

WHAT'S NEW AT Q

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



As discussed in this newsletter, the FDA has established an acceptable limit for labeling a food product "Gluten-Free." This will provide assistance to the many consumers who suffer from Gluten allergy and/or Celiac Disease. One stipulation of the new law is, foods that inherently do not contain gluten may use the "gluten-free" claim. But food allergens can be

pernicious and common-sense is often not enough to determine what products inherently do not contain Gluten. We associate Gluten with products that contain wheat, rye, barley, or other grains, but these ingredients may exist in very small quantities. For example did you know that gluten allergen can be present in some of these products: jelly beans, non-dairy creamer, pickles, pudding, salad dressings, soups, soy sauce and veggie burgers. So while the new regulation will help identify food products that are safe for use by consumers with Gluten allergies, do not assume that a product is Gluten-free just because it does not seem like the type of product that can contain Gluten. The same goes for many other food allergens, such as egg, milk and peanut. If a product does not contain these ingredients, but shares a production environment with a product that does contain them, residual levels may be transmitted to the "clean" product and cause potential danger to consumers. That is why a proper Allergen Control Program includes food contact surface testing as well as product testing. Likewise, many manufacturers are requiring suppliers to verify the raw materials/ingredients/flavorings they produce are free from allergens before incorporating them into finished products.

David G. Goins

David G. Goins, President

OUTBREAK GUIDANCE

The Council to Improve Foodborne Outbreak Response (CIFOR) has released a guidance document entitled, "CIFOR Foodborne Illness Response Guidelines for Owners, Operators and Managers of Food Establishments (CIFOR Industry Guidelines)." The guidance includes 14 "tools" for food establishments to utilize to assist them in preventing foodborne illness and also reacting to a foodborne illness should it occur. The document was created by the CIFOR Industry Guidelines Workgroup. According to the introduction of the guidance, "this document represents CIFOR's strong commitment to assist the food industry in its efforts to take an active and educated role in the response and investigation of foodborne illness outbreaks." CIFOR is a multidisciplinary working group convened to increase collaboration across the country and across relevant areas of expertise in order to reduce the burden of foodborne illness in the United States. The CIFOR Industry Guidelines were developed by food industry leaders and local, state, and federal regulatory and non-regulatory public health agencies with expertise in epidemiology, environmental health, laboratory science, communications, and food industry operations and is an example of what can be achieved to promote food safety when public health and industry work in partnership."

GLUTEN REGULATION

In July, the FDA released the long awaited final rule, "Food Labeling; Gluten-Free Labeling of Foods." According to the FDA website, "the final rule defines and sets conditions on the use of the term "gluten-free" in foods, including: 1) Foods that inherently do not contain gluten (e.g., raw carrots or grapefruit juice) may use the "gluten-free" claim. 2) Foods with any whole, gluten-containing grains (e.g., spelt wheat) as ingredients may not use the claim; 3) Foods with ingredients that are gluten-containing grains that are refined but still contain gluten (e.g., wheat flour) may not use the claim; 4) Foods with ingredients that are gluten-containing grains that have been refined in such a way to remove the gluten may use the claim, so long as the food contains less than 20 parts per million (ppm) gluten; 5) Foods may not use the claim if they contain 20 ppm or more gluten as a result of cross-contact with gluten containing grains." Subsequently, "a food that bears the claim "no gluten," "free of gluten," or "without gluten" in its labeling and fails to meet the requirements for a "gluten-free" claim will be deemed to be misbranded. A food whose labeling includes the term "wheat" in the ingredient list or in a separate "Contains wheat" statement as required by FALCPA and also bears the claim "gluten-free" will be deemed to be misbranded unless its labeling also bears additional language clarifying that the wheat has been processed to allow the food to meet FDA requirements for a "gluten-free" claim." The final rule became effective on September 4, 2013. The compliance date of the final rule is August 5, 2014.

ARSENIC ACTION

In July, the FDA released the "Guidance for Industry, Arsenic in Apple Juice: Action Level," setting the allowable level of Arsenic in Apple Juice at 10ppb, the same level set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for drinking water. A 2012 study conducted by the FDA analyzed 94 samples of randomly selected apple juice and found that 95% of the samples were below the 10ppb threshold. While recognized as a carcinogen, the level of arsenic intake where it becomes carcinogenic has not been established. Products that exceed the action level may be removed from store shelves by the FDA and manufacturers of those products may be subject to fines. Arsenic is found in both inorganic and organic form with inorganic being the carcinogenic type. Inorganic arsenic also has been associated with skin lesions, developmental effects, cardiovascular disease, neurotoxicity, and diabetes.

MEET THE Q LABORATORIES' STAFF

Michael Goins is the IT/Marketing Coordinator at Q Laboratories, Inc. Mike has been with the company since 2012. He is responsible for maintaining and optimizing the entire IT Network at Q Laboratories, Inc. including servicing the Data Server and all lab work stations as well as coordinating the ongoing implementation of the Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS). He also assists with all marketing functions including trade shows, website design and strategic planning.

