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## President's Message

What impact have you made with the work you do? Think about it. What impact has 100+ NEHA members in Nebraska made? We have different duties across the board but we are all working towards the common goal of better Environmental Health. I have tremendous respect for the work you do and know it has a significant impact on the health of Nebraskans. This is my feeling towards Environment Health as a discipline and will lead my actions as your NEHA President.

I am Ryan King, REHS/RS, MA. I am the Assistant Executive Director of the Central District Health Department in Grand Island. My bachelors degree is in Biology and I hold a masters degree in Management. My career in public health began as an Environmental Health Specialist and later transitioned to supervising the section. I spent time working as the Director of Program Evaluation for the Iowa Department of Human Services and now have an understanding and appreciation for both state and local government systems. My current position with the local health department in Grand Island has provided me with tremendous opportunities to learn more about public health as a whole. I currently sit on the board of the Public Health Association of Nebraska and feel this will provide insight in to the direction of public health in Nebraska.

I have held multiple board positions with NEHA but this is my first run as the President. I invite your input on the direction of NEHA as this board moves ahead. Over the next year I will make it a priority to continue to move the board forward and showcase NEHA and the good work we do as environmental health professionals. Thank you all for the fine work you do and I look forward to serving you over next year.

*Ryan King, REHS/RS, MA*  
rking@cdhd.ne.gov



## MEET YOUR 2009 NEHA BOARD

### President Ryan King, REHS/RS, MA

**Vice President Jeremy Eschliman** I am second oldest of 6 children growing up on a dairy farm in Wheeler County, Nebraska. After graduating from Wheeler Central High School, I traveled to Wayne State College and completed my undergraduate degree majoring in Chemistry and Biology. I live with my wife and 4 children on a farm 2 miles south of Saint Paul, Nebraska. My personal hobbies include: building/remodeling, hunting, and gardening. I began my career at Central District Health Dept. [previously Grand Island-Hall County HD] in July of 2000. I was NEHA secretary in 2006-2008 and have assumed the role of Vice President for 2009. My goals for NEHA are to increase visibility and revamp the awards program.

**President Elect Kathy King** BS degree University of Nebraska - Agriculture/Natural Resources- Forestry/Fisheries& Wildlife. Four years with the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department as an EHS II in the Disease Prevention Section. REHS since 2006, obtained Certified Professional-Food Safety status in June 2008. Duties include: sanitation inspections in childcare centers, childcare homes and food establishments, as well as conducting monthly food handler and childcare provider health and safety trainings. Serve on the epidemiology team when outbreaks of communicable disease occur in food service and/or childcare settings.

**Secretary Jacque Davenport.** I have been employed at Douglas County Health Department for 10 years in July. I started as a lab scientist for the County and moved into the position I currently hold, Lead Risk Assessor/Inspector. I've lived in Omaha all of my life. I attended the University of Nebraska at Omaha and received a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Science and a Master's degree in Biology. I am currently pursuing a Doctorate degree in Education at the College of Saint Mary's. I have a wonderful husband and four beautiful children that keep me very busy. I have been a member of NEHA for almost 10 years. I served as your Vice president last year and am currently your secretary. It has been a wonderful experience serving the community and being part of an association that gives so much to its members.

### Treasurer Jere Ferrazzo

### Past President LesThiesen

Greetings from the past pres! Well as our president wants to help the member to be a little more familiar with the officers of our association he has asked each of us to give a short bio. So here goes! My name is Les Theisen, I was born in Omaha a few years ago. I served in the U. S. Navy for 22 years as a hospital corpsman. I have a bachelor of science in health sciences from George Washington University in Washington D. C. I began my civilian environmental health career at Douglas County Health Department in 1995 as an Environmental Health Specialist I. I have been an active member of NEHA since 1995 serving 3 separate terms as president of the association. I am currently serving my 3<sup>rd</sup> and final year as a board member of this fine association. I have found that in serving as a board member of the association has helped me to realize just how much effort is put forth by the board members, as the association tries to provide enough CEU opportunities for the membership to maintain their license renewal requirements. I would very much like to thank the board members: (Doug Clark, Jacque Davenport, Ryan King, Jere Ferrazzo, Jeremy Eschliman, Robin Wright, and Joe Gaube, and also those who have continued to contribute in committees like Kathy King and George Hanssen) that served during my term as president. The combined efforts of these people definitely made the year a lot easier. While I would have said the outgoing officers, none were outgoing, they just traded places. I would like to invite each of you as a member of the association to put your name on the ballots as a potential officer of the association. Don't be discouraged if you don't get the vote the first time. Make a real run for the office you seek by providing a short bio for insertion into the newsletter so that the membership knows a little about you! The old saying that you get out of an association what you put in! Well I feel that by serving as an officer of the association what you get out is easily increased by ten fold. As you have seen in many of the presentations and journals it seems that many in our profession are seen as the silent profession. You can help to change that! Many of our jobs in the community are just assumed, from the food we eat, the pools we swim in, the water we drink, the air that we breath just to name a few of the areas we exert our expertise. Be a part of it all!





## MEET YOUR 2009 NEHA BOARD (continued)

**Board Member At Large Robin Wright** Hello NEHA members, my name is Robin Wright and I have been a member of this fine association since 1999, working as a REHS food inspector in South Omaha. Recently, October 2007, I was elected to serve on the board and it has been interesting and fun working with these professionals. Really, it has. My arrival into the Nebraska Environmental Health Association was a bit unconventional. Born and partly raised in Miami Florida our family move to Omaha was less than celebratory. A nine year stint in the US Navy jazzed my life up. As a Facility Watch Supervisor/Air Traffic Controller at a NATO Air Base and state side jet Naval Air Station telling planes and people where to go was exciting and intense. Pondering the meaning of life with the closing of the Naval Air Station pending, I found my self on the steps of our Texas county court house during a tax sale. Next thing know I'm the new owner of a 19 stall horse barn. Those of you that have attended these tax auctions can imagine what happened! Just like that I was the owner/operator of a public horse stable. After six years of training, boarding and breeding horses 24/7 it occurred to me that if I finish my Bachelor of Science degree, maybe I could use my brain instead of my brawn, to earn a living. Bingo here I am! No really, I came back to Omaha to finish what I had started 20 years prior at UNO. I enjoy being an active part of NEHA. If you have any new ideas for speakers or CEU's please let one of us know. Or better yet, come to a meeting or run for office, you might be surprised....

**Board Member At Large Joe Gaube**

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### A Great Time (and Need) for Professional Visibility

If indeed the new administration transfers responsibility for public health from the federal government to the states, what will happen to environmental health? Do we have enough name recognition to survive?

With that sobering thought, this is an opportune time to contact your new or re-elected state legislators to talk about environmental health. We don't do that enough. If at all. Not as individuals, not as a professional organization.

Why can't we?

We are each a constituent, an individual who voted for—or not—our representatives. And as such we have the right and sometimes an obligation to contact them, not as John Smith who works for the state of Nebraska or for a specific agency, but John Smith who lives in their district and is contacting them as a constituent and a member of the Nebraska Environmental Health Association. And NEHA should also be contacting them representing a group of professionals who have expertise in wells and pools and food safety and lead paint and all the other areas of our practice, and offering themselves as a resource.

Why not call your local representative and suggest meeting for coffee. Honestly, it's not that hard. I've had a few cups with my state rep and she understands environmental health better precisely because we've had a few short discussions. She even joined our state association.

If coffee doesn't sound like your thing, send a letter or email to the representative let them know that you are a constituent and an environmental health professional that does xyz for the community and if any questions about environmental health arise during his time in office, that you would be happy to answer them, or put him in contact with someone who can answer them. End of letter. Thank you. John Smith RS or REHS

Easy? Yeah! We *have* to sell ourselves. That's what visibility is all about. Our profession depends upon it.

Iowa is planning the Region 4 Conference for September 22-24, 2009 at Lake Okaboji in the northwestern corner of the state. Reserve these dates for another exciting conference experience. If you are willing to participate on the committee to find NE speakers for the conference, please contact me. [bettepacker@comcast.net](mailto:bettepacker@comcast.net)

Thanks!

Bette Packer REHS  
NEHA Region 4 VP





## Sarpy/Cass Health Department Plastic Bag Collection Drive

The Sarpy/Cass Health Department sponsored a plastic bag collection drive in recognition of Nebraska Public Health Month (topic: "Climate Change: Our Health in the Balance") and Earth Day. Elementary students from South Sarpy District 46 brought plastic bags into their classroom for eight days in the beginning of April. Plastic bags accepted included grocery bags, retail bags, bread sacks, newspaper sleeves, and dry cleaning bags.

The plastic bags were collected and hand-counted by Health Department staff and placed into 150 gallon plastic bags. The plastic bags will be recycled by the Hy-Vee Store located at Shadow Lake Towne Center during the week of April 21.

The classroom in each school that collected the most number of bags per student will win a special party on Earth Day, April 22. The Health Department will also give each student in both schools a reusable shopping bag.

Westmont Elementary, with 252 students, collected a total of 24,101 bags. Springfield Elementary, with 281 students, collected a total of 17,245 bags. Combined, South Sarpy District 46 elementary school students collected 41,346 bags.

The EPA estimates that 380 million plastic bags are used annually in the United States, and an estimated 1% of all plastic bags get turned in for recycling.

Jenny Steventon, Environmental Health Coordinator



## FERN - Food Emergency Response Network

With the occurrence of 9-11 and the subsequent establishment of Homeland Security, money was available for local, state, and national food laboratories to develop a network to work together in a national event with agents spread via food.

The anthrax incident couldn't have occurred at a better time, developmentally speaking. It overwhelmed several testing laboratories. It presented a true surge situation, and provided a lesson in what would be needed to prevent this from occurring again. It showed the need for a number of facilities to be able to do the same type of testing on a huge number of samples that were very dangerous to analyze.

FERN, a cooperative venture between FDA and USDA, was established. FERN consists of three main disciplines: microbiology, chemistry, and radiology. For inclusion, at that time, all that was required was to be a State facility, and fill out a form describing the equipment, supplies, personnel, and testing being done. A laboratory could apply for one or all of the disciplines. A panel reviewed the information submitted and determined whether or not the laboratory met the criteria. Much of this was brought into existence on the fly and has continued to be refined.

Since then, over 150 microbiology laboratories, 125 chemistry laboratories, and 12 radiological laboratories have received FERN designation. In addition, FERN is now intertwined with other laboratory groups, such as the CDC and LRN.

Initially, FERN was setup to handle terroristic events. The prevailing thought was that an attack on the food supply was imminent. State food laboratories would handle the initial screening of hundreds or thousands of expected samples. Positive samples would be sent, normally, to federal laboratories, for confirmation.

In the beginning, 17 laboratories were selected to receive microbiological grants to upgrade their facilities, purchase equipment, and develop standardized tests. The NDA food laboratory was one of the labs selected for this program and has benefited greatly from the grants. Six chemistry laboratories were selected to perform chemical testing. NDA applied for one of the grants but wasn't awarded one.

Since its initial concept, FERN's focus has changed. The screening laboratory doing huge numbers of samples is still in play, but the scenario of activating several FERN laboratories to test for foodborne agents is now in vogue. The reasons for the change in philosophy are:

1. There has been no major bioterrorist event.
2. There have been several national foodborne illness events. Salmonella in lettuce; Salmonella in peanut butter (twice); Mellamine in pet food; and E. coli O157:H7 in tomatoes. Each of these situations led to the activation of the FERN network and some FERN laboratories analyzing samples.

Tom Tieso Supervisor - Food and Dairy



## NEBRASKA LICENSEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **What is the Nebraska Licensee Assistance Program?**

The Nebraska Licensee Assistance Program (NE LAP) provides education alcohol/drug assessments, treatment referrals, case management and monitoring for licensed, certified or registered health service professionals in the state of Nebraska. The Nebraska Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, Licensure Unit oversees Best Care Employee Assistance Program's provision of these services. Best Care EAP is a service of the Nebraska Methodist Health System headquartered in Omaha, Nebraska.

#### **Who is eligible for the Program?**

Anyone who is actively licensed, certified or registered in their profession by the Division of Public Health Licensure Unit. If you have questions regarding eligibility, you can call the NE LAP Coordinator at our toll-free phone number (800) 851-2336 or the Licensure Unit for assistance.

#### **What is the cost?**

There is no charge for the services provided by the NE LAP, including the alcohol/drug assessments. However, if a treatment referral is made and services are utilized outside of the NE LAP, the expenses for these services are the responsibility of the licensee.

#### **If I enter the Program, will anyone find out?**

Involvement in the NE LAP is completely confidential. Information cannot be released without the licensee's authorization, unless provision of information is required by State or Federal law.

#### **I live outside of eastern Nebraska and it is not convenient for me to drive to the NE LAP office in Omaha. Where will I have to go for a NE LAP assessment?**

The NE LAP provides convenient assessments throughout the state of Nebraska. When someone cannot meet with the NE LAP Coordinator at one of our offices in Omaha, Lincoln, Fremont, Beatrice, Norfolk, Columbus, or Kearney, arrangements for an assessment will be made with one of our affiliates in your area. The assessment is free of charge when arranged by the NE LAP Coordinator.

#### **I am not sure if I need help for my alcohol/drug use. What should I do?**

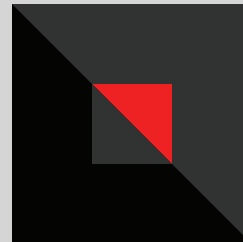
If you are questioning whether or not you need help with your alcohol or drug use, please call and consult with the NE LAP Coordinator. The Coordinator will discuss your situation with you and help you determine what you may need to do to address your situation.

#### **How do I find out more information about the NE Licensee Assistance Program?**

The NE LAP has a toll-free phone number that provides convenient access to the program, staff and services. You may also visit our web site at [LAPNE.org](http://LAPNE.org) for more information

If you have further questions about the Nebraska Licensee Assistance Program, or feel that you need assistance from the NE LAP, please contact the NE LAP Coordinator, Judi Leibrock or NE LAP Counselor Tricia Veech, at (800) 851-2336 or (402) 354-8055.

George Hanssen, Nebraska Department of Agriculture and Doug Clark, Douglas County Health Department





## 2008 Recognition Awards

NEHA Recognition Awards were presented at the Annual Education Conference at Mahoney State Park in October, 2008. Take a look at a snapshot of some of the great accomplishments of our peers and congratulate them when you get a chance!

### Environmental Health Specialist of the Year

**Leon Marquart**, Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department

Leon has been assigned a variety of duties that has included inspection of food establishments, nuisance complaints and other public health duties. Leon has worked on several projects including the West Nile Virus epidemic, a mysterious skin rash incident and a Certified Pool Operator's training curriculum. He was recently promoted to a Senior Staff position and is a true public health professional.

**Larry Tinchler**, Nebraska Department of Agriculture

While maintaining a regular work schedule as a Food Inspector, Larry, as helped other inspectors in his area of central Nebraska. Larry went to Kansas City for the USDA country of origin label training (COOL) and made a number of inspections under the Cool contract USDA had with NDA. Larry is always available for consultations with new operators on construction and design on operations for sanitation purposes.

**Les Theisen**, Douglas County Health Department

Les has been President of NEHA (Nebraska) for three terms, each term spanning three years. He was instrumental in planning the region four annual conference during his 2003 presidential term. He has held various other board positions for NEHA for which he was a very involved participant that included his skills of organization, tenacity, education mentorship and leadership. Les has an incomparable wealth of knowledge and is a respected public health professional in his field.

**Ray Tuller**, Nebraska Department of Agriculture

Ray is a food sanitarian working in southwest Nebraska. He is responsible for the inspection of food establishments in a 14 county area. Ray assists with ServSafe Training held in his area. Ray also assists fellow sanitarians with food handler training courses held outside of his area. During the fall of 2007 and the spring of 2008 he worked on the County of Origin Labeling project (COOL) after his training in Kansas City.

**Troy Huffman**, Nebraska Department of Health

Troy goes out of his way to educate food service staff across the state to ensure meals are safe. Troy created a database of food service provider's email addresses and uses it to inform recipients of any potential issues. Troy also spends time ensuring pools are safe. He has a heightened awareness of crypto and works to educate pool operators. Troy has been a member of NOWWA since its inception and has been appointed to be on the NOWWA Advisory Committee. Troy is also a member of the Power Plant Emergency Response Team.

### Environmental Health Administrator of the Year

**Joyce Jensen**, REHS, CPFS, Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department

As an Environmental Health Supervisor for the Disease Prevention Section, Joyce supervises three programmatic areas: Food Safety/Food Handler Education, Body Art and Child Care. Joyce is a strong advocate for team approach, always making the effort to involve her staff in decision making, coaching and mentoring her staff and encouraging team members to rely upon each other. She and her teams have a continuous improvement mindset, always working toward improving processes and outcomes.

**James Weverka**, REHS, Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department

This past 4 years Jim has worked with the Humane Society to resolve ongoing kenneling contract dispute which finally was resolved this past year. Jim worked to upgrade the penalties for dog fighting and cockfighting, to ban the possession of fighting dogs and make it a criminal offense to be a spectator at a dogfight.

**Great Job!!!**



## Food Safety Awareness Month

On September 11, 2008, Governor Dave Heineman signed the proclamation declaring September as Food Safety Awareness Month.

Attending the ceremony, pictured left to right, were Wayne Bowles, Lazlo's and Fireworks Restaurant; Julie Albrecht, UNL Extension Educator; Governor Heineman; Jim Partington, Executive Director of the Nebraska Restaurant Association; Beth Haas, Education Coordinator, Hospitality Education Foundation, Nebraska Restaurant Association; George Hanssen, Food Division Manager, Nebraska Department of Agriculture; and Troy Huffman, Food Safety Evaluation Officer, Nebraska Department of Health.



## Protecting your Health - South Heartland District Releases Radon Test Results

South Heartland District Health Department gave away over 200 radon test kits last winter in a radon awareness effort to promote the Environmental Protection Agency's campaign "Test your home. Protect your health." South Heartland was awarded the free kits for Adams, Clay, Nuckolls and Webster counties through a grant from the National Association of County Officials (NACO). University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension offices in Adams, Clay, Nuckolls, and Webster counties collaborated with South Heartland by distributing the radon test kits from their offices and assisting with education on radon.

Michele Bever, Executive Director of South Heartland District Health Department, has been pleased with the public's interest in this project. "Nearly 250 residents across all 4 counties registered for free radon test kits since the beginning of January." In addition, the Health Department and UNL Extension provided information on radon through presentations and focused mailings to reach over 700 people during the first month of the campaign. "Residents are becoming aware that radon is a natural environmental hazard in our part of the country and they are curious about their individual risks. Testing your home is the first step to finding out whether you and your family might be exposed to high levels of radon gas."

To date, 94 submitted samples have returned results. In Adams County, the average indoor radon level was 8.96 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) with individual home results ranging from 1.5 to 34.6. In Clay County, the average indoor radon level was 9.59 with individual home results ranging from 2 to 14.9 pCi/L. In Nuckolls County, the average indoor radon level was 6.08, with individual home results ranging from 2.2 to 12.2 pCi/L. And, in Webster County, the average indoor radon level was 6.49 with individual home results ranging from 0.3 to 22.9 pCi/L. Overall, 75% of the homes tested in South Heartland District had radon levels greater than 4 pCi/L.

Michele Bever, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
South Heartland District Health Department



### What's That Powder?

#### *Chemical Identification of "Unknowns" using Fourier Transform Infrared Technology*

*Dana El-Hajjar, MBA, BS., Technical Director, Chemistry, Nebraska Public Health Laboratory*

Following the events of 9/11, a need arose for first responders to test "white powders" or unknown chemicals that may be a result of a terrorism act. Some agents of chemical terrorism include weapons of mass destruction such as sarin, GB, VX and other toxic powders like cyanide. This has led to the rapid expansion of the analytical capabilities of agencies that might respond to an event such as HazMat teams, Civil Support Teams, firefighters, and public health laboratories. This expansion has included acquisition of Fourier Transform Infrared (FTIR) spectrometry for analyzing the chemical composition of unknown solids, liquids, and pastes, including those that may be regarded as a chemical threat. Just as field identification of biological agents has its limitations so do chemical detection devices and it is of utmost importance to realize what they can and cannot do.

#### What is Infrared Spectrometry?

- Infrared Spectrometry is a technique based on the vibrations of the atoms of a molecule
- An infrared spectrum is obtained by passing infrared radiation through a sample and determining what fraction of the radiation is *absorbed* at a particular energy
- Peaks are produced when light energy is absorbed by molecular bonds creating a "fingerprint" of the chemical
- Bonds between particular atoms (functional groups) occur at characteristic wavenumbers

#### Field Versions and Laboratory Versions of FTIR

The main difference between the FTIR devices used in the field and laboratory units is that the laboratory units have a microscope attached which allows for better identification of mixtures. It also enables the pinpointing of a specific crystal to be identified at the microscopic level. Laboratory units also have the ability of detecting differing polarizing properties of substances.

The advantage of the field devices is that they can be taken into the "hot zone" and provide for preliminary identification of substances. It is of utmost importance, however, that this preliminary identification be combined with other confirmatory tests to correctly identify the substance. Even if the FTIR device gives a chemical identification, it is important to realize that it may be a mixture of a chemical and a biological agent, and a laboratory that has the capability of testing for biological agents may need to be consulted.



*Above:  
Laboratory FTIR  
with microscope capa-  
bility*



#### What can FTIR identify?

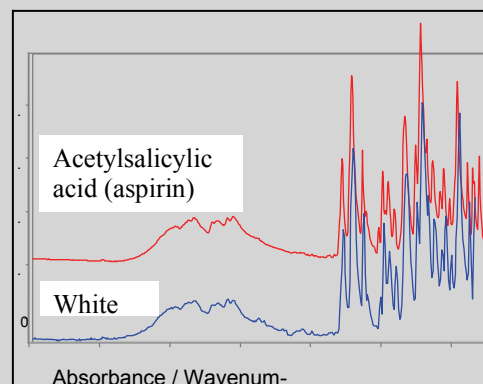
FTIR technology is used mainly for the identification of unknown chemicals. It can be used to identify organic materials (e.g. fibers, urea), and inorganic materials such as mineral acids (e.g. boric acid), and mixtures of these components in solid, liquid, and paste form.



## What's That Powder? (continued)

### What can FTIR not identify?

FTIR technology does have limitations. For example, it cannot identify the cation or anion associated with an ionic bond (e.g. salts), or elemental compounds such as metals or dilute aqueous solutions. It also cannot be used for the identification of biological agents, since it gives the same non-unique spectrum for all protein substances. Even seemingly homogeneous specimens may yield non-definitive spectra. Mixtures of chemicals may also be very difficult to identify with the field versions of FTIR. A laboratory that has the capability of FTIR microscopy and other analytical techniques would be needed to confirm such samples. It is also important to note that the first "hit" on the library match may not necessarily identify the sample, and further confirmation may be required. However, given that the field FTIR devices have limitations their ability to rule out certain chemicals is a valuable capability.



Spectrum of an unknown pill (blue) and the library match (red) identified it as aspirin

### Nebraska's FTIR Proficiency Testing Program

Instrumentation using FTIR can be a very powerful tool, yet it is important to realize the limitations of such field screening devices and the importance of training and continued demonstration of proficiency. The Nebraska Public Health Lab (NPHL) established the FTIR Proficiency Testing (PT) program in 2004 as a means of assuring capabilities of laboratories in Nebraska to test for unknown substances. The program was founded mainly to help users maintain proficiency on the FTIR microscopy laboratory units, but has since then expanded to include agencies that have the field versions of FTIR as well. In March 2008 the proficiency testing program was opened to laboratories and agencies outside Nebraska that may be involved in testing of unknown substances using FTIR analysis. The NPHL intends on bringing up a Raman PT program in the near future. For more information about this program visit our website at <http://www.nphl.org/NebraskaFTIRProficiencyTestingProgram.html>, or contact program staff at (402) 559-9421.

Dana El-Hajjar, MBA, BS., Technical Director, Chemistry, Nebraska Public Health

Anthony R. Sambol, MA, SM(NRM), SV(ASCP), CBSP(ABSA) Assistant Professor, Dept. of Pathology & Microbiology Assistant Director, Nebraska Public Health Laboratory Coordinator, Special Pathogens/Biosecurity Preparedness Lab for Bio, Chem, and Rad, UNMC

## FD215 MANAGING RETAIL FOOD SAFETY

**Course Description:** This course is designed to allow participants an opportunity to explore the various ways that risk-based inspections can be applied in retail and food service establishments. Topics will include the "process approach" to HACCP, applications of HACCP principles in routine inspection work, and assessing active managerial control of risk factors by operators through a HACCP system or other established food safety systems.

While the process approach is new to many regulators, it is better designed for use in retail and food service settings than traditional HACCP approaches because it eliminates lengthy flow charting and hazard analysis for every type of food product.

**Objectives:** Upon completion of this course, participants will be able to:

Identify possible hazards associated with retail and food service operations and the control measures available to prevent, reduce, or eliminate the risks of these hazards.

Apply the "process approach" of HACCP to routine inspections of retail and food service operations.

Identify appropriate techniques and methods for applying HACCP principles to inspections and offering intervention strategies for controlling risks to operators (those with and without HACCP Plans.)

**Prerequisite:** Students should have some exposure to and understanding of the HACCP concepts. They should have read and become familiar with the NACMCF HACCP Principles and Application Guidelines: <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPHS/NACMCF/past/JFP0998.pdf>

**CEU Credits: 2.2 Course Duration:** 3 days, March 17, 18, 19, 2009. 8:00-4:30 tentative class times. **Enrollment is limited to 50**

Alan Gelfius will be the instructor. Alan has presented several courses in Nebraska, is energetic, and makes the course enjoyable. The training will be held at the Lincoln/Lancaster County Health Department Training Center, 3140 N St., Lincoln. The registration cost will be kept to a minimum and will cover any course materials, breaks, and lunches.



## NEHA Briefs

**Board of Environmental Health Specialists:** In the Spring 2008 NEHA Newsletter, we reported that the biennial REHS fee would increase to \$150 beginning January 1, 2009. The Board approved the increase based on projected costs to support the REHS program and to reduce the deficit that has accumulated over the years.

The Board has since been notified that the biennial fee for registration will be \$116. Good news for REHS's.

If you have issues you would like to Board to bring forth, contact one of the members. They are George Hanssen, NDA, Doug Clark, DCHD, Mike Gould, NHHS, Joyce Jensen, LLCHD, Scott Holmes, LLCHD, and Les Olson (citizen member).

**Board Member Term Change:** Because the Uniform Credentialing Act goes into effect on December 1, 2008, the terms of four of the Board members will be extended. The law states that at the expiration of three -year terms of the members serving on December 1, 2008, successors shall be appointed for five-year terms.

Doug, Joyce, Scott and George will be serving on December 1, 2008 and are being reappointed on December 1, 2008. Their term will begin on December 1, 2008 and expire on November 30, 2013.

Some of you that renewed your REHS early may have received two registration cards. This occurred because with the statute change, the name changed to Certified Registered Environmental Health Specialist. The renewal program was not changed early in the renewal process to reflect the name change.

**Foods Division Adds Additional Sanitarian:** In April, Ericka Smith signed on as a field inspector in the north central region of the state. Ericka lives in O'Neill and works 9 counties from Pierce County to Cherry County.

**Mexican 'Vanilla' Found in Food Service:** During routine inspections of food establishments, sanitarians look for Mexican 'vanilla'. Often this is a product derived from the tonka bean which is used in the manufacturer of coumarin which is used in 'rat poison'.

Often this product is brought in from Mexico by tourists.

On two separate occasions, samples of Mexican vanilla were collected and analyzed. Of seven samples recently collected, two were found to have excessive levels of coumarin. One sample had 1427 ppm and the other 826 ppm. These products were destroyed.

FDA was notified with sample results and manufacturers information. FDA KC will contact the FDA office in the appropriate district for follow-up.

Information on Mexican vanilla was provided by FDA and distributed to field sanitarians. If you have questions about this product, please call George Hanssen, 402-471-2536.

## Upcoming Events

March 17-19, 2009 FDA Course Managing Retail Food Safety, Lincoln

March 25, 2009 Annual Nebraska Food Safety Task Force Conference. Country Inn and Suites, Lincoln

April 7-9, 2009 Mid-Continental Association of Food & Drug Officials Annual Conference. Norman, Oklahoma

For information on these events, contact George Hanssen 402-471-2536

Visit the NEHA website at <http://nebrneha.startlogic.com/>

