
SANITARIAN'S NEWSLETTER

MAY 1999

April 26, 1999

Message from the President



Hello, I am Twila Stowers Carr. I am glad to represent the WVAS as your president. Since 1983, I have been a member of the WV Association of Sanitarians. This is a great family and I am

very happy to be a part of it.

I started out in Mercer County and made my way to the Eastern Panhandle. Stan Walls sent me to training school under Director Edwin Debarr, in Guthrie, WV. I really enjoyed the training school and I will never forget the meals we ate and prepared at the center. Ron Forren frequented the center for evening meals. I definitely learned a lot and have pictures to prove it.

After training and Mercer County, I moved to the Eastern Panhandle and went to work for the Jefferson County Health Department and John Cooper. After two years I was offered a position with the Berkeley County Health Department. Max Fisher warned me I would have a battle in Berkeley County. That was an under statement.

It is never a dull day in Berkeley County. The best policy is to follow the book and to be consistent. Public education is vital. I hope as the president of the Association of Sanitarians to educate the public on the conflicts that Sanitarians face daily, in their endeavor to keep the environment safe and to protect public health. I am in total support of the reclassification package and I hope to help speed the process along. Since the job responsibilities and education requirements for sanitarians is momentous, the salary and position should reflect the expertises.

I love computers and the Internet. If anyone wishes to contact me, please feel free to email a message to twila@intrepid.net. I know this year will be rewarding and exciting. I am up to the challenge and hope you are too.

Sincerely,
Twila Stowers Carr, R.S.



Visit this website at
www.intrepid.net/~twila/

Announcing NEHA's 1999 AEC and Exhibition!

National Environmental Health Association 63rd
AEC and Exhibition

July 6-9, 1999

Exhibit Dates: July 6-7, 1999

Renaissance Hotel and Nashville Convention Center,
Nashville, TN

NEHA is proud to announce the 1999 AEC and Exhibition, July 6-9, 1999 in Nashville, TN. By conducting ongoing market research and analyzing previous attendee survey responses - we can guarantee that you will find the education that you need and want at the 1999 AEC and Exhibition.

Only at the NEHA 1999 AEC and Exhibition will you find educational sessions that cover all areas of environmental health and protect! The conference will include topics ranging from food protection, onsite wastewater, geographic information systems, global

positioning systems, bioterrorism, management, indoor air quality, hazardous waste, emerging pathogens, drinking water, bioterrorism and much more. You will receive hands on experience from experts in the environmental health and protection field. You may even get the opportunity to take a tour of a facility/site relating to your field! Check out NEHA's website at www.neha.org for the latest conference information.

Save money by registering early! If you sign up by June 18, 1999 you will receive the special full conference rate of \$379 for members and \$489 for non-members. This is a \$50 savings over the onsite registration fee!

Sanitarian's Mid Year Meeting

May 4-6, 1999
Cedar Lakes Conference Center
Ripley, West Virginia

AGENDA

Tuesday, May 4, 1999

12:30 pm	Registration	L. Thompson
12:30-3:00 pm	Thermometer Standardization	Office of Lab
1:00 - 2:15 pm	Environmental Health Updates	R. Rader & Staff
2:15 - 2:30 pm	Break	
2:30 - 3:30 pm	Bureau & Transition Updates	Dr. Henry Taylor
3:30 pm	WVAS Business Meeting	T. Carr, President
5:30 pm	Sanitarian's Picnic (No charge to WVAS members, all others \$4.00)	Shelter #3

Wednesday, May 5, 1999

8:30 - 9:30 am	The Future of NEHA	G. Gist, Pres. NEHA
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9:30 - 10:00 am	General Sanitation Rule	G. Hamilton
10:00 - 10:15 am	Break	
10:15 - 11:00 am	1996 Food Code/EIS Pilot Project	S. Jones
11:00 - 12:00 pm	Norwalk Virus: Anatomy of an Outbreak	E. Brannon
12:00 pm	Lunch	
1:00 - 2:00 pm	Source Water Assessment Project	W. Toomey
2:00 - 3:00 pm	Child Care Regulations & Licensing	L. Jones J. Griffith
3:00 - 3:15 pm	Break	
3:15 - 4:45 pm	On-Site Wastewater Treatment Alternatives	Dr. K. Mancl

Thursday, May 6, 1999

8:30 - 9:30 am	1998 West Virginia HAU Survey	M. Aiton
9:30 - 10:00 am	WV Small Sewage Updates	M. Fisher
10:00 - 10:15 am	Break	
10:15 am - 5:00 pm	LPA1 Lead Paint Analyzer Operator Certification Course	

HAU Draft Report Released

This report summarizes a Home Aeration Unit Survey for West Virginia. Over 400 HAUs in six counties were evaluated to help determine if the units were meeting health and environmental regulations. Most units were installed to replace failed system or because of a failed

percolation test on a new site. The type of unit installed varied by county, according to the availability of the distributors in that area. Of 419 units examined, 85 HAU's were sampled for laboratory analyses. The survey of West Virginia HAU's was performed by Environmental Services and Training Division and the Environmental Microbiology Laboratory of West Virginia University, six county health departments, and with the assistance of the West Virginia state health department. The information gathered will be useful in determining if use and maintenance regulations for HAU's should be modified further.

The following conclusions were made:

- Many HAU's appear to be discharging effluent of unacceptable quality.
- Inclusion of additional treatment might reduce the problem of solids accumulations throughout HAU's and may improve overall system performance such as BOD5 reduction.
- Disinfection of effluent appears to be largely inadequate, and must be improved to avoid potential public health problems.
- Data suggest that mechanical and/or electrical malfunctions of HAU's are common and that safeguards to insure continuous operation of the units should be implemented.
- There is a difference between public perception of positive HAU effectiveness and their actual effective performance. (DUH!)

EIS Needs Help Getting With The Program

FDA's Electronic Inspection System, released amid great fanfare in 1995 as a tool for health departments to maintain inspection and epi data, may be cast into the techno' trash-heap unless some white knight (Bill Gates perhaps?) sees fit to update the program and make it compatible with current operating systems. Funds for updating the MS-DOS based program were requested in the FY99 Food Safety Initiative budget, but the upgrade "clearly doesn't fall out as higher priority" compared with other FSI initiatives, noted Larry Edwards of FDA's Retail Food Protection program.

Those familiar with the EIS program "recognize its value," Edwards said, noting other electronic inspection

options don't appear to produce as comprehensive, high quality reports as EIS. If FSI funds become available, Edwards said he would solicit input from current users on what should go into an upgrade and devise a firmer estimate of the cost.

At the Conference for Food Protection last spring, delegates approved a recommendation, submitted by the Georgia Department of Agriculture, that FDA be urged to update the EIS program. "It seems such a waste for this system to have been developed this far," the issue read, "Just to abandon it and move to something else." In its response to the CFP recommendations, FDA agreed the EIS system could help build a needed national database. "However," FDA noted, "due to the uncertainty of our budget, an upgrade of EIS and technical support can not be promised at this point."

EIS developer Charles Otto, now with CDC's Vessel Inspection branch, finds the lack of movement on an EIS upgrade "very frustrating." He estimates the project would cost between \$100,000-\$200,000 - "Maybe even less." State and local agencies are now designing their own systems from scratch, often spending twice as much. "This process will be duplicated time and time again," he said. "All that's required is to spend that money one time, do it well, and make it flexible and big enough to fit everyone's needs. As it is, everybody is going to spend equal what we spent on the national level."

Otto notes the program "works real well" in Windows 95 environment, but concedes it doesn't look like a Windows program. Wayne Kopp with the Wisconsin State Department of Agriculture recently piloted an adapted EIS program that ran through Windows, but reported the project is now "dead in the water," after complaints the DOS-like text report wasn't "user friendly." Kopp said he was "still a firm believer in EIS. It has some clunky things in it, but if you're willing to put with those, the system can do some good data analysis."

The MS-DOS based EIS package remains available for \$69 from the National Technical Information Service (800/553-6847; item number PB95502365). The package features central office and field data systems (which Otto reports are Y2K-proof), and Epi-Tracker, a tool for investigating foodborne outbreaks. But be apprised, users

are on their own. No technical support is available, nor forthcoming, from FDA.

New from Charles OTTO

Ship was a disaster. Even though new - it was almost like they took the wrong path down the decision tree when it came to public health matters in building. We have not been involved to this point in there new construction. Would not believe all the direct connections between water and sewer system via submerged inlets and direct connection to drains. They use an ozone generator / UV system for circulating air in galleys - but have raw chicken juice splashing on cooked food and most of the cooked food out at room temperature, clean storage of utensils often on deck, no hand washing (only cold water feed there), instead of paper towels - they do an air dryer with a UV light on it.... (be interesting to see study on effectiveness of that).

This is in regard to an outbreak that he is near. He is Siapan right now.

On outbreak - the company was claiming at first it must have been a deliberate sabotage or terrorist attack. There have been a lot of labor disputes at the plant over last year - so someone was probably quick to push the OSHA button. Plant employees mostly young Chinese women who are here on temporary work visas and live in company dormitories. Here is what we found out yesterday - Met yesterday with Secretary of Public Health and David Rosario, Director of Environmental Health on training program we are going to do here at end of week. They told us about a the large food outbreak last week with one of the garment factory cafeterias. 1000 down out of 3000 diners. Major medical mass casualty disaster. Initial findings are B. cereus and Salmonella. EIS team is on way over and should be here tomorrow to help continue to sorting things out. At first the company locked out the public health people and they had to get the police to get into the plant. After first 100 or so hit local emergency room - they ended up moving emergency room out to the plant. Suit for \$1 billion dollars has already been filed.

If any of you want to contact him, his email is: cao7@cdc.gov

Thought you might like to see this....

Francis %*

Meat Groups Propose Carcass Testing Plan

Facing the threat of an expanded range of beef products subject to USDA's E. coli 0157:H7 adulteration policy, and an almost certain corresponding rise in positive findings and recalls, the national's meat industry trade associations joined forces and proposed to voluntarily test for the pathogen on carcasses. Several meat groups proposed the plan at a March 8 public meeting, called by USDA to discuss its proposal to bring meat trimmings and other non-intact meat under the same zero tolerance standard for E. coli 0157:H7 that applies to raw ground meat. The National Meat Association argued that the policy expansion would impair a company's ability to conduct the testing needed to ensure interventions are working "by adding a legal landmine to an already complicated microbial landscape."

The details of the carcass sampling program have yet to be worked out, but the meat industry wants some assurance from USDA that it will relax its random sampling of product from plants participating in the voluntary effort. Government and consumer groups appeared receptive to the plan. Carcasses are already being tested for generic E. coli under the pathogen reduction/HACCP rules, but the random 0157 testing conducted by USDA has been on finished product either at the plant or at retail. By shifting the 0157 testing back to the carcass, the meat industry has a better chance of containing the scope of a recall. Under the plan, "one carcass would equal one lot," according to American Meat Institute spokesperson Janet Riley. "The liability is still ours," she said, but the plan would allow meat processors to get a better handle on which cattle suppliers provide contaminated animals.

New research out of USDA suggests the percentage of cattle shedding E. coli 0157 may be far greater than previously believed. Researchers with the Agricultural Research Service Meat Animal Research Center recently announced results of a study designed to assess the percentage of "in-stage" cattle that shed 0157 in their feces just prior to slaughter. Prevalence rates in some

pens were almost 90%, noted ARS scientist Dr. Robert Elder, "and we found several pens that had 50% or greater fecal shedding" of the pathogen. Previous studies estimated less than 5% of cattle carried the pathogen, so what accounts for the striking increase? "The culture method we worked out is far and above what anybody else is using," Elder said the meat industry is doing a good job of controlling against contamination of carcasses, noting that even "with that much going in," relatively few positive samples are picked up by USDA testing of finished product.

Foodnet Ups and Downs

Preliminary FoodNet data from 1998 presents one of those glass is half-empty/half-full scenarios, depending which pathogen is of interest. The data, published in the March 12 Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, tracks an overall decline in the foodborne disease incidence rates for the nine foodborne pathogens monitored under the disease surveillance program since the program was launched in 1996. While illnesses tied to the leading foodborne pathogens, Salmonella and Campylobacter, were off significantly, the FoodNet incidence rate for E. Coli 157:H7 was up 22% over the 1996 level, a jump CDC speculated could be the result of a "normal variation."

The most dramatic declines were noted in rates of Salmonella and Campylobacter infections. The number of Salmonella infections declined 14% from 1996 to 1998, while the number of infections blamed on Salmonella Enteritidis (SSE), associated with shell eggs, fell off by 44%. CDC speculates that implementation of ag-quality assurance programs in some states may be contributed to the decline in human illnesses caused by SE. Campylobacter infections, which remain the most common foodborne disease monitored by FoodNet, declined by 14% between 1997-98.

Regulatory officials credited new food safety efforts and the implementation of HACCP programs in meat and poultry plants with the decline in foodborne disease rates. After one year, the percentage of Salmonella-positive product in the large meat and poultry plants operating under HACCP had been cut in half for broilers and by a third for ground beef, according to recently released USDA data. "Our new system has resulted in a sharp

decrease in Salmonella contamination of raw meat and poultry and, we believe, contributed to this decline in foodborne illness," noted USDA Secretary Dan Glickman.

But some food safety experts say it's too early to jump to any conclusions. Jenny Scott, director of food safety programs for the National Food Processors Association noted in a recent speech that, "Ultimately, our measure of the success of HACCP will be a reduction in foodborne illness. But that will take time-years." After a careful study of the FoodNet numbers, she said she was "unconvinced that they do not primarily reflect normal fluctuations in the incidence of foodborne illness and our imprecise means of measuring it." Scott warned against crediting the decline as a "HACCP success," because if the numbers bounce back up, critics could declare HACCP a failure. "Like true love, the course of HACCP will not be smooth—we need to be prepared to accept these fluctuations, as long as the general trend is in the right direction."

"It's encouraging to see downward trends in these number," noted Minnesota epidemiologist Craig Heddburg. But with the tremendous geographic variability noted at the different FoodNet sites for the different pathogens, "you have to be a little cautious about throwing all the data into one pot." Three years is not a long time period, he said, and there will be "bumps in the road" before enough data is gathered to draw any conclusions as to what is "in fact real and related to those practices."

Preliminary Data from the Foodborne Diseases Active Surveillance Network

Rate of selected pathogens, per 100,000 population, detected by FoodNet at the five original sites, by year— U.S., 1996-98

Organism	1996	1997	1998
Campylobacter	23.5	25.2	21.7
Cryptosporidium	NR	2.7	2.5
Cyclospora	NR	0.3	0
E. coli 0157:H7	2.7	2.3	2.8
Listeria	0.5	0.5	0.5
Salmonella	14.5	13.6	12.4
Shigella	8.9	7.5	8.5
Vibrio	0.1	0.3	0.3
Yersinia	1.0	0.9	1.0
Total	51.2	50.3*	47.2*

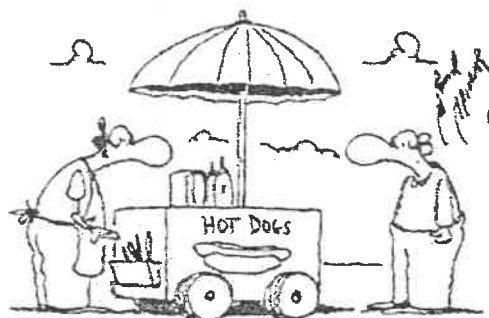
NR: not reported; *Excludes Cryptosporidium and Cyclospora

BAC Talk

If you've been wondering what BAC, the germ-fighting star of the Partnership for Food Safety Education's campaign, has been up to, check out a new newsletter, called "BAC Talk." The newsletter, readable at the Fight BAC web site (www.fightbac.org), carries the latest details and activities of the public/private partnership campaign designed to educate the public about safe food handling and preparation.

The inaugural issue touts the opening of the BAC store, open all day long (via the "net"), and offering a range of reasonably priced BAC products. Coffee mugs, posters, bookmarks, and stickers are just some of the items food safety educators might wish to purchase and make available to groups and classes. Volume discounts are available. Visit the store at the BAC web site at www.fightbac.org.

A Presenters Guide developed for use by community educators when they visit classrooms is in the early stages of distribution. Designed for educators of kids in grades K-3, the guide will be available in the BAC store this spring. The guide teaches the food safety basics, such as washing hands and rinsing fruits and vegetables.



"The mag wheels come in handy when I'm eluding the health department."

Cheesecake: A Potential Vehicle for Salmonellosis?

This study was conducted to investigate the potential hazard of *Salmonella enteritidis* surviving during the preparation and baking of cheesecake. Batters prepared with standard- and reduced-fat ingredients were inoculated with a 5-strain cocktail of *S. enteritidis* (10 and 106 CFU/g) and were then baked according to a typical cheesecake recipe. After baking, the cheesecakes were refrigerated overnight before the survival of *S. enteritidis* was determined either by direct plating or after enrichment. Samples (approximately 25 g each) were aseptically cut from the center, mid (6.35 cm from edge), and side (2.54 cm from edge) area of each cake for microbiological analysis. Proximate compositions (fat, moisture, protein, ash, pH, and water activity) of both raw batter and final baked cheesecakes were also determined. *S. enteritidis* was able to survive baking of cheesecake when batter was inoculated with a high population (106 CFU/g) of *S. enteritidis* regardless of whether standard- or reduced-fat ingredients were used. Three of nine standard- and four of nine reduced-fat cheesecake samples contained viable *S. enteritidis*. In addition, one sample contained viable *S. enteritidis*.

population detectable by direct plating approximately 10 CFU per g of cake). This sample was taken from the center of a standard-fat cheesecake that was inoculated with a high population (106 CFU/g) of *S. enteritidis*. Results of this study suggest that cheesecake prepared with eggs of low microbiological quality or cheesecake improperly handled or stored could serve as a vehicle for salmonellosis.

Marlboro Man Misses His Lung In New Billboards

The Marlboro Man started making way for a new message Thursday -- a cowboy telling his buddy he has emphysema, a cemetery full of crosses and other billboards bearing anti-smoking messages.

Under a settlement reached in November with 46 states, the major tobacco companies have agreed to turn over the leases on more than 4,100 advertising billboards to be used for anti-smoking messages. Thursday was the deadline.

"They are scheduled to come down officially at midnight tonight, April 22, 1999," CDC spokesman Ellwyn Grant said.

"This is a significant step in the effort to limit the ability of the tobacco companies to market their products to kids," Bill Novelli, president of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, said in a statement.

Under the agreement, tobacco companies agreed to pay states \$206 billion and submit to advertising and marketing restrictions, including the handover of the billboard leases.

The restrictions ban all outdoor advertising including billboards in arenas, stadiums and shopping malls. They also bar distribution and sale of clothing and merchandise such as caps, T-shirts and backpacks with brand name logos.

Tobacco companies will also be barred from using cartoons in the advertising and packaging of tobacco products.

The deal includes cigarette makers Philip Morris Cos., the world's largest, RJR Nabisco Holdings Corp. (NYSE:RN - news), Brown and Williamson Tobacco Corp. and Lorillard Inc., as well as smokeless tobacco maker UST Corp. (Nasdaq:USTB - news)

While some states have designed their own replacement billboards -- paid for by the tobacco companies -- the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the National Cancer Institute designed several of their own, many based on designs created by the states of Massachusetts and California.

Some play on the familiar ads, showing cowboys chatting. But instead of lighting up, the rangy model in one tells his companion, "I miss my lung, Bob".

Others carry blunt warnings such as, "Warning: When used as directed cigarettes kill".

"Advertising Age (magazine) recently selected the Marlboro Man as the number one advertising icon of the century," Novelli said. "It is no surprise that the most preferred brand among kids is also Marlboro."

But Samuel Craig, chairman of the marketing department at New York University's Stern Business School, said that could be turned around against tobacco.

"For better or for worse, I think Joe Camel and the Marlboro Man have become American icons, a part of American culture," he told Reuters Television in an interview.

"However, it cuts both ways," he added -- pointing to the replacement billboards.

In the end, however, Craig said billboards have little effect one way or another on smoking.

"Billboards serve as very good reminders and ways of keeping a brand in front of people ... but in and of themselves they are not a key determinant of whether people smoke or whether they buy a specific brand," he said.

He said that, just as in 1971 when they were banned from broadcast advertising, the tobacco companies would look for other places to promote their product.

The Health and Human Services (HHS) department said tobacco companies spent \$300 million on billboards in 1996.

"While we celebrate this public health victory, we must not lose sight of the fact that it will take further action by public health officials and local communities to reduce the health effects attributed to tobacco use," HHS Secretary Donna Shalala said.

Ten Best Things to Say If You Get Caught Sleeping At Your Desk

1. "...in Jesus' name. Amen."
10. "They tole me at the blood bank this might happen."
9. "This is just a 15 minute power-nap like they raved about in that time management course you sent me to."
8. "Whew! Guess I left the top off the White-Out. You probably got here just in time!"
7. "I wasn't sleeping! I was meditating on the mission statement and envisioning a new paradigm."
6. "I was testing my keyboard for drool resistance."
5. "I was doing a highly specific Yoga exercise to relieve work-related stress. Are you discriminating toward people who practice Yoga?"
4. "Dang it! Why did you interrupt me? I had almost figured out a solution to our biggest problem."
3. "The coffee machine is broken..."
2. "Someone must've put decaf in the wrong pot..."

**West Virginia Association of Sanitarians
Awards Nomination Form
For 9/98 to 9/99**

An objective of our Association is to **recognize and honor individuals** for outstanding service in promoting environmental/public health. Please take a few minutes to complete this form. A member may enter more than one nominee in each category. Please submit a separate form for each nominee.

The following categories may be submitted for consideration:

- Specialty Programs
(i.e. Food, Sewage, Milk,
Child Care Centers, etc.)
- General Sanitation Program
- Sanitarian Supervisor
- Special Recognition
- Community Service
(By a Sanitarian)
- Outstanding Individual, Group, or
Business promoting
environmental/public health.

Nominee: _____ (May be individual, group, or non-sanitarian)

Address: _____

Nominated by: _____ **Phone:** _____

Address: _____

Briefly describe the event or accomplishments that may justify an award:
Please use reverse side of this form if necessary.

When did the event or accomplishment occur? _____

Where did the event or accomplishment occur? _____

Who and how many were affected? _____

What change or benefit occurred? _____

Specific role of the nominee: _____

PLEASE RETURN FORM TO:

**Joe Wyatt, RS
WVBPH
815 Quarrier Street, Suite 418
Charleston, WV 25301**

Nominations need to be submitted by:

JULY 1, 1999