



Dedicated to the promotion of high standards in environmental health for the general welfare of the public

NEHA Conference Agenda

October 24, 2023

7:30 am - 8:30 am Registration Check-in—Crete Carrier Lodge, Mahoney SP

8:30 am - 8:45 am

Opening Remarks and Welcome

Harry Heafer, President, Nebraska Environmental Health Association, Lincoln-Lancaster Co Health

Dr. David Dyjack, NEHA, Executive Director and CEO

Kim Carlton, NEHA Region IV Vice President, Retail Food Program Manager in the Food and Feed Safety Division, MN Dept of Health

8:45 am -9:15 am

Update on the Nebraska Environmental Summit

Speaker: Susan Bockrath

susanbockrath@nalhd.org



Bio: Since 2012, Susan Bockrath has led Nebraska Association of Local Health Directors' (NALHD's) work toward an exemplary, collaborative local public health system that ensures health for all Nebraskans. She applies her expertise in public health, education, project management, evaluation, and health literacy to amplifying local health departments' collective work as regional chief health strategists. NALHD's current work under her leadership is strengthening relationships and collaboration across the public health system to: grow local environmental public health capacity, increase preventive oral health access, develop community

health worker capacity, advance equity, and address public health professionals' and organizations' health literacy skills. Susan holds a master's degree in public health from Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health (1998). In addition to serving on several statewide advisory committees and boards, Susan is an active member and past chair of the Council of SACCHOs (state affiliates of the National Association of County and City Health Officials [NACCHO]).

Presentation Description: Nebraska's 19 local health departments (LHDs) and the Winnebago Tribal Health Department have embarked upon a multi-year collaborative effort to build their capacity to better meet the environmental health needs of their communities and partners. Their goal is to support, add to, and maximize environmental public health activities in local communities across the state. This session will include a panel of LHD leaders who will help describe the planning process that the Nebraska Association of Local Health Directors (NALHD) has been facilitating since January of 2023 and share the resulting priority areas, goals, and projected next steps.

9:15 am - 10:15 am (Keynote)
“Platte River Time Lapse Project”

Speaker: Ethan Freese
efreese2@unl.edu



Bio: Ethan Freese was born and raised in Lincoln, Nebraska. He graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2018 with degrees in Fisheries and Wildlife and Grassland Ecology and Management, and completed a Master of Applied Science degree at UNL in 2020. Currently, he is working for the Platte Basin Timelapse project in the School of Natural Resources at UNL. Ethan has developed a deep appreciation for the prairies of Nebraska and he enjoys helping others learn about these undervalued ecosystems.

Presentation Description:

The Platte Basin Timelapse project (PBT) has been working since 2011 to tell the story of water in the Platte River Basin. PBT has more than sixty timelapse cameras throughout the Platte River Basin in Nebraska, Colorado, and Wyoming. These cameras constantly monitor change over time on the landscape and have helped document severe droughts and flooding in the Platte Basin. In addition to our timelapse camera system, PBT has published more than 170 stories on our website including short films, photo essays, and ESRI Story Maps. PBT recently completed a project working with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission to produce updated educational materials about the wetlands of Nebraska.

10:15 am - 10:30 am
BREAK—Snacks and check out the raffle items

10:35 am - 11:30 am
“Fermented Foods: Health, Manufacture, and Safety”

Speaker: Dr. Bob Hutkins
hutkins@unl.edu



Bio: Professor Bob Hutkins is the Khem Shahani Professor of Food Microbiology in the Food Science and Technology Department at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The Hutkins Lab studies bacteria important in human health and in fermented foods. He has published widely on probiotics, prebiotics, synbiotics, and fermented foods and is the author of the recently published 2nd edition of Microbiology and Technology of Fermented Foods. Prof Hutkins served on the Board of Directors for International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics, and since 2011, he has written a monthly column, called “Ask the Food Doc”, for the Lincoln Journal Star.

Presentation Description: Fermented foods have become increasingly popular in the past decade, in large part due to their suggested health benefits. Many consumers, as well as small craft manufacturers, are now making a wide range of fermented foods, including kimchi, pickles, kefir, yogurt, and kombucha. In this presentation, I will review the principles for how these products are made, their nutritional properties, and how to reduce food safety risks.

10:35 am - 11:30 am

“Environmental Public Health Tracking Program Update”

Summer Woolsey, MPH, summer.woolsey@unmc.edu

Rachael Birn, MPH, rachael.birn@nebraska.gov

Summer Woolsey

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Rachael Birn



Bios: Summer Woolsey (left) is a graduate of the University of Nebraska Medical Center and holds an MPH in Health Promotion. She has worked in both public health research and communications roles, including completing a communications fellowship with the American Journal of Public Health. Her research and practice interests are at the intersection of health communication, health equity, new media, and health promotion. Summer is the Communications and Outreach Coordinator for the Nebraska Tracking program.

Rachael Birn (right) is a graduate of the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) Applied Epidemiology Fellowship and holds an MPH in Epidemiology from University of South Florida. She developed a passion to serve the public as a Registered Dental Hygienist and transitioned to public health to make an even greater impact. Her CSTE fellowship with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services focused on infectious diseases at the human-animal-environmental interface. Rachael is the lead Epidemiologist for the Nebraska Tracking program.

Presentation Description:

From the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the home and environment we live in, environmental public health is all around us. In this presentation, project epidemiologist, Rachael Birn, MPH, and project communications and outreach coordinator, Summer Woolsey, MPH, will outline the progress of the new Nebraska Environmental Public Health Tracking Program (Nebraska Tracking), including new public health initiatives in our state. The Nebraska Tracking program is designed to improve the health of our communities by providing a wide array of information on environmental hazards and health effects, such as air quality, asthma, heat illness, lead poisoning, and radon. Awarded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in late 2022, Nebraska is now part of a network of 32 U.S. states that provide environmental public health tracking programs. Nebraska Tracking will work over the next five-year period to provide tools and resources to improve community health throughout Nebraska.

11:30 - 12:15 pm — Annual Business Meeting

12:15 - 1:00pm — Lunch

1:00 pm - 1:50pm

“Water quality and health in rural Nebraska”

Jesse Eugene Bell, Ph.D.

jesse.bell@unmc.edu



Bio: Dr. Jesse E. Bell is the Claire M. Hubbard Professor of Water, Climate, and Health in the Department of Environmental, Agricultural, and Occupational Health at the University of Nebraska Medical Center and the School of Natural Resources within the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He is the director of the Water, Climate and Health Program at UNMC and the director of Water, Climate and Health at the University of Nebraska’s Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute. The mission of these programs is to develop interdisciplinary research, education and collaborative solutions to public health challenges associated with environmental issues in Nebraska and around the world. As the director since inception, he has helped grow these programs to over 20 faculty, staff, and students. His expertise and research are focused on understanding the influence that changes in the environment and climate have on natural and human processes. Before coming to UNMC, Dr. Bell developed and served in an interagency position

between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). During his time in this role, he worked on a variety of innovative health projects that made use of his knowledge of climate processes and ability to analyze climate data. He was able to unite their efforts toward better understanding climate’s impact on health. His research and efforts there built the foundation for novel and inventive approaches to use climate data to assist with health research. During this time, he was a lead author for the U.S. Global Change Research Program report “The Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States: A Scientific Assessment” that was released by the White House in 2016. Dr. Bell is a native Nebraskan and received his Ph.D. is from the University of Oklahoma.

Presentation Description: Groundwater is the primary source of drinking water in rural Nebraska. However, contamination of groundwater is a potential threat to human health. This session will focus on adverse health outcomes associated with agrochemical contamination in Nebraska. We will also discuss opportunities for public health to address these threats.

1:00 pm - 1:50 pm
“Nebraska Cottage Foods”
Cindy Brison - UNL Extension
cbrison1@unl.edu



Bio: Cindy has worked for Nebraska Extension for 27 years. She has 16 years of food service experience before that. Cindy’s educational focus is food safety, cottage foods and health and wellness. Cindy helped create the Nebraska Extension Cottage Food Safety Training, and coordinates the food safety training of Extension in the state. She is married with three adult children, two dogs and a cat.

Presentation Description: The evolution of the Nebraska Cottage Food Industry from 2019 to today is mind blowing. What started out as baked goods like cookies and bread has blown into niche syrups and freeze dried candy! Cottage Food producers are some of the most innovative individuals, and this can be a challenge for surveyors. Learn about the growth of the industry in Nebraska and other bordering states.

2:00 pm - 2:50 pm
“Control Your Water, Don’t Let It Control You”--Legionella in Nebraska
Storm Keffer, MPH
storm.keffer@nebraska.gov



Bio: Storm Keffer serves as an Epidemiologist with the Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI) and Antimicrobial Resistance (AR) team at Nebraska DHHS and is the current lead Epidemiologist for legionella. He developed a passion for public health, specifically HAI/AR, since obtaining his bachelor’s degree from Doane University in 2017 and transitioning from a cytogeneticist to public health epidemiologist. He holds an MPH in Epidemiology from the University of Nebraska Medical Center and has been with the HAI team since 2020 and doing legionella work since 2022.

Presentation Description:
In this presentation, we'll go over a little bit of background on the legionella organism as well as its health burden, and why it has become more of an interest to public health. Additionally we'll cover public health surveillance of legionella as well as outbreak response (with some examples) and lastly, the current challenges that we are facing addressing legionella as a public health issue and what innovations we are seeking to enhance capabilities in prevention and response.

2:00 pm - 2:50 pm

“Nebraska Borne: Mosquitoes–Biology of the top mosquitoes of Nebraska-potential for disease transmission”

Dr. Tom Janousek

tjmosq@msn.com



Speaker Bio: BS Creighton, MS Tulane (in hot and sweaty New Orleans!) Ph.D. Texas A&M: Specific research on the biology and control of mosquitoes along the Coast of Texas. Post-Doc at Nebr Dept of Health with Wayne Kramer on mosquito-transmitted disease of Nebraska. Post-grad work: Entomologist for Jefferson County, TX Mosquito Control District, Entomologist for a private mosquito control company in Colorado, Started my Company in Omaha, Pest Consulting Services in 1999. We do large-scale field trials of mosquito control products, conduct mosquito control workshops and consult/assist agencies with mosquito control issues.

Retired with 24 years of military service: an Entomologist for the US Army Reserve, deployed as an Entomologist to Iraq in 2003-04. And an Entomologist for the Air Force Reserve with a unit that conducted aerial mosquito control.

Presentation Description: Nebraska has over 50 mosquito species with 20 to 30 being potential biters of humans. The mosquito lifecycle will be explained. The presentation will include an in-depth examination of top five most abundant mosquitoes in Nebraska. Specific topics will include biology, disease potential and unique characteristics. Other mosquitoes of interest in Nebraska will be discussed. Additionally, there have been a few invasive mosquitoes that have become Nebraska residents and they will be discussed.

BREAK

2:50 pm - 3:10 pm

Snacks and Final Raffle chances

3:10 pm - 4:15 pm

“Air quality and human health in Nebraska”

Jesse Eugene Bell, Ph.D., jesse.bell@unmc.edu

Kelli Gribben, Ph.D., kelli.gribben@unmc.edu

Dr. Jesse Bell



&

Dr. Kelli Gribben



Bio: Kelli Gribben, PhD, is a Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Water, Climate and Health Program. Dr. Gribben is formally trained as an epidemiologist and has prior experience working in both research and public health practice settings. Her current research is primarily focused on understanding the impacts of environmental exposures on respiratory health, specifically exploring relationships between air pollution and allergies, asthma, and other respiratory diseases. Through this work, Dr. Gribben aspires to contribute new evidence that can be translated into prevention and disease management activities.

See Dr. Bell's bio above in 1pm slot.

Presentation Description: Air quality issues in Nebraska have human health consequences in both rural and urban areas. This session will explore the role of air pollution, pollen, smoke, and climate factors on respiratory health outcomes in Nebraska. We will also discuss the populations most at risk to these respiratory issues.

3:10 pm - 4:15 pm

“Custom Exempt Slaughter”

Caitlyn Andrews, Nebraska Dept of Agriculture, caitlyn.andrews@nebraska.gov

Mark Heim, USDA, Mark.heim@usda.gov (invited)

Chris Clem, USDA, Chris.clem@usda.gov (invited)



Speaker Bio: I grew up in Oklahoma and graduated from Oklahoma State University with a degree in Agricultural Education. Prior to my career in Nebraska, I worked on the Food Safety team for the Walmart Corporate Offices in Bentonville, AR as well as worked as a food safety coordinator in Charleston, South Carolina.

In 2016, I moved with my family to Nebraska and accepted a position with the Nebraska Department of Agriculture. Initially I had the opportunity to work with the animal feed program and then accepted a newly developed position on the Food Safety team as NDA’s Produce Safety Program Specialist. I worked to develop a state produce safety regulatory program that would implement the Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Safety Rule. As a part of the Food Safety team my path often overlapped with the retail and manufacturing foods program, so I had the opportunity to become familiar with the entire program and in April of 2022, I accepted the position of NDA’s Dairies and Foods Program Manager.

Although newer to the program manager position, I’ve worked hard to fully understand state and federal regulations for retail food and food manufacturers and how those regulations should be implemented in the state. My short time in this position has led me to form alliances with both FDA and USDA to fully understand where there is overlap and where there is not.

I’ve also had the opportunity to serve on the committee tasked with developing the National Produce Regulatory Program Standards and on the committee to develop the National Produce Regulatory Program Standards Alliance.

Presentation Description: I will be presenting on the Meat Processing Regulatory Requirements in Nebraska: When does a meat processor need a state of Nebraska food permit? The line is blurred for many on when the state of Nebraska gets involved with issuing food permits and when a processor is strictly under USDA authority. Who gets involved with custom exempt lockers? What happens if someone decides they want to butcher and sell chickens? What if someone is doing both custom slaughtering AND retailing? We’ll explore the variety of business practices in the state and go over both USDA and state of Nebraska regulations and how those apply to these businesses.

4:15 pm - 4:30 pm—Conference Wrap-Up, Raffle Item Pickup