyzed from a validated laboratory, as being adequate for removal from the Import Alert.

Simultaneously, FDA and Mexican officials are stepping up their joint effort to trace recent contamination incidents back to their source and discover their cause or causes, in order to form future prevention strategies. FDA and Mexican officials also are collaborating on laboratory methodologies used in Mexico for testing fresh papayas for Salmonella.

**CASA MEMBER SURVEY** (you may e-mail to [mmdefibaugh@hotmail.com](mailto:mmdefibaugh@hotmail.com) with CASA in the subject line)

TOPIC-----

SPEAKER AND CONTACT INFORMATION (IF AVAILABLE) -----  
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VOLUNTEER INTERESTS:

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

All CASA 2010 memberships expire on **December 31, 2011**. Renewal can be made either by completing the **Renewal** form, attached for your convenience, and mailing it along with a payment to the **CASA Treasurer**, or by mailing it to Alexander A. Ondis, 4625 Wards Chapel Rd., Owings Mills, MD 21117, or by paying for membership at our next quarterly meeting on 12/6/2011. The Renewal form can be found on the CASA Web-Site, [www.casafdo.org](http://www.casafdo.org), click on "Renew/Join". Renewal may also be done on-line at the above web-site.

### **CASA Membership Dues Information and Application**

Please complete today and return to:

Megan Lauff, FDA, US Custom House, 200 Chestnut St., Room 900  
Philadelphia PA 19106

- Regulatory \$15 Annual Dues
- Associate \$35 Annual Dues
- Retired \$10 Annual Dues

(Make checks payable to CASA – FID#56-6136694)

Local Conference Membership is included with payment of dues in all categories: Check appropriate conference below:

- Baltimore  Philadelphia
- New York  Pittsburgh
- Niagara Frontier  Susquehanna
- Northeastern N.Y.  Virginia

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Agency \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Form may also be sent to Alexander Ondis, Baltimore Conference Sect/ Treasurer  
4625 Wards Chapel Rd., Owings Mills, MD 21117