

Government Relations & Advocacy Committee Report

The Government Relations and Advocacy Committee worked throughout the year on behalf of ASTA members and the spice industry, holding two face-to-face meetings and several conference calls.

The main emphasis of the Committee continues to be implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). The committee submitted five sets of comments to ensure FDA understands how certain aspects of FSMA will impact the spice industry. We submitted comments on:

- FDA's Proposed High-Risk Designation for Tracing
- The Reportable Food Registry Consumer Notification
- FSMA Focused Mitigation Strategies for Food Defense and Intentional Adulteration
- FDA's Supplemental Proposal on the FSMA Foreign Supplier Verification Program; and
- FDA's Supplemental Proposal on Preventive Controls for Human Food

Other successes this year include:

- **2014 ASTA Regulatory Workshop held on October 15th in Crystal City, VA.** More than 80 participants enjoyed a day of immersion into regulatory subjects of interest to the spice industry including a hands-on practical exercise on preparing for recalls as well as information on FSMA contaminants in spices and testing that is occurring. Attendees also heard from FDA on its vision of changes coming to the paradigm of doing business with the Agency as implementation of FSMA continues to unfold.
- **The FSMA Webinar Series held in conjunction with the Flavor and Extract Manufacturers Association (FEMA).** This ongoing effort is aimed at ensuring ASTA members have the latest information on the proposed FSMA rules to prepare for implementation at their companies. All of the Webinars have been recorded and are available on the ASTA Web site for those who missed them or as a refresher as implementation draws nearer. This is an ongoing priority and more Webinars can be expected as the final rules and implementation dates occur.
- **ASTA advocated for the role of spices to be elevated in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015.** Every five years the federal government reviews nutritional science in a joint effort between the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The results serve as the foundation for US food policy. ASTA submitted comments to the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC) on the important role spices can play in enhancing the consumption of nutrient dense foods. The Scientific Report of the 2015 DGAC states that "emphasis should be placed on expanding industry efforts to reduce the sodium content of foods and helping consumers understand how to flavor unsalted foods with spices and herbs."

- **Improving the user experience of the government relations and advocacy resources available on the ASTA Web site.** A subcommittee met to review existing resources and re-organize content to ensure ASTA members have the resources they need. The committee encourages members to review the changes to the Web pages and provide feedback as we continue the effort to make improvements to the ASTA government relations and advocacy experience.

The Government Relations & Advocacy Committee continues to handle a busy portfolio as we advocate on behalf of the Association. I would like to thank the Committee for their hard work over this past year as we developed comments and increased our voice on behalf of the spice industry. I also would like to thank two long-term members of the committee, Barbara Larson of Olam Spices and Vegetables, Inc. and Floyd Stone of Griffith Laboratories, who both retired at the end of 2014. We will miss their expertise. I'd also like to welcome their replacements, Darrell Portz of Griffith Laboratories and Vinay Sreekumar with Olam Spices and Vegetables, Inc. They have already begun actively participating in comment development over the past few months. This is a reminder that the value of the Association is in the hard work of the many volunteers who make our efforts possible. Finally, I would like to thank all of my colleagues on the committee for their dedication.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Kitchen, Chair
ACH Food Companies Inc.

Government Relations & Advocacy Committee
Bev Tschirhart (Board Liaison) McCormick & Company, Inc.
Karen Burns, ETO Sterilization-Cosmed Group
Ron Elton, John H. Elton, Inc.
Joanne Ferrara, ConAgra Foods
Darrell Portz, Griffith Laboratories
JennieAnn Reitemeyer, Van de Vries Spice Corporation
Janis Rich-Gutierrez, Kalustyan
Manoj Ruparelia, Mincing Overseas Spice Company
Sara Sanders, Kalsec, Inc.
Whitney Sayia, A.A. Sayia & Co., Inc.
Tim Sonntag, Wixon, Inc.
Vinay Sreekumar, Olam Spices and Vegetables, Inc.