

Government Relations and Advocacy Committee Annual Report

The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) continued to be the focus of much of the committee's work. A webinar was held in July on release of the final rules for Sanitary Transport and Intentional Adulteration. Funding was also approved for the committee to develop a new tool for companies to use to determine which FSMA rules they need to comply with. The ASTA FSMA Decision Tree was unveiled at the October Regulatory Workshop and is now available on line for all members to use. A follow up tutorial webinar was held in February. Member response to the Decision Tree has been positive, with many commenting that it is a valuable tool they are using within their companies.

FDA Deputy Commissioner for Foods and Veterinary Medicine, Dr. Stephen Ostroff headlined the Regulatory Workshop in October providing his perspective on FSMA implementation. Other speakers addressed key issues including efforts underway to provide education overseas on FSMA's Foreign Supplier Verification Program and a legal perspective on the GMO labeling bill. Attendance at the workshop continues to grow and the committee will begin planning soon for the 2017 event.

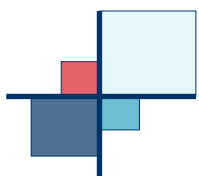
Work by the Food Safety Preventive Controls Alliance (FSPCA) Foreign Supplier Verification Program (FSVP) Working Group continued this year and the ASTA committee has kept abreast of what the group is working on. Last summer the Working Group solicited volunteers on very short notice to review the modules and provide feedback. M. Thomason provided an update on this exercise.

The committee worked with staff to develop and review comments to submit on FDA's request to define "natural" for labeling purposes. This process served as the basis for a session during the Regulatory Workshop to show members how the regulatory rulemaking process works.

The committee worked with ASTA General Counsel John Hallagan to publish a white paper on California Proposition 65. The committee also continues to monitor work on efforts to develop protocols to deal with noxious weeds with APHIS.

The committee continues work on the Government Relations and Advocacy area of the ASTA website, reorganizing content to make it more user-friendly and developing new content and adding links. This work is ongoing as regulatory information and resources continue to evolve.

I am also pleased to announce that Jessica Skerritt is joining us as ASTA's new Government Relations Director. Jessica joined the ASTA staff at Verto Solutions in late February and will be attending her first committee meeting during the ASTA Annual Meeting in Austin. We're excited to have Jessica join us and look forward to supporting her as she learns about ASTA and the spice industry.



Respectfully submitted,
Carol Kitchen, B&G Foods, Inc.
Government Relations and Advocacy, Chair

Government Relations and Advocacy Committee:
Karen Burns, ETOP Sterilization-Cosmed Group
Ron Elton, John H. Elton, Inc.
Joanne Ferrara, Givaudan
Janis Rich-Gutierrez, Kalustyan Corporation
Darrell Portz, Griffith Foods
JennieAnn Reitemeyer, Spice Chain Corporation
Manoj Ruparelia, Mincing Overseas Spice Company
Whitney Sayia, A.A. Sayia & Co., Inc.
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Vinay Sreekumar, Olam Spices and Vegetables
James McKinley Thomason, The Doug Jeffords Company, Inc.
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