

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 RFA's technical programs and resources is the RFA Technical Committee, which is led by Technical Director Martin Mitchell and Committee Co-Chairs Bill Schwartz and 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 Martin Mitchell at mmitchell@certified-laboratories.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 Martin Mitchell at mmitchell@certified-laboratories.com or Technical Committee Co-Chairs Bill Schwartz at wcschwartz@ameritech.net and Janet Rowat Kraiss at jrowatkraiss@suterc.com.



RFA Technical Director
Martin Mitchell



Technical Committee Co-Chair
Bill Schwartz



Technical Committee Co-Chair
Janet Rowat Kraiss

Refrigerated Foods Association

3823 Roswell Road, Suite 208
Marietta, GA 30062
P: 678-426-8175
F: 678-550-4504
info@refrigeratedfoods.org
www.refrigeratedfoods.org

Refrigerated Foods Association

Advancing and Safeguarding



the Refrigerated Foods Industry



2020 - 2022 Technical Resources Update

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 Martin Mitchell by e-mail at mmitchell@certified-laboratories.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.

Technical Committee Conference Calls

The Technical Committee conducts monthly conference calls. Members discuss current industry issues, provide updates on topics of interest, ask questions and offer suggestions on future Webinar topics. Minutes are distributed to all members to share the meeting content to those unable to participate.

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. Titles 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.

- COVID Consumer Behavior (4/15/20)
- FDA Inspection Manual (5/27/20)
- Shelf Life Protocol (6/3/20)
- Condensation Control (6/17/20)
- Refrigerated Transportation (7/15/20)

RFA Fall Symposium

The RFA Technical Committee works in conjunction with the Industry Development Committee to plan and organize the RFA Fall Symposiums. The 2019 RFA Symposium took place in New Brunswick, NJ and included visits to Rutgers University, including its Food Innovation Center (FIC), Aquamar, Michael Foods/Jersey Pride and the Port of New York and New Jersey.

Due to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, the 2020 RFA Fall Symposium will be a “Virtual Symposium”. Members of the Technical and Industry Development Committees are scheduling the event for late September. Presentations will discuss current topics of membership interest. Subjects will include employee safety measures to combat COVID-19, facility sanitation protocols and business development measures.

COVID-19 Pandemic

Early on in the crisis, RFA focused to provide the most current CDC, OSHA, FDA and USDA information to assist the membership. A special Roundtable Conference Call was arranged during which members openly shared best practices they initiated to address the coronavirus pandemic at their locations. Immediately following the Roundtable, RFA began distributing a daily COVID-19 Update, capturing the recommendations of health professionals and regulatory bodies. The RFA stands ready to support its member companies through global challenges.

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 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.