Interagency Risk Assessment Consortium
Spring Technical and Policy Quarterly Meeting Report
March 14, 2011

Technical Meeting

Welcome and Introductions

The Interagency Risk Assessment Consortium (IRAC) held its 2011 spring quarterly meeting of the technical committee and policy council on March 14th in Washington, DC. Chair Isabel Walls welcomed the group and asked for self introductions. Technical and policy representatives and guests from various agencies (Table 1) participated on site or by the phone.

Updating the IRAC Charter – Signing Ceremony

Isabel Walls reported that the charter signing ceremony that took place on February 8, 2011 was a great success. Approximately 25 representatives from IRAC member agencies attended the ceremony at the USDA Whitten Building in Washington, DC. Mike Landa from the IRAC host agency, FDA, gave welcoming remarks. IRAC Policy Council co-chairs Sherri Dennis and Kerry Dearfield and Technical Committee chair Isabel Walls gave remarks on the mission, history and accomplishments of IRAC in the last decade. Approximately half of the signatories from the 19 federal agencies were present to sign and new charter, and gave remarks on the importance of IRAC and their agency's role. Isabel Walls is drafting a summary for the event, which will be posted on FoodRisk.org together with photos taken at the ceremony. Denise Eblen noted that FSIS has shared news from the event in a USDA newsletter.

"5 minute" Agency Updates

Technical representatives in attendance gave a brief overview of food safety risk analysis projects and issues in their agencies that may be of interest to other agencies.

IRAC Work Group Updates and Discussion

L. monocytogenes Dose Response Workgroup

Sherri Dennis reported that the Lm Dose-Response Workshop would take place March 17-18, after a year-long planning process. The Steering Committee included representatives from four IRAC agencies (FDA, FSIS, CDC and NIFA). Approximately 45 experts have accepted the invitation to participate in an in-depth review of new modeling framework and data and what should be the focus for research in the future. The workshop will focus on scientific discussion, not policy. There will be presentations and breakout sessions. There is a long list of questions for the breakout sessions. An online forum has been established on FoodRisk.org to facilitate information exchange among the participants. Outcome of the workshop will be posted on FoodRisk.org.

Susceptible Populations Workgroup

Jane Van Doren reported that a small work group is continuing work on drafting a manuscript based on outcomes of the susceptible populations workshop held in January 2010. It was noted that the workshop found that how to define sensitive and susceptible populations is a key issue, and identified data gaps such as a lack of information on susceptible individuals in outbreak investigations. Andy Maccabe indicated that this data gap would be communicated to CDC for

use in research planning. It was also noted that DHS has a risk lexicon document that may include a definition for susceptible population. It was suggested that FoodRisk.org provides a link to the DHS risk lexicon document.

Presentations

There were two presentations at the meeting. (1) Frank Hearl from NIOSH gave a presentation on " NIOSH Risk Assessments and Occupational Exposure Limit Developments (aka Food Flavorings and Other Delights)." (2) Joe Annelli from APHIS gave a presentation titled "One Health Initiative" with input from Pat Basu from FSIS.

Policy Council Meeting

Draft 2010 Annual Report

Isabel Walls noted that the draft annual report has been circulated among IRAC members for review. It was noted that some of the logos on the cover are not up-to-date. Isabel Walls requested that IRAC representatives send the logo of their agency (if different from the current version) as well any suggested changes to the draft report to Yuhuan Chen. Sherri Dennis suggested that after the annual report is finalized, member agencies might wish to share the report with their management to communicate what IRAC does.

Strategic Planning

Isabel Walls indicated that a work group met in January and developed a draft strategic plan for IRAC. The strategic plan includes a vision statement, a mission statement, goals and activities. The Policy Council and IRAC representatives present discussed the draft and made several suggestions for revision. Isabel Walls will revise the draft incorporating suggestions made.

Several suggestions were made to enhance IRAC communication and visibility:

1) Hold an annual public meeting where IRAC member agencies present work related to a topic of common interest (e.g., norovirus risk from soil, water, foods) and to seek public input. It was suggested that March would be a potential time to hold the meeting;
2) Seek to establish more formal collaborations with IAFP (the Microbial Modeling and Risk Analysis PDG), ASM and APHA, and seek opportunities to co-sponsor workshops;
3) FDA CFSAN has a traveling booth at conferences. Sherri Dennis will find out where the booth is going this year and will try to arrange for including IRAC materials;
4) Update IRAC website. Yuhuan Chen shared initial ideas for updating the IRAC web page. It was suggested that a member-only page would be helpful for sharing documents prior to public release. Walls asked for more volunteers to work with Yuhuan Chen on the project. Sherri Dennis noted the IRAC website can also be a place to seek stakeholder input on data and research needs (this is an aspect that FDA was criticized by the IOM panel for insufficient communication).

Proposed Activities for 2011

- Norovirus: Sherri Dennis noted that CDC and FDA had a meeting in February to discuss state-of-the art in norovirus research. One of the many positive outcomes of that meeting was the idea of developing a multi-year research plan for collecting data and information

that would be used in a quantitative model to evaluate risk of norovirus from a variety of foods (and provide a means to evaluate the relative effectiveness of control measures). She proposed a work group to explore research needs and data gaps to be filled, in order to facilitate a risk assessment of norovirus in foods and intervention strategies. Wendy Fanaselle volunteered to lead the work group, and to draft a description of proposed work. The description will be circulated among IRAC members to seek volunteers to join the work group.

- Rapid Risk Assessment and Decision-Making: Janell Kause noted that from time to time the risk assessment group at FSIS has been called upon to provide rapid risk assessments to support outbreak investigation and enforcement options. Rapid risk assessments are also needed to address risk associated with unforeseen or unexpected hazards (e.g., drug residues; melamine). Sherri Dennis noted similar needs at FDA (e.g., *Salmonella* in HVP). There is a need to do rapid risk assessments in a more systematic fashion. Sherri Dennis and Yuhuan Chen shared information about iRISK – an online tool that has been under development for the last several years to facilitate rapid risk assessments (FDA recently completed a peer-review of iRISK and is making improvement of the tool). Janell Kause proposed putting together a workshop on approaches, experiences and needs for rapid risk assessments. IRAC could co-sponsor the workshop with SRA. Janell Kause volunteered to lead a work group to explore putting together a workshop proposal. To facilitate this process, it was suggested that a series of case studies (10-15 minute presentations) would be presented at the quarterly meetings this year to help frame the workshop. Suggested case studies include recent studies from NOAA, DOD, FSIS (Kerry Dearfield to present) and ORACBA (Mark Powell to present).

- Cumulative Risk Assessment: In cumulative risk assessments, multiple hazards are evaluated at the same time, e.g., risk from mycotoxins and Hepatitis B, risk from microbial infection and chemical toxicity, interaction between hazards and influence of life stage. Isabel Walls volunteered to lead the work group to define focus and scope of the potential project. A starting point might be a literature review on cumulative risk assessments that have been conducted to date.

Table 1. Attendance (* participated by phone)

Aaron Niman	EPA OPP
Andrew Maccabe	DHHS CDC
Denise Eblen	USDA FSIS
Frank Hearl	CDC NIOSH
Isabel Walls	USDA NIFA
Jane van Doren	FDA CFSAN
Janell Kause	USDA FSIS
Jeremiah Fasano	FDA CFSAN
Kerry Dearfield	USDA FSIS
Lesley Vazquez-Coriano*	EPA OW
Mark Powell	USDA ORACBA
Mary Torrence	USDA ARS
Mike Broder	EPA ORD
Robert McDowell	USDA APHIS
Sandra Hoffmann	USDA ERA
Shanker Reddy	USDA AMS
Sherri Dennis	FDA CFSAN
Stephanie Mickelson*	USDA FNS
Stic Harris	DHS OHA
Wen Zou*	FDA NCTR
Wendy Fanaselle	FDA CFSAN
Wendy Hall	USDA APHIS
Yuhuan Chen	FDA CFSAN