Disaster Preparedness, Response and Recovery Symposium Held on November 1st

On November 1st, over 120 registered participants from industry, government and academia participated in the Terrorism, Pandemics and Natural Disasters: Food Supply Chain Preparedness, Response, and Recovery symposium co-sponsored by The Food Industry Center and the National Center for Food Protection and Defense (NCFPD) of the University of Minnesota and the Trucking Industry Program of the Georgia Institute of Technology. Invited speakers covered topics across a wide spectrum of food protection risks from intentional terrorist attacks on the food supply to biological and pathological threats to catastrophic natural disasters.

The mission of NCFPD is to reduce the likelihood of an attack on the food system, improve the

nation’s ability to respond to an attack, and to reduce the long-term consequences of such an attack. The symposium shared this mission by engaging the audience in presentations, discussions, and mock disaster scenarios. The primary messages delivered during the day are captured below.

**SYMPOSIUM KEY MESSAGES:**

1. **BELIEVE IN THE VALUE OF REDUNDANCY & EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT**

2. **CREATE RESPONSE PLANS AND PRACTICE THE PLANS NOW!**
   - “You can’t exchange business cards during a disaster!”
     (Col. Hoffman)
   - Reactions in a disaster must be practiced, automatic, and known to all employees

3. **CONSTANTLY REVIEW AND UPDATE PLANS**
   - Keep contact numbers current
   - Continue to establish relationships with local law enforcement and first responders

4. **COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE**
   - With supply chain partners, with local responders, with employees, and with insurers

An written summary of the Symposium and a CDR capturing the Symposium speakers and presentations are currently being edited. They are expected to be released by the end of January 2007.

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During this last holiday season we were reminded that the supply chain for food (and other goods) is sometimes circuitous and actually longer than most of us think. Seeing bags of canned and boxed food piled in corners of churches and offices ready to be delivered to food shelves, food banks, or other secondary distribution points reminds us that the retail store or restaurant and their customers are not the end of the chain. Often food is redistributed to food shelves or homeless shelters or soup kitchens. Eleven percent (35 million) people in America are hungry or food insecure. Food insecure is defined by the USDA as those “households that are uncertain of having, or unable to acquire, enough food to meet the needs of all their members because they had insufficient money or other resources for food.” Food-insecure households include those with low food security and very low food security. Low food secure households obtained enough food to avoid substantially disrupting their eating patterns or reducing food intake, by using a variety of coping strategies, such as eating less varied diets, participating in Federal food assistance programs, or getting emergency food from community food pantries (http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodSecurity/trends.htm). The percent with very low food security, meaning that they are often hungry, is 3.9% or 4.4 million people, about the same number of people who live in Colorado or Louisiana.

Community food pantries and their customers extend the food supply chain beyond the sight of someone’s home or retail store. Sometimes they buy food needed to stock their shelves with cash donations. Seventy percent of the “revenue” for Second Harvest Heartland, located in Minnesota, arrives as food-in-kind. Second Harvest Heartland is primarily a food bank, (a food distributor) to 800 other food agencies (shelves), such as Minnesota Food Share, who make it available to the final hungry customer. In 2005 Second Harvest Heartland distributed over 30 million pounds of food in Minnesota and Western Wisconsin on a budget of $51 million. (That is roughly $1.67 a pound.) To their great credit, 96% of their revenue goes for food programs and only 4% for administration and fund raising (http://www.2harvest.org).

This is not meant to be a commercial for Second Harvest, but a statement to remind us that the food supply chain reaches beyond our stores, restaurants and kitchens. Many food companies participate in this extended supply chain with direct food donations and cash support. Thousands of well-fed children bring cans of food to their schools or churches to feed the hungry. When we think about the food industry we should not forget the distribution services extend far beyond our daily travel paths. This part of the supply chain does a great service in helping food to reach food insecure consumers efficiently and contributes to safer and healthier lives.

Jean & Ben

TFIC to Present Workshop on Food Defense at the 2007 NGA Annual Convention

Jean Kinsey, Jon Seltzer and Dennis Degeneffe will be conducting a workshop titled “Terrorism, Avian Flu and Natural Disasters” at the National Grocers Association Annual Conference in Las Vegas on January 31st. The session will be interactive and include new information from the Center’s Supply Chain Security Benchmarking Survey. The session will also discuss the Center’s recently published results of a segmentation study of consumers’ attitudes towards food terrorism. If you will be attending the NGA Conference, we encourage you to join in the TFIC workshop.
Alumni Interview

Name: Ryan Altergott
Employer: Hormel Foods
Title: Supervisor: Refrigerated Foods Operations
College: Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resources, University of Minnesota
Major: Agribusiness Management, Finance minor

How did you choose to work for Hormel?

During college I had the luxury of having many internships, which allowed me to focus my efforts on positions that I felt would best suit my personality, work ethic, and skill sets. I chose a position in Operations at Hormel, and both the position and the company are a great fit.

What courses did you take that best prepared you for your career? Were there food industry activities in which you participated?

Agribusiness management 4851 with Jon Seltzer was, hands down, the best course during my collegiate career. This course presented the fundamentals behind operations within the food industry. It combined class work with real life applications and field studies, and truly was the capstone course for my degree.

I also attended the Food Marketing Institute conventions in Chicago as an intern both my Junior and Senior years, which gave great exposure to the food industry overall.

Why do you like working in the food industry, and working for Hormel?

The food industry, historically speaking, has been one of the most stable industries in which to work, and I was attracted by the job security. I’ve also discovered the added benefit of working at a food processing facility when it comes to lunch and dinner time!

Hormel is a leader in the protein industry. Just this year Hormel had record profits in an industry which saw many competitors lose money and lose market share. Hormel is a company with good leadership, founded on good principles in quality, and takes care of their employees.

What was the most significant “welcome to the working world” moment, when you knew you were no longer a student?

My first real salaried paycheck.

Where do you see your career in the next five to ten years?

I would like to be in either a superintendent position within the plant functions of operations or in a corporate liaison position related to operations.
Did You Know...

Trends/Buzzwords to Watch:

OMICS:
“The term omics refers to the comprehensive analysis of biological systems. A variety of omics subdisciplines have begun to emerge, each with their own set of instruments, techniques, reagents and software. The omics technology that has driven these new areas of research consists of DNA and protein microarrays, mass spectrometry and a number of other instruments that enable high-throughput analyses.” This has big implications for designer foods.

(http://www.omicsworld.com/?gclid=CLXN46vRsYkCFRpFSAodQF-BQw)

BIOINFORMATICS:
“…the field of bioinformatics has grown in parallel (with omics) and with the help of the internet, rapid data analysis and information exchange is now possible. Omics will not only have an impact on our understanding of biological processes, but the prospect of more accurately diagnosing and treating disease will soon become a reality.” There are large implications for

Food, Technology, and Individual Privacy Colloquium

Colloquium speakers will elaborate on Radio Frequency Identification as a technology, the benefits of the technology for the food and beverage industries and consumers, and ways of ethically and legally managing privacy concerns. Currently, there is no RFID specific legislation or established industry norms regarding privacy.

On May 16th, experts from academic, legal, and marketing research fields will draw on their professional insights to discuss ways of managing the individual privacy risk. Featured speakers include Diane Bowers, President, of the Council of American Survey Research Organizations; and from the University - Dr. Ted Labuza, Food Science and Nutrition; William McGeveran, Assoc. Professor, Law School; Dr. Frederick Riggins, Asst. Professor, Information/Decision Sciences, Carlson School; and Prentiss Cox, Assoc. Clinical Professor and former Asst. Attorney General and Manager of the Consumer Enforcement Division in the Minnesota Attorney General’s Office.

The event is co-sponsored by the University’s Consortium on Law and Values in Health, Environment & the Life Sciences.

The Supermarket Panel Returns

The Supermarket Panel, The Food Industry Center’s unique store level survey of supermarket practices, will resume again in 2007 with the receipt of a grant from USDA.

The Panel will address supply chain, productivity, food safety and technology adoption from randomly selected individual stores across the United States. By crossing formats, ownership groupings and all parts of the country, the Panel provides a unique picture of the supermarket industry. Given the importance of this link of the supply chain to issues of food safety and the size of the supermarket workforce, USDA has funded the Panel for one year with the possibility for additional funding in subsequent years.

The 2007 Supermarket Panel is under the direction of Clarissa Yeap, Assistant Professor in the Department of Applied Economics. Dr. Yeap’s research in food service and restaurants will provide added value to the breadth of knowledge the Panel generates. Jon Seltzer will continue as the Survey’s Project Manager. For further information on the Panel, or stores wishing to participate in the Panel, please contact Jon Seltzer, (952) 926-4602, seltz004@umn.edu.