

## July 2017 Training And Education Newsletter

### Editor's Note

In my life, I have been fortunate to be around the best of people. Sure there were some bad onions out there, but I made sure to stay away from them. Nonetheless, I am not where I am if it were not for the people who have come into my life. So far in the journey, I have found mother-figures, father-figures, friends, and role models; and they have given me much compassion and support. I am, in essence, a culmination of all these support pillars, and I am a better person because of them.

I will always be both *grateful* for the positivity they have given me, and *humbled* by the fact that I still have much to learn.

No I am not dying! ... At least not in any accelerated and immediate stages I am aware of. It is nice, though, to have some reflection once in a while.

-Virginia

### In This Newsletter Issue

- A. Copyright (*pg. 1*)
- B. Women in Seafood Leadership Summit (*pg. 1*)
- C. How to Avoid Stupid Audit Non-Conformances (*pg. 3*)
- D. Subscriptions (*pg. 4*)
- E. Nationwide Courses (*pg. 4*)

### **A. Copyright**

After waiting 7 months, we finally received a letter from the U.S. Copyright Office stating that A Compendium of Interventions for *Listeria monocytogenes* in Ready-to-Eat Foods has been successfully registered in accordance with title 17, United States Code. Although the Compendium is a living document and may need to be re-registered following drastic changes, it is comforting to know that the backbone is registered under the proper channels. What a relief it is to know that this document will be tied to SPA from this day forward!

### **B. Women in Seafood Leadership Summit**

I went to the Women in Seafood (WIS) Leadership Summit because, well, I am a woman and I am in seafood. And since this was the first of its kind, I approached with curiosity, an open mind, and no real

expectations... I lied. I expected to walk into the room and hear female-empowered music of which to include the soundtrack of the new Wonder Woman movie. But that was about it in terms of expectations.

Although it was great seeing some familiar faces and bouncing ideas off of them, it was difficult to make new connections with some people who went to the event in a group. In fact, I found it frustrating that the event called for everyone to support each other, and yet in mid-conversation, some women stared off into the distance obviously paying attention to something else, or started playing with their phones. How can we support each other, when we do not let each other in?

One of the speakers, Carrie Brownstein, said to stay away from women who are cruel and to find a culture that you are comfortable in and makes you happy. While I agree with Carrie, I also want to be in an environment where I can promote positivity and change for the better. So by golly, if there is another WIS Summit, I am going to be there and I am going to infiltrate those cliques. And please do not let my experiences deter you from going to events like these; for all I know, it is just me or it was really late and people were tired. But just know that if you need a wingman, you have my number.

Of all the speakers that evening, I felt the most impactful was Torunn Knoph Halhjem. She had very powerful, take-

away messages, which I have highlighted below:

#### **How to succeed:**

- Don't listen to men who say, "You cannot ..."
- Don't listen to women who say, "You cannot ..."
- Surround yourself with like-minded career driven people
- Find a mentor
- Stand tall and be able to say, "No"

#### **How to succeed (according to men):**

- Be respected, not liked
- Don't be afraid to lead and make an impact
- Thick skin is needed!

#### **Invaluable skills to have to move up:**

- Passion
- Dress professionally
- Comfort in the spotlight
- Understanding the fundamentals of the business
- Build yourself a little sharper so that they forget that you're a woman.

All of the above take-away messages do not only apply to women. I feel that a lot of the advice applies to anyone, especially those who are just getting their feet wet. There are those lucky few who knew that the ocean was calling them, and that there was no shaking the sea. Then there are a lot of newbies who would stay in our industry if they just gave us

another year, but some of them never come back for a second try...

My new goal is to introduce the seafood industry to young-ens, and to help reduce that turn-over rate. How do we do that?! It seems a bit scary, but let us start brainstorming and open up that conversation! What made you stay in the seafood industry? Please feel free to email me your responses!

### **C. How to Avoid Stupid Audit Non-Conformances**

The International Food Safety and Quality Network (IFSQN) had Amanda Evans-Lara from Australia sharing her “over 20 years” of experiences, and providing practical strategies to prevent those stupid audit non-conformances. Non-conformances are related to the failure to comply with the requirements of the organization’s quality system, requirements of customer standard, and legal requirements. The majority of components in an audit involve the premises (building, security issues), practices (implementation of procedures and practices), and documents (including documents required by a procedure), and records (e.g.: verification).

Some stupid non-conformances that Amanda has encountered involved:

- Infestation of pests
- Missing or incorrect records. This should not be a problem if you are properly verifying.

- Someone picking their nose and then returning straight back to the processing line without proper hygiene procedures
- Metal detector not turned on because “it slows down production”
- Employee using the toilets and urinals as mop buckets to help mop the floor, because the employee was too lazy to retrieve a bucket with warm soapy water
- Personal items on equipment
- Open pest bait systems on equipment and containers

Amanda noted that sometimes we get wrapped up with the tiny details that we forget to go back to the basics when it comes to preventing and avoiding these stupid non-conformances. Some strategies that Amanda mentioned include:

**Know what you are being audited against.** And have the correct version of the standard, as well as the updated documents associated with the most current version.

**Make sure everyone is on deck and is supportive of improvements,** including management.

**Communicate to others of the forthcoming audit,** especially since there is usually advanced notice. Quiz employees on questions that may arise during the audit. Provide some training and describe what to expect, so everyone

is comfortable when the audit is actually happening.

**Make sure all documents are available.**

Have a logical document retrieval system (and time yourself on speediness of document retrieval). Label folders on spine and cover. If you have paper versions, do not lock up documents. If you utilize e-filing, have a back-up just in case.

**Make sure key persons are available and present at the time of the audit.**

If they are not available, then rescheduling may cost lots of money and if it is a customer audit, they may think that you are not taking things seriously and may subsequently sever ties.

**Internal audits** performed 1-2 weeks prior to the actual audit can incorporate checklists for standards. Free checklists are available online depending on the standard. If done correctly, then notes/non-conformances should be similar between internal and external audits.

If you are interested in watching the IFSQN webinar, it can be accessed [here](#).

**D. Subscriptions**

If you would like to subscribe/unsubscribe to this newsletter, please do so by sending an email to [vng@spa-food.org](mailto:vng@spa-food.org).

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**Nationwide Courses on Food Safety and Regulatory Affairs**

*Course*

**Better Process Control School (Acidified Foods only)**

*When:* August 7-9, 2017

*Location:* Chapman University

*Cost:* \$600/person

More information found [here](#).

*Course*

**Better Process Control School (Low Acid Foods)**

*When:* August 7-10, 2017;

*Location:* Chapman University

*Cost:* \$850/person

More information found [here](#).

*Course*

**Microbiological Concerns in Food Plant Sanitation**

*When:* August 8-10, 2017; 7:30AM – 4PM

*Location:* IFT Headquarters, 525 W. Van Buren Street, Ste. 1000, Chicago, IL 60607

*Cost:* \$950/person (IFT member); \$1145/person (non-IFT member)

More information found [here](#).

*Course*

**BRC Global Standard for Food Safety Issue 7 – Implementing the Standard**

*When:* August 29-30, 2017; 7:30AM – 5PM

*Location:* 111 E Wacker Drive, Ste. 2600, Chicago, IL 60601

*Cost:* \$695/person

More information found [here](#).

\*Course information that is being sent to you via this newsletter may not necessarily be hosted by Seafood Products Association (SPA). Nor is SPA endorsing any of the companies supplying this information.