

**MINNESOTA FOOD SAFETY AND DEFENSE TASK FORCE**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**May 21, 2024**

Today's meeting was held in Room B144, Orville L. Freeman Building, 625 Robert Street North St. Paul and via Microsoft Teams Video Conferencing platform.

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 PM.

Members present included: Courtney Bidney, Chris Gindorff, Amy Johnston, Jamie Kirkpatrick, Angie Wheeler, Julia Selley, Chris van Twuyver, Jamie Pfuhl, Steven Foster, Ruth Meirick, Derick Davis, Erin Mertz, Caldoun Abuhakel, Brent Kobiellush, and Luke Meier.

Visitors present included: Keri Plude, Amy Zagar, Jim Topie, Julia Goldman, Mike Thompson, Brian Yager, Daniel Webber, Sadie Gannett, Jodie Burke, Jeff Luedeman, Julie Wagendorf, Meghan Melheim, Michelle Medina, Stan Osuagwu, Steve Barthel, Alida (Sorenson) Siebert, Mathew Gerths, Natasha Hedin, Evan Powell, Jennifer Stephe, Mike Smith, David Smith, David Read, Andrea Vaubel, Sana Elassar, and Megan Jansa

**1. Dates and links**

- [Apply to become a member of the Food Safety and Defense Task Force](#)
- [Investigations of Foodborne Illness Outbreaks – CORE table](#)
- [University of Minnesota Freeze Drying Webpage](#)

**2. The minutes from the March 2024 meeting were accepted with no comments.**

**3. Member and Visitor Updates**

**Ruth Meirick (Minnesota Farm Bureau):** Ruth shared that they have been monitoring H5N1 and interstate movement of cattle. Ruth recently visited the Santa Teresa international cattle crossing in New Mexico. It was mentioned that this might be a good idea for a future meeting agenda topic.

**Amy Johnston (University of Minnesota Extension (U of MN)):** Amy shared that the University is working on developing freeze-drying education and training materials. A webpage link is provided above.

**Erin Mertz (Ecolab):** Erin shared that they are also focusing on H5N1 tracking. She recently attended the Food Safety Summit in Rosemont, Illinois and had a meeting with the Illinois Institute of Technology (who is partnering with industry) and they presented their top 5

priorities – H5N1 and pasteurization, ag water rule, traceability, food chemical safety, nutrition.

**Michelle Medina (Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA)):** Katherine is the Division Director for the Food and Feed Safety Division at the MDA. However, she is currently working on the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) implementation. She will be sharing additional updates during her presentation later in the meeting.

**Sana Elassar, (U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA HAF1W)):** Sana shared that they have been working with the MDA on several outbreaks, and mentioned the CORE outbreak table, linked above.

**Chris van Twuyver (FDA HAF1W):** Chris recently returned from a ninety-day detail. He will be attending a joint meeting with CFSAN and OHAFO this week.

**Alida Sorenson (Food and Feed Safety Division (FFSD, MDA)):** Alida shared that they are working on several *Listeria* and *Salmonella* outbreaks. The team will be welcoming Journey Gosselin as the new Food Business Navigator starting June 5.

**Chris Gindorff (Hy-Vee, Inc.):** Hy-Vee has acquired an Indiana store chain and is working on building a food safety team. Hy-Vee now also has a representative on the Iowa Food Safety Task Force.

**Stan Osuagwu (Home Chef):** Stan connected with Carrie Rigdon (AFDO) at the Food Safety Summit earlier this month. This is his first meeting.

**Luke Meier (North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters (NCSRC)):** Luke shared that their 8-hour awareness training for end users is complete. The training has been shared with Nebraska and Iowa members.

#### 4. **MDA Legislative Updates**

Michelle Medina, Government Relations Coordinator, MDA shared recent legislative updates. Her presentation slides are attached.

#### 5. **AFDO Guidance for Developing HACCP Plans**

Jim Topie, Food, Pools, and Lodging Services, Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) provided a high-level overview of a guidance document and associated references. The document is attached.

#### 6. **Task Force Admin Updates**

##### **Terms of Reference**

Members reviewed the updated 2024-2025 Terms of Reference and discussed that even

though participation is up, engagement is down. There was additional discussion around “revitalizing” the task force, especially with a new batch of members coming in this summer. The following brainstorming ideas were shared:

- Trainings:
  - Small to midsize business workshop for specialized process HACCP plans; short training and then a hands-on component
- Other Engagement:
  - Interacting with the Minnesota State Fair
  - Recommendations on policy to the MDA
  - Survey of the task force members and participants for ideas on improvement
  - Survey of small to mid-sized firms: “what do you need?”
- Potential Meeting/Agenda Ideas:
  - Tours at facilities
  - Meetings at various locations
  - Subcommittee working group for specific topics
  - Networking options (break in the middle of meetings)
  - Hold a special meeting to discuss the goals and objectives of the task force; number of meetings per year; structure; strategic planning
  - Presentation by new member Derick Davis
  - Bird flu update
  - Food defense/intentional contamination (FPDI)

Members voted to approve the proposed Terms of Reference. There was consensus around scheduling a special strategic planning meeting once new members are on board to further discuss these ideas.

### **Membership**

This is the last meeting for Courtney and Chris serving in their Chair and Vice-Chair roles. Andrea Vaubel, MDA Deputy Commissioner recognized them for their service on the task force and presented them with a certificate of recognition signed by the MDA Commissioner, Thom Petersen.

The 6 membership vacancies have been posted on the Secretary of State website. The link can be found above. Please consider applying if you are interested in serving on the task force. The vacancies will remain posted until filled. Feel free to reach out to Natasha Hedin with any questions.

### **7. Member Update**

Erin Mertz, Ecolab provided a member update. Her slides are attached.

### **8. Potential Agenda Items for July – See Task Force Admin Updates Above**