NECAFS Highlights, Looking Ahead, and Conference Expectations

Albany, NY
February 5, 2019

Chris Callahan
Elizabeth Newbold

go.uvm.edu/necafs  necafs@uvm.edu
Enhance produce safety and preventive controls
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Goal:
Enhance produce safety and preventive controls training, education, and outreach among small and medium sized farms and small processors in the Northeast.

Objectives:
1. Establish Foundational Network Structure
2. Build Capacity, Competency, and Collaboration
3. Develop and Deliver Educational Programs
4. Evaluate and Assess Progress and Impact
5. Sustain Good Work

Who:
- University researchers, educators and extension specialists
- State regulatory and enforcement agency partners
- Local food and farming organizations, NFP’s
- Industry associations
- Small and medium sized producers, small processors, buyers
- Other regional centers and initiatives, national center, USDA/FDA

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NECAFS started with NE-PHRESH

• Disparate opinion, accuracy and location of knowledge. Overlapping and non-coordinated effort in region.
• Based on my own field experiences, shared by others.
• Lacking regional relevance and research base.
• NEED/NERA* Planning Grant ($4k) to focus on postharvest research and educational needs. Together.

* Northeast Extension Directors / Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
What Came from this?

- Expressed need for consolidated resources – sharing work
- Expressed desire for collaborative research and educational programming – e.g. drafted collective research questions
- Concerns about how to “train up” for anticipated FSMA rules (PCHF and PSR) (this was Jan ’15)
- Concerns about maintaining regional relevance of information, educational programs and best practice
- Sustained, nascent network with willingness to collaborate

[Diagram: FSMA Framework for Industry Curriculum Development and Dissemination]

This is not an all-inclusive list of entities that will be developing training curricula and delivery for domestic and foreign food businesses.
2015 Proposal to RFP
For Feb 2016 – Feb 2019

Objectives
1. Establish Foundational Network Structure
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Northeast Center to Advance Food Safety (NECAFS)

Advisory Committee
- Regional and national representative structure. Includes National Center representation, funder and other key partner organization representatives.

Steering Team
- Regional representative structure, 2-3 from each state, diversity of geography, role in food system, staggered terms.

Executive Team
- Administrative and operational responsibility for center. Day to day.

Center Administrator
- Plan for future funding and development of staff positions to enable a stronger network.

P/T, WG Leads
- Future Staff

Special Topic Teams
- SPGP, WG’s
- Standing working groups defined by the steering group to focus on specific topics required by the center (based on stakeholder input). Recipients of sub-awards for consolidation and development of key knowledge.

Educational Project Teams
- TSSP, WG’s
- Implementation teams focused on delivery of educational and technical assistance. Recipients of sub-awards for delivery of programming.

Educational Cohort
- Producers and processors in the region with interest and desire to improve food safety knowledge and practice

The Network

NCC TAC / Collab Forum

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Results</th>
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<td>eNewsletter and Listserv</td>
<td>Circulation: 19 -&gt; 433, 44% opens &amp; 25% clicks (<a href="go.uvm.edu/necafsnews">go.uvm.edu/necafsnews</a>)</td>
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| NECAFS Website and Clearinghouse | Website: 6,847 page views. ([go.uvm.edu/necafs](go.uvm.edu/necafs))  
Clearinghouse: crowd-sourced, curated collection of food safety related resources. ([go.uvm.edu/clearinghouse](go.uvm.edu/clearinghouse)) |
| Webinars                         | 14 webinars held to-date, 938 attendees, 1,205 contact hours. Regional focus, national inclusion. Varied topics from Annual Meeting Summary to Tailoring Programs for Plain Sect Growers. |
| Annual Meeting                   | Regional, in-person meeting and conference. 2 days, 110 attendees in Jan 2018. Workgroup meetings, general session, networking. Evaluation. |
| Training Support Stipend Program (TSSP) | Training of trainers and lead trainers in PSA, FSPCA and SPROUT national curricula, Support for training delivery to stakeholders. 41 trainers supported to-date. 13 delivery events supported in region to-date. |
| Special Projects                 | SPGP: Competitive RFP with small awards. 4 projects funded and underway. Systematic review of needs assessments.  
Extension Legal Services Initiative with Vermont Law School (USDA NAL) |
NECAFS Clearinghouse
Overall Goals

• Collect and curate resources related to the
  • Produce Safety Rule
  • Preventive Controls for Human Food Rule.

• Provide direct links to food safety people, projects, and publications to help the user understand what resources exist.

• Facilitate peer to peer collaboration and review.

• Increase knowledge of what resources exist
  • Training aids,
  • Add-on and supplemental materials, and
  • Stakeholder tools.

• Leverage work the done in one place through use in another.

• Address an identified need for curated collection of food safety resources in one location.
  • NOTE: Intentionally not limited to the NE Region.
  • NOTE: PSR and PCHF resources.

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Brief Introduction to Clearinghouse

• Launched in early 2018 after
  • Initial population with resources
  • Feedback and revision

• Target Audience is Educators and Service Providers
  • Intended to improve delivery of education and service to stakeholders
  • Currently has 226 resources

• Public Calendar of Events

• Collection of Produce Safety Rule and Preventive Controls for Human Food Rule related resources under FSMA, including TAN questions and answers

• Drupal content management platform for ease of use and future maintainability.

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Systematic Review of Needs Assessments

Lead: Hannah Harwood Doyle

• Literature Review

• RESEARCH QUESTION:
  What are the known needs identified through assessment when looking specifically at food safety among small processors and small/medium sized producers in the Northeast US

• IN OTHER WORDS:
  What has been done already, to find out what producers and processors need regarding food safety?
Common NEEDS identified – 5 themes

- **KNOWLEDGE**
- **TRAINING**
  - Technical skills
  - Worker training
- **CAPITAL**
  - Money / cost of compliance
  - Infrastructure + equipment
- **TIME**
- **ATTITUDE**
  - Motivation
  - Confidence
### SPECIFIC AREAS OF NEED FOR KNOWLEDGE OR TECHNICAL TRAINING – not much change over time (GAPs vs FSMA PSR)

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<td>* Written food safety plan (Ellis et al. 2005)</td>
<td>* Written food safety plan (Kilonzo-Nthenge et al. 2018)</td>
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<td>** Understanding specifics of regulation** (Eggers et al. 2010, Lewis Ivey et al. 2012)</td>
<td>** Understanding specifics of regulation** (Grover et al. 2016, Parker et al. 2016)</td>
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<td>* Worker training (Jackson et al. 2007)</td>
<td>** Worker training** (Grover et al. 2016, Strohbehn et al. 2018)</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Pest exclusion (Hamilton et al. 2015)</td>
<td>* Pest exclusion (Nayak et al. 2015)</td>
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Evaluation Informed USDA Proposal

- Evaluation of stakeholders in 2018 informed objectives outlined in USDA proposal
  - Educators, Government/Regulators, Research, Industry (Producer or Processor), Consultant, and Auditor
- Articulated the continuing need for communication, research, education, and engagement of hard-to-reach audiences
- Emphasized the benefits of current NECAFS activities

- 2018 Annual Meeting
- 43% Response Rate

- 95% learned something new
- 98% met someone new
- Significant intent to change and apply new knowledge
USDA NIFA FSOP Award - Project Objectives

• **Proposal** 2018 for Aug 2018 – Aug 2021

• Continue to build regional **capacity and competency**
  - Training Support Stipend Program, webinars with focus on “best practices”

• Continue to facilitate **regional communication and collaboration** through established avenues
  - eNewsletter, website, Clearinghouse, Annual Meeting

• Expand current NECAFS **Workgroup activities**
  - Financial and facilitative support in the creation of topic focused outputs
  - Work centers around region specific areas of need
  - Needs assessment, Preventive Controls and Buyer

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Project Objectives

• Expand the **Clearinghouse**
  • Build a network of navigators for state based contacts
  • Build a national brand and logo
  • Continually respond to users and make improvements

• Start to support the LRCC with continued Clearinghouse **consolidation and communication nationally**
  • Support the posting of resources from across the nation
  • Regularly released eNewsletter highlighting resources

• Start to aid in the development of a **unified reporting** plan
Evaluation

• **Measure** trainer and participant impact
  • All food safety outreach and education across the region
  • Will begin collecting, summarizing and visualizing training and project outcomes regionally

• **Assess** Efficacy of Regional Center
  • Stakeholder feedback collected annually at Annual Meeting
  • Evaluation of NECAFS programming and our efficacy in helping our stakeholders
  • NECAFS then responds to feedback to ensure that our approach meets the needs of our region
  • Goal is to effectively support our network partners

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**Next Steps**

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<td>• Solid structure, supported by organic network development.</td>
<td>• Continued, expanded communications via eNews and Webinars.</td>
<td>• TSSP continues, shifting to focus on delivery support.</td>
<td>• Continue partner network evaluation</td>
<td>• Continue to foster and directly support integrated proposals</td>
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<td>• Sustain and nurture.</td>
<td>• Enhanced Work-group activity.</td>
<td>• SPGP supporting add-on and supplemental materials.</td>
<td>• Gathering testimonials, stories, and impact narratives from producers and processors (started Winter 2017)</td>
<td>• Support, nurture and grow regional center programming via USDA FSOP program.</td>
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<td>• Focus on inclusion and diversity.</td>
<td>• Work-groups identifying specific development needs among producer and processor cohorts.</td>
<td>• Data visualization</td>
<td>• Seek additional external funding for base NECAFS support.</td>
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- go.uvm.edu/necafs
- necafs@uvm.edu
The Annual Meeting

• Agenda Review
• Expectations
• Feedback

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necafs@uvm.edu
Agenda Review

8:30  Welcome & Plenary
10:00 Break
10:30 State and Regional Updates
12:00 Lunch
1:00  Workgroup Meetings
5:00  Poster Session
6:30  Dinner

8:00  Breakfast & Fed Updates
9:00  Workgroup Meetings
12:00 Lunch
1:00  Workgroup Report Out
      Next Steps
3:00  Adjourn

3:30  NECAFS Steering Team

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Expectations

• Connect with partners
• Meet new collaborators and peers
• Ask questions
• Engage in discussion

• Workgroup approach is intended to provide time in-person to move topics along through dialog.

Workgroups:
• Encourage engagement
• “Rule of 3”
• Facilitators focused on facilitating
  • Need helpers for time keeping
  • Need helpers for note taking
• Report out to the larger group on day 2.

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Feedback

• Meeting has changed over the years based on feedback

• Please complete evaluation before you leave

• This event is for the entire network
Annual Meeting NECAFS Overview

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