
The Food Protection GRAPEVINE

The BCFPA Newsletter: Vol.1 No.4, April 2002

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear BCFPA Members, Friends and Colleagues:

We are pleased to offer you yet another high quality, newsworthy Grapevine edition. I thought that it would be appropriate to point out that the BCFPA has been nominated for the affiliate's communication award. This award is presented at the International Association for Food Protection's awards ceremony. This is an annual conference held this year in San Diego, California in July 2002. I would like to thank our editor, Earl Bowler, for the quality of his work in preparing the newsletter. It is even more commendable because the BCFPA is a non profit organization and the work that we do is all voluntary.

The BCFPA is focused on food safety and we are always looking for ways to better serve our members. It is your association and we encourage everyone in the food industry to join the BCFPA. Even better than that, we would like more people to come forward and volunteer ANY spare time, resources or talent that you can to make our association stronger. Our most urgent vacancy right now is for someone to help us get a website up and

running. Please give me a call at 604-576-1191 ext. 3740 for more information on joining the BCFPA team and if you have any other questions regarding volunteering. Ask any of the team members and they will tell you that it is more fun than actual work.

Our association is growing from strength to strength and we would like to thank all of you for your support in the past and into the future. The turnouts at our speaker's evenings have always been strong.

Our next speaker's evening is on Wednesday, April the 3rd 2002 at BCIT. The theme is HACCP Gaining Control of Your Process. We have esteemed speakers from BC who will be talking about HACCP from gate to plate. This will cover on farm HACCP, HACCP in processing, retail, food service and distribution. Pre-registration is going well and we still have room.

Pre-registration is preferred to accommodate catering and payment can be made by mail, fax or at the door. I look forward to seeing you all



CONTENTS

Report on The November Listeria Speaker's Evening	2
CFIA Field Compliance Guide: Listeria/RTE Foods	5
Webwatch/Newsbits	6
Job Listings	6
Announcements	8
Corporate Members List	8

on Wednesday. We will not turn anyone away, so if you find out only at the last minute that you can make it, please come and join us. Please see the speakers evening announcement below for more details.

Take Care and I look forward to seeing you all on Wednesday night.

Sincerely,
Clive Kingsbury
BCFPA President

BCFPA Hits the High Note for Their Listeria Speakers Evening

Second Speaker's Evening for 2001, Tuesday Nov.20 at the British Columbia Institute of Technology, Burnaby BC

This was our night, the one we have been striving for. The good work of our planners and the talented lineup of speakers paid off. The evening was a resounding success with 93 registrants that included a few more new BCFPA memberships. The evening was attended by representatives from industry, government and academia working in production, QC, inspection, laboratory and management. A number of students representing the food programs at BCIT and UBC were also in attendance. We began the evening with a hosted supper generously catered in part by Schneider Foods that included delicious cold cuts plus an assortment of beverages and sandwiches purchased from BCIT. This gave everyone additional opportunity to meet and greet as well as to talk shop.

The meeting was opened by our president, Clive Kingsbury, who welcomed the guests and

introduced the first speaker for our Listeria evening, Jenny Scott, Senior Director of Food Safety Programs of the National Food Processors Association (NFPA). She opened by expressing the seriousness of *Listeria monocytogenes*. Listeriosis results in death in 20 percent of the cases (or 500 of 2500) in the United States each year. She outlined the history of major outbreaks of Listeriosis pointing out that the first one was due to contaminated coleslaw in Nova Scotia, Canada.

The presence of *Listeria monocytogenes* in foods often results in recalls. Jenny showed us a variety of the foods that have been recalled in the USA and Canada due to *Listeria monocytogenes*.

Listeria Monocytogenes

- Non-sporeforming, Gram-positive rod
 - Grows aerobically and anaerobically
 - Grows between -0.4 and 50°C.
 - Grows at pH 4.4 to 9.6
 - Grows at 10% NaCl
 - Withstands repeated freezing and thawing
 - Survives for prolonged periods in dry conditions
 - Is widespread in the environment:
 - Soil
 - Water
 - Sewage
 - Decaying vegetation
 - Domestic animals (including pets)
 - ~5% of the normal population
 - Raw agricultural commodities
 - Food processing environments
 - The home
 - Is found in a wide variety of foods:
 - Meats
 - Poultry
 - Vegetables
 - Dairy products
 - Fishery products
- Jenny Scott, NFPA*

After giving us the tombstone data on the bug, noting how prevalent it is in the environment and the fact that it even grows under refrigeration, we learned that Listeriosis is quite rare in the general population. In addition to the usual population at risk, pregnant women are also considered a very high-risk group for *Listeria monocytogenes*. Policy for *Listeria monocytogenes* in the United States differs from Canadian policy in that the US has a "zero tolerance" for *Listeria monocytogenes* in all ready-to-eat foods.

For the balance of her presentation, Jenny gave us an insight into how to prevent Listeria from becoming a problem in food processing plants and contaminating finished products. We learned the key places where *Listeria* contamination can occur and general considerations to be monitored throughout the entire process and plant environment in order to prevent contamination. She thoroughly went over personnel,

facilities, equipment, sanitation and personal hygiene points. Throughout each area, attention to detail is essential to control *Listeria*.

Jenny ended her presentation by spending some time expressing the importance of environmental monitoring and finished product testing to ensure *Listeria monocytogenes* control.

Following this excellent presentation, we had a break that allowed time for us to again enjoy the good food, network, get to know each other more and discuss Jenny's presentation with our colleagues. And to award a lucky winner with some \$\$\$-- in our ongoing support for students of food technology, we allowed students from the BCIT and UBC Food programs to sell 50/50 draw tickets to fund their activities and allow them to participate in student competitions.

Our second speaker of the evening was Dr. Monika Naus, Associate Director of Epidemiology Services, BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC). Monika provided us with an insight into the epidemiology of Listeriosis. Listeriosis is one of about 200 known diseases that can be transmitted through food.

Monika showed us the impact of foodborne illnesses on the population as a whole*. She then focused on Listeriosis explaining the illness, its methods of transmission, clinical symptoms, diagnosis and treatment. She spent time discussing the different sectors of the population at risk and how the propensity for infection differs among these sectors.

* Excerpt from the presentation of Dr. Monika Naus, BCCDC

Monika then went on to discuss some of the more common food borne diseases and compared various infection data and characteristics of these diseases to Listeriosis. Some of the available data on Listeriosis in 1998 showed that most cases in Canada (51 of 76) occurred in Ontario. During 1991 to 2000 BC averaged four cases per year. Monika advised us about outbreaks of Listeriosis and discussed some of the major outbreaks in Europe and North America. She then went on to discuss public health activities. We learned about outbreak investigations and the challenges that *Listeria* presents. For

example, a food history of two months prior to an onset of symptoms is required in Listeriosis cases. This is extremely difficult to determine.

Monika pointed out the need for public education and the advisories during outbreaks and recalls. BCCDC issues dietary recommendations for persons considered being at risk for Listeriosis. These are to avoid soft cheese; heat leftover foods and ready-to-eat foods until steaming; and avoid deli foods or thoroughly reheat cold cuts before

eating. Guidelines for home food handling include cook raw food from animal origin; wash raw vegetables; separate uncooked meats and vegetables; avoid unpasteurized dairy products; and wash hands and utensils etc. after exposure to uncooked foods.

Our final speaker of the evening was Terry Peters, Microbiology Program Specialist with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). Terry provided us with an overall summary of Canadian regulations and guidelines. He explained the need for guidelines in order to interpret and apply certain regulations.

Listeria* - burden of illness

Of the 13.8 million US annual cases of food-borne illness, accounts for:

- **0.02% of cases (~2,500)**
- **3.8% of hospitalization due to food-borne illness (~2,300)**
- **27.6% of deaths from food-borne illness (~500)**
 - mortality 11% under 40 years old, 63% in >60 year olds

The legislation for control of Listeria in foods is found in the Canadian Food and Drugs Act. Health Canada has developed a *Field Compliance Guide for Ready-to-Eat Foods Contaminated with Listeria monocytogenes*. Unlike the USA, Canada has both a "zero tolerance" as well as a 100 cfu/g guideline that are applied to different categories of ready-to-eat foods that become contaminated.

The Listeria Field Compliance Guide divides food into three categories. We have "zero tolerance" for those foods that have been linked to Listeriosis outbreaks (category 1) and ready-to-eat foods with a shelf life greater than ten days (category 2). In category 1 foods a class I recall is carried out on the product and public alerts are generally issued. For category 2 foods a class II recall is initiated and an alert may be considered. Foods that do not support the growth of Listeria or have a shelf life less than ten days (category 3) are allowed to have up to 100 cfu/g of *Listeria monocytogenes* provided that the good manufacturing practices in the processing plant are acceptable. Where this is exceeded a class II recall and stop sale is considered.

Terry closed his talk by pointing us to some Canadian government websites where further information on Canadian policy can be found. The sites are:

1. Listeria Field Compliance Guide (CFIA)
http://inspection.gc.ca/english/anima/fi_spoi/product/listeriae.shtml
2. Food Safety Facts on Listeria (CFIA)
<http://inspection.gc.ca/english/corpaffr/foodfacts/listeriae.shtml>
3. Health Canada Standards and Guidelines for Microbiological Safety of Food
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/food-aliment/english/publication_s/compendium/volume_1/index.html
4. Canadian Food Inspection Agency
<http://www.inspection.gc.c>

a/

Following Terry's presentation each of the speakers came forward to the front of the room to answer questions from the audience. A number of key points related to Listeria were discussed. After this, Clive summed up the evening sessions in his closing remarks and showed our appreciation by presenting each of the speakers with a gift. We ended the evening with a draw for a coveted year's membership in our parent organisation, the International Association for Food Protection. A local representative of SGS Labs was the lucky recipient of this prize.

The British Columbia Food Protection Association would like to express our thanks to our corporate sponsors and to all of you who were able to join us. Your support allows us to present this valuable information and work toward a safer food supply. The evening was a great success and we are looking forward to our next Speaker's Evening on HACCP in April 2002.

Special thanks to Terry Peters for doing 'double duty'--presenting AND writing this report!

CFIA FIELD COMPLIANCE GUIDE RTE Foods Contaminated with *Listeria Monocytogenes*

*RTE foods have been placed into **three categories** based on health risk:*

Category 1

- Causally linked to outbreaks of listeriosis
- Highest priority for inspection and compliance activities.
- Includes:

MASTHEAD

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>e-mail address</u>
Clive Kingsbury	President	ckingsbu@jms.ca
Terry Peters	Vice President	tpeters@em.agr.ca
John Boyce	Treasurer	john.boyce@diverseylever.com
Ernst Schoeller	Secretary	cdssanltd@shaw.ca
Annette Moore	Executive Member	Annette.moore@gems5.gov.bc.ca
Earl Bowler	Newsletter Committee	earlb@yvesveggie.com
Catherine Semple	Executive Member	semplec@inspection.gc.ca

liver pâté,
 coleslaw mix with shelf-life > 10 days,
 unacidified jellied pork tongue,
 hot dogs/wieners,
 cold smoked rainbow trout and
 processed deli turkey meat.

● **Public alert may be issued if illness has been specifically linked to the product.**

==>**Unless** the manufacturer/importer is able to present data which demonstrates that the product will not support the growth of *L. monocytogenes*.

Category 1 Action

● **presence of *L. monocytogenes* in these RTE foods will automatically trigger a Class I recall with consideration of a public alert**

Except in the following cases:

- where the measured pH and/or water activity of the food will not permit the growth of *L. monocytogenes* in that food; or
- where the manufacturer/importer is able to present data that demonstrates that the product will not support the growth of *L. monocytogenes*.

Category 2

- all other RTE foods capable of supporting growth of *L. monocytogenes* with a shelf life exceeding 10 days.
- Second highest priority in inspection and compliance activity.
- Includes: vacuum packaged meats, MAP sandwiches, cooked seafood, packaged salads, refrigerated sauces.

Category 2 Action

● **presence of *L. monocytogenes* in these products requires a Class II recall**

Dietary recommendations for persons at high risk of listeriosis

- *Avoid soft cheeses (e.g., feta, Brie, Camembert, Mexican-style, and blue-veined cheese).*
- *There is no need to avoid hard cheeses, cream cheese, cottage cheese, or yogurt*
- *Leftover foods or ready-to-eat foods (e.g., hot dogs) should be reheated until steaming hot before eating*
- *Although the risk for listeriosis with foods from delicatessen counters is relatively low, persons at high risk may choose to avoid these foods or to thoroughly reheat cold cuts before eating*

General guidelines for preventing listeriosis through home-food handling and preparation

- *Thoroughly cook raw food from animal sources*
- *Wash raw vegetables*
- *Keep uncooked meats separate from vegetables*
- *Avoid unpasteurized dairy products*
- *Wash hands, knives and cutting boards after exposure to uncooked foods*

-Monika Naus, BCCDC

Category 3

Contains two types of RTE food products:

- those supporting growth of *Listeria monocytogenes* with <10 days shelf life and
- those not supporting growth of *Listeria monocytogenes*.
- Lowest priority for inspection and compliance action
- Includes: cooked seafood, packaged salads, ice cream, hard cheese, dry salami, salted fish, breakfast and other cereal products.

RTE food not supporting growth of *L. Mono*

- **includes the following:**
 - (a) pH 5.0 -5.5 and $A_w < 0.95$
 - (b) pH < 5.0 regardless of A_w
 - (c) $A_w < 0.92$ regardless of pH
 - (d) frozen foods

Category 3 Action

For Category 3 RTE foods, the following factors are considered in the compliance action taken:

- adherence to GMPs,
- levels of *L. monocytogenes* in the food, i.e. *L. monocytogenes* counts are >100 CFU/g => class II recall and stop sale

L. monocytogenes is <100 CFU/g, but GMPs are absent or inadequate> class II recall should also be considered

L. monocytogenes is <100 CFU/g, but GMPs are adequate => sale considered.

- shelf life and/or
- result of health risk assessment

Excerpt from the presentation by Terry Peters

Job Listings

The BCFPA is looking for an internet-adept person to help design and possibly maintain an official website for us. A \$\$\$ fee is available.

Just contact Clive or Terry of the Executive Board.

Original post date: Thursday, March 28, 2002
Subject: **Summer Position - Ramsey Sias**

A summer position (possibly positions) is available working in Abbotsford and Pitt Meadows at two different plants (Berry Hill and Purewal), doing monitoring for the Ramsey Sias company.

Ramsey Sias will provide training; however, they need a person who will be objective, trustworthy, able to work independently, and responsible. You must have a car, as ideally you will be travelling between the two plants in Abbotsford and Pitt Meadows. There may be a possibility of continuing part-time work in September and October.

If interested, send your e-mail to Charlie Schmidt at cschmidt@ramseysias.com

Please contact the Newsletter Committee if you wish to post a job listing in this section. Postings are free!

Webwatch

International Association for Food Protection
<http://www.foodprotection.org>

Dong-Hyun Kang, Assistant Professor at Washington State University [dhkang@mail.wsu.edu], operates a

very informative website with access to job listings, educational videos, and food safety news.

www.foodhaccp.com

Biotechterms-scientific vocabulary for the aspiring techies out there

www.biotechterms.org

Science and Nature present their discussion site featuring sustainable development, climate change, intellectual property, and social/economic needs of developing countries

www.scidev.net

From Annette Moore's Food News Group:

Livestock

Dairy Farmers of Canada now have their Canadian Quality Milk Program on the web! Both the reference manual and workbook can be found at:

<http://www.dairyinfo.agr.ca/cdicofqm.htm>

Consumer News

Are you finding your answering more consumer calls lately? Here are some websites that provide information for any consumer wanting to know more about food safety concerns....

Canadian Food Inspection Agency - Consumer Information

http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/ppc/biotech/co_nse.shtml

Washington State University - Food Safety Education for Consumers

<http://www.foodsafety.wsu.edu/>

Food safety info for consumers, educators and health professionals

<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/consedu.htm>

Newsbits

[Editor's note: I couldn't help thinking as I came across these stories that there could be a new paint job in Capers' future.]

HEALTH SCARE HITS ORGANIC MARKET

March 29, 2002

National Post/ The Vancouver Sun

VANCOUVER - According to these stories, thousands of customers of a high-end organic supermarket chain lined up for free vaccine shots yesterday after learning a food handler has hepatitis A, a viral illness.

The vaccination program -- one of the largest of its type in Canada -- saw about 3,000 people get their shots by yesterday at one of three community centers, and an additional 2,000 are expected through the weekend.

Dr. Patricia Daly, medical health officer with the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, was quoted as saying, "I've been talking to our nurses. They're really overwhelmed. People are lined up out the door, and having to wait two hours."

The stories say that the concern is that the foodhandler, a manager now off work, could have contaminated salad dressing, barbecue sauce, peanut sauce, salads, wraps, coleslaw, and vegetarian or bocconcini panini made between March 13 and 26 at any of three **Capers**

Community Markets in the Lower Mainland. No one has yet reported being sick.

Dr. Daly was cited as comparing the crush of people lining up for shots of immune serum globulin to the customer base of Capers, trendy outlets that stress health food, organic produce and include, among their customers, Gordon Campbell, the B.C. Premier, stating, "These are very popular establishments that have a high volume. The clientele they serve are well-educated, upper middle class [people] who follow the news. They are concerned and going out to the clinics."

That is not always the case, she said, recalling a similar crisis at a bingo parlor in Vancouver's working-class east end. "We went right to the bingo parlor and immunized all the regulars. If we hadn't gone there, I don't think many people would have come forward for shots."

Geoffrey Howes, a manager of several swank Vancouver restaurants and chairman of the B.C. Restaurant and Foodservices Association, was cited as saying that for restaurants, supermarkets and other businesses that sell food, an outbreak of food-borne illness that makes customers sick is a manager's nightmare, adding, "It's one of the worst things a restaurant has to endure."

Capers' regional food services manager Deb Ouellet was cited as saying

Thursday she doesn't know whether the company has lost customers at its stores, located in Kitsilano, the West End and West Vancouver and that she hasn't had time yet to consider what will happen to Capers and its customer base.

Howes was further cited as saying that the businesses named in public health alerts can expect an immediate drop in business of 30 to 50 per cent and that the customer base usually returns to pre-

emergency levels within one year -- if a business wins back the public's trust.

Businesses can spend more money on advertising and marketing campaigns, but Howes said that approach sometimes backfires, because ads can remind consumers of what happened. Howes recalled the worst-case scenario, involving a long-gone Vancouver seafood restaurant called **The Wharf**. In 1978, four people were taken to hospital and a total of 17 became sick with food poisoning after eating hollandaise sauce at the restaurant. Howes said the restaurant publicly admitted it made a mistake when it left the egg-based sauce out overnight without any refrigeration, but said it was such a stupid human error that the public never trusted the restaurant again.

In contrast, Howes noted the **Five Sails Restaurant** at Pan Pacific Hotel recovered after a 1987 food poisoning. Five patrons and one employee at the high-priced Vancouver restaurant became sick with botulism, a potentially deadly illness, after eating botulism-spore-contaminated chanterelle mushrooms.

Federal and provincial health authorities later said the restaurant should have boiled its mushrooms at least 15 minutes to kill the bug, but decided not to lay any charges because the restaurant cooperated during the investigation.

Steve Halliday, the Pan Pacific's general manager, said Five Sails closed for about one week but regulars returned the day the restaurant reopened. Halliday said the restaurant "never had a glitch in revenue" and there was no long-term effect, because the botulism source was quickly identified and the public was kept informed.

His advice: "Just move as swiftly as possible and communicate to the press exactly what's going on, and don't try to hide anything."

ANTISEPTIC ANTIDOTES BREEDING LIKE GERMS

March 30, 2002
The Gazette (Montreal)

Josh Freed writes in this column that he was in a restaurant in downtown Phoenix recently where he ordered some eggs, sunnyside up - but the waitress looked troubled. Moments later, the chef appeared to say he couldn't accept the order. Freed says that it turns out that under Phoenix's city bylaws, it is now illegal to serve eggs with yolks that are still yellow - you can only serve them "easy over."

"It's some kind of health thing," explained the mystified chef, to protect people from the danger of bacteria in undercooked eggs.

Freed says that later the same day we went to another restaurant where the waitress refused to cut up our pizza, stating, "Sorry - you'll have to do it yourself. We're not allowed to touch the food."

Freed says these are only his latest encounters with "microbe mania," a rapidly spreading disease on both sides of the border. It's the growing fear of germs, bacteria, dirt, dust, sweat and other tiny particles that have suddenly been declared too dangerous to tolerate.

Go to a barbecue and your beef will be cooked until it tastes like your shoe. Go to the grocer and your vegetables are wrapped in enough plastic to ship a crystal vase. Go to a fashionable party and there's a good chance they are serving antibioticly washed salad, with purified air and filtered water.

LICK OF PAINT TO KEEP THE GERMS AWAY

April 8, 2002

Business Week Magazine
Catherine Arnst

Thanks to modern science, you can now protect yourself against deadly microbes--and redecorate at the same time. In March, the Environmental Protection Agency approved a surface coating--i.e. paint--called Caliwel that kills more than 20 harmful microbes, including the bugs that cause hepatitis, Legionnaire's disease, and cholera. According to its manufacturer, Alistagen of New York, Caliwel kills microbes on contact within five to 15 minutes and keeps on killing for up to six years.

The coating's secret weapon is calcium hydroxide, a germ-fighting powder.

Because the compound quickly becomes ineffective when exposed to air, Alistagen has concentrated it in microcapsules able to resist degradation. The

coating is now available in one- and five-gallon containers, costing \$69 and \$295, respectively. It may not be cheap, but at least you won't be stuck with institutional gray. Caliwel comes in seven colors, with custom mixes available on request.

--These articles were obtained via Doug Powell's Listserve, **FSNet**

To subscribe to FSnet, send mail to:

listserv@listserv.uoguelph.ca

Leave subject line blank & in the body of the message type:
subscribe fsnet-L firstname lastname
e.g.. subscribe fsnet-L Doug Powell

BCFPA salutes its Corporate Members

Fletcher's Fine Foods

C.D.S. Sanitation Ltd.

FoodAssure Laboratory Ltd.

I.G. MicroMed Environmental Inc.

Unipac

Your corporate memberships have helped our organization become the success that it is.

As a benefit of your corporate membership, you are entitled to advertise free of charge in our newsletter that is distributed by e-mail. For future newsletters, please forward artwork and copy to our newsletter editor, Earl Bowler at earlb@yvesveggie.com.

John Boyce
Treasurer - BCFPA

Announcements

• Wednesday, April 3rd, 2002

BCFPA Speaker's Evening:
'HACCP: Gaining Control of Your program!'

Featuring:

- A panel of SIX industry experts
- HACCP on farms, in the plant, and at the store
- The status of HACCP in BC
- What HACCP really requires!
- Time: 5:00 to 9:30 PM
- Place: Room 214, Townsquare D, Building SE 2
BCIT-3700 Willingdon Ave.
Burnaby BC
- Admission:
BCFPA, BCFT, CIFST, or IFT members - \$25.00

Non-members - \$35.00

Students - \$10.00

- Please contact Clive or another Executive BCFPA Member if you would like to provide a poster of your own research at this event.

GLOBAL HACCP CONFERENCE COMING IN MAY

[posted in the April 1, 2002 Lean Trimmings issue
Edited by Jeremy Russell]

The **International HACCP Alliance** will be hosting a Global HACCP Conference **May 15-17** in Chicago, IL. It is currently inviting participants and sponsors to take part. Participants with at least one full conference registration or one

complimentary registration may choose to exhibit at the Conference.

Sponsorship opportunities show your commitment to excellence in food safety.

You may send a self-addressed, stamped (34A2) envelope to Jeremy Russell at NMA-West for more information or visit the International HACCP Alliance website at <http://haccpalliance.org>.

BRITISH COLUMBIA FOOD PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

AFFILIATE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR FOOD PROTECTION



The Grapevine wants your C.V.!

Students, Researchers, or any Food Industry Professionals interested in a change are invited to submit a short summary of their professional offerings and goals in confidence to the **Grapevine** (BCFPA@hotmail.com). Suggested format: a plain text e-mail copy of your résumé's vital points (8-10 lines max), with a note to us how you would like to be contacted (directly or through us).

A new postings section will feature the abbreviated CV (minus the contact name if privacy is preferred) with a Grapevine Reference # allowing prospective employers to contact you.

Postings are FREE for BCFPA members!

See you all Wednesday!

-Earl Bowler