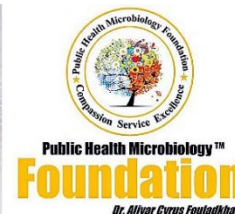




Volunteer Section
Institute of Food Technologists



7th Statewide Research Competition: Food Industry, Food Safety, and Public Health Microbiology in Changing Climate

Thursday, October 16, 2025, from 4:30 to 7:00 pm (central time)

Nashville, Tennessee, Lawson Hall 107B, Food Science Program, Tennessee State University

And via Zoom: <https://tennessee.zoom.us/j/81604433925> Passcode: PHMLab



Dr. Alex Byelashov, PhD, MPH, Founder & Principal Consultant of PDMG

Co-Keynote Speakers



Ms. Autumn Schuck, Assistant Program Director, Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO)

Judges

Dr. Alex Byelashov: Founder & Principal Consultant of PDMG

Dr. Minoo Bagheri: Assistant Professor, Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Dr. Aliyar Cyrus Fouladkhah: Founding Director, Public Health Microbiology FoundationSM

Dr. Alex Byelashov, PhD, MPH, is Founder & Principal Consultant of PDMG, advising on innovation for food, beverage, and nutrition ingredients. He is Executive Innovations Advisor to Actus Nutrition, a leading supplier of dairy proteins, where he manages biotech platform projects. Previously, Alex was Head of Global Innovations at BarthHaas and VP, Innovations at John I. Haas, leading the companies' innovations joint venture—the world's largest supplier of hops and hop-flavor products, with innovations used across most major beer brands. Earlier he led product and process development at Omega Protein, then a publicly traded company and the world's largest supplier of omega-3 oils. Trained in food microbiology (MS, PhD) and public health (Yale MPH), his microbiology foundation threads through his career.

Ms. Autumn Schuck has spent over 20 years making food safety smarter, stronger, and more connected. At AFDO, she helps lead Inspector Bootcamp, teaches courses on retail and manufactured food safety, and supports national efforts to build a more integrated food safety system. She's also passionate about mentoring the next wave of public health professionals—managing AFDO's internship awardees, giving guest lectures, and adding jobs to the careers website to help students and early-career folks find their path. Before joining AFDO, Autumn was the Inspection Manager for the Kansas Department of Agriculture's Food Safety Program, where she supported field teams across the state. Her career has taken her from inspector to supervisor to third-party auditor, giving her a well-rounded view of the challenges and opportunities in food safety. She earned her degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management from Kansas State University, and she's still driven by the same mission: keeping food safe and helping people grow.

Competition Founding Director

Aliyar Cyrus Fouladkhah, PhD, MS, MPH, CFS, CPH