

What has the RFA done for you lately?

The RFA continues to provide you, the members, with access to the most up-to-date news and resources on food safety and regulatory issues affecting the refrigerated foods industry. Our goal is to be your best resource for news, research and answers on technical and regulatory issues facing your business.

The driving force behind the RFAs technical programs and resources is the RFA Technical Committee, which is led by Technical Director Doug Marshall and Committee Chair Janet Rowat Kraiss. Over the past years, the Technical Committee has worked to enhance membership in the RFA by providing for education, FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) support, review of USDA actions, technical news updates, hosting educational Web conferences, and organizing the technical portion of the RFA's Fall Symposium and Annual Conference.

To keep you up-to-date on everything that is new and available and to make sure you are taking advantage of all the technical resources of the RFA, the Technical Committee has put together the following update on the current services and resources available to RFA members as well as a brief preview of the new projects planned for this year.

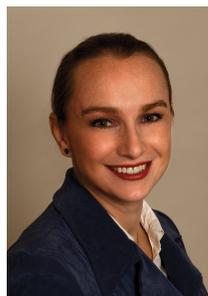
Detailed information on all of the RFA's technical resources are always available on the RFA website. In addition, many of the materials are available to download directly from the website in the Members-Only Section. Visit the RFA website at www.refrigeratedfoods.org. If you have questions, please contact RFA Technical Director Doug Marshall at douglas.marshall@ft.eurofinsus.com or you can contact the RFA office at (678) 426-8175.

Get Involved!

The Technical Committee is always looking for input and comments from members on topics and issues they would like to see addressed. If you have input or would like to join the Technical Committee, please contact RFA Technical Director Doug Marshall at douglas.marshall@ft.eurofinsus.com or Technical Committee Chair Janet Rowat Kraiss at jrowatkraiss@suterco.com.



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Refrigerated Foods Association

2023 - 2024 Technical Resources Update

*Advancing and Safeguarding the
Refrigerated Foods Industry*

RESEARCH & SUPPORT

The RFA is your primary resource for information and support on food safety, technical issues and regulatory compliance. A full list of all technical resources is available on the RFA website, under the “Resources and Links” section at www.refrigeratedfoods.org/resources-and-links.

Technical Hotline

Get immediate answers to your technical questions via the Technical Hotline! Members can contact RFA Technical Director Doug Marshall by e-mail at douglas.marshall@ft.eurofinsus.com to ask questions on food safety and regulatory issues.

Technical E-News

Stay up-to-date on the latest food safety and regulatory issues affecting the industry with the Technical E-News, a bi-weekly e-mail newsletter containing the latest technical news headlines and articles of interest to the refrigerated foods manufacturer.

RFA E-List

Questions about regulatory issues? Looking for information on food safety concerns? Get involved in the RFA E-List, an e-mail discussion group that allows members to send questions or comments to an entire group at one time. Learn more on the RFA website.

Research Studies and Reports

As a member of the RFA, you have access to in-depth research on the important food safety concerns you face within your plant each day. The RFA has a library of primary research on critical food safety topics, including microbiological control, HACCP, cross-contamination, allergens, and labeling. In 2020, the RFA released to its members an updated Shelf Life Protocol. The RFA Standardized Protocol for Determining Shelf Life of Refrigerated Foods was originally developed in 2002 and subsequently revised in 2009. The purpose of the standardized protocol was to enable individual manufacturers, and/or their customers if they so desired, to determine their product shelf life and compare their stated shelf life with the shelf life of similar products produced by other manufacturers. Many of the updates to the protocol came in response to an RFA survey of its members, conducted in 2019.

Open Technical Call

The Technical Committee conducts monthly zoom calls. These calls are open to all members. Members discuss current industry issues, provide updates on topics of interest, ask questions and offer suggestions on future Webinar topics. To keep everyone up-to-date, minutes are distributed to all members.

EDUCATION & ADVANCEMENT

Valuable Web conferences, symposiums and conferences are offered throughout the year providing information and education on critical food safety issues and allowing members to learn and share with others in their field.

Technical Web Conferences

The RFA Technical Committee typically hosts 4-6 Technical webcasts per year on timely topics specifically relevant to the refrigerated foods industry. Topics from some of this year’s webcasts are listed below. Slide presentations from past webcasts are available on the RFA website; recordings of past webcasts are available by contacting the RFA Office. Webcasts are included as a member benefit and provided free of charge to members.

- FSMA Compliance Beyond PCQI Training (1/6/22)
- Food Allergen Matters (4/6/22)
- Navigating Your Supply Chain (4/27/22)
- USDA’s 2021 Appendix A & B Guidance (5/25/22)
- National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standard (6/29/22)
- Challenge Studies (7/27/22)
- Update on the Seafood HACCP Guidance (10/26/22)
- FDA’s Food Safety Enforcement (12/6/22)

RFA Fall Symposium

The RFA Technical Committee works in conjunction with the Industry Development Committee to plan and organize the RFA Fall Symposiums. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020, 2021, and 2022 RFA Symposiums took place virtually. We are excited to offer an in-person Fall Symposium again.

The 2023 Fall Symposium will be held September 11-13 in St. Louis, MO. Attendees will visit several plants relevant to our member’s interests. Tours for this year’s Fall Symposium will include, United Fruit & Produce Company, Deli Star’s Food Discovery Center, Companion Bakery, Volpi, Eurofins EAG St. Louis, and Dierbergs Markets. The group will also have the opportunity to hear presentations by industry leaders on Monday.

RFA Fall Symposiums include sessions that are of interest to all facets of the industry. Whether you are involved in food safety and quality control, executive management, or marketing and operations, these events offer valuable information and insights that can be applied to all aspects of your business.

PROJECTS

The Technical Committee works each year to complete one or more major technical projects. Details of the recently completed and upcoming projects are listed below:

Lunch and Learn Sessions

As “Subject Matter Experts”, RFA was able to assist FDA in developing an implementation strategy under the Food Safety Modernization Act. Lunch and Learn sessions are scheduled to discuss FDA Guidance Documents of special interest to RFA members. Past topics have included food safety plan validation, supply chain requirements, preventive controls, seafood HACCP, and intentional adulteration procedures. Future topics will be chosen when FDA and USDA make announcements or provide guidance documents or directives pertinent to the membership.

Anonymous Regulatory Information

Through the Technical Director, RFA members can seek regulatory information about their concerns without divulging their company name to any regulatory agencies. In addition, the RFA represents the opinions of its members by submitting public comments in response to proposed guidance documents and regulations. In 2020, the RFA commissioned an update to its FDA Food Inspection Manual, a guide for how to handle a regulatory inspection by FDA. This manual is available free-of-charge to members.

Training DVDs

To assist members to comply with FSMA training requirements, RFA offers two training DVDs:

- . “Operation Food Safety: Everybody’s Mission” (2007) covers critical topics and tasks to help refrigerated plant workers ensure food safety. Topics such as HACCP, personal hygiene and microorganisms in the plant are featured.
- . “Food Safety Training DVD for Experienced Employees” (2010) provides training topics suitable for supervisory staff relative to the requirements of the FSMA. Topics such as sanitation and equipment cleanliness, allergen control, food security and traceability are included.