

# Strategic Plan 2023-2025

In early 2022, the Board of Directors (Board) and Committee Chairs as well as Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Past President representatives met virtually to establish Goals and Objectives. Tasks were identified at Seminar (May 16) (hybrid virtual and in person) and finalized virtually in October. The Board decided to **Table Objectives 1.1 and 4.1** from Task identification at Seminar. The work will be done in future, led by a Board group.

For 6 Objectives, each group was asked to:

1. Identify and prioritize Tasks for each Objective. Identify intended outcomes for each Task and prioritize the Task list.
2. For each Task identify responsible committees, timelines and activities to achieve the Task outcome. Consider resources and \$ implications.
3. Each Task needs to have a tangible outcome that will translate into what will be accomplished.
4. Tasks will be identified based on the premise that they will be completed within the Strategic Plan timeframe (3 years starting January 2023; full years 2023-2025). If not the timeframe will be specified (e.g. 5 years).

Smart Tasks principles were used:

- *Specific* – target a specific area for improvement.
- *Measurable* – quantify or at least suggest an indicator of progress.
- *Assignable* – specify who will do it.
- *Realistic* – state what results can realistically be achieved, given available resources.
- *Time-related* – specify when the result(s) can be achieved.

## **Finalized Goals and Objectives**

**Vision** - AAFCO is a trusted leader that safeguards animal and human health.

**Mission** - AAFCO is a collaborative association that supports members and stakeholders, and promotes a safe feed supply through unified system-based regulation, feed ingredient standards and laboratory operations.

### **GOAL 1: Improve Organizational Infrastructure and Operations**

(Improve the organization's infrastructure and operations to be more effective and efficient and dynamic.)

- Objective 1.1: Evaluate current AAFCO internal protocols and processes to enhance operational efficiencies (tabled to address in future)
- Objective 1.2: Identify and develop organizational training for AAFCO leaders
- Objective 1.3: Identify and pursue opportunities that improve financial management and advance organizational health

### **GOAL 2: Enhance Member Support and Education Resources**

(Members are supported through the development of tools, resources, education, and other efforts.)

- Objective 2.1: Be the leading resource of training for animal food regulators and laboratories within 5 years
- Objective 2.2: Enhance membership through recruitment, support and sustainability

### **GOAL 3: Advance Human and Animal Health and Safety**

(Regulatory and laboratory initiatives promote the health and safety of humans and animals.)

- Objective 3.1: Promote and integrate Animal Food Safety Systems

- Objective 3.2: Promote and integrate laboratory technology, methods, quality systems, and collaboration in support of Animal Food Safety Systems

**GOAL 4: Foster External Stakeholder Relationships**

(Relationships with external stakeholders are fostered to provide advancement opportunities for the Association.)

- Objective 4.1: Identify stakeholders with common interests in order to prioritize, develop, and maintain professional relationships that advance AAFCO’s Vision and Mission (tabled to address in future)

Participants at Seminar were divided into 6 groups (5 in person, 1 virtual). Each group worked on two Objectives to establish Tasks. Follow up virtual calls were held October through March to finalize Tasks for each Objective.

1.2	1.3	2.1	2.2	3.1	3.2
Organizational Training AAFCO Leaders	Financial Management & Organizational Health	Regulatory and Lab Training	Enhance Membership	Integrated AFSS Roadmap	Integrated Lab AFSS Roadmap
Round 1		<i>Virtual</i>			
Scott	Ashlee-Rose	<i>Richard</i>	Kristin	Erin	Mark
Tim	Ken	<i>Eric N.</i>	Dave D.	Dave E.	Josh
Charlotte*	Mick	<i>Ali</i>	Liz	Jacob	George
	Stan	<i>Sally</i>	Hollis	Austin	
Round 2				<i>Virtual</i>	
Ashlee-Rose	Tim	George	Erin	<i>Richard</i>	Kristen
Ken	Stan	Josh	Dave E.	<i>Sharon</i>	Dave D.
Mick	Charlotte	Mark	Jacob	<i>Darrell</i>	Liz
			Austin	<i>Eric N.</i>	Hollis
				<i>Ali</i>	
Electronic version from:					
Ashlee-Rose	Stan (& Ashlee-Rose)	Josh	Erin	Dani	Dave D
<b>Virtual Calls</b>					
Charlotte	Ashlee-Rose	Austin	Jenny	Kristi	George
Marissa	Laura	Kristi	Liz	Erin	Dave D.
Scott	Michelle M.*	Miriam	Jacob	Jacob	Kristen
Eric B.	Austin	Ali	Hollis	Laura	Josh
Ashlee-Rose	Ken	Josh	Dave E.	Kent	Mark
Ken	Eric B.	Mark	Kristen	Darrell	Liz
Mick	Mick	George	Marissa	Dave E.	Hollis
Michelle M.*	Stan	Eric N.	Erin	Ali	Austin
Jo Lynn	Kent	Sharon	Dave D.	Sharon	
Austin	Charlotte	Sally	Jo Lynn	Eric N.	
Doug	Darrell		Austin	Austin	
Miriam	Jenny				
	Doug				

*Italics indicate they were invited but did not attend*

\* Additional FDA participant

Strategic Planning participants unable to attend Seminar Task identification session: Kent, Eric B., Miriam, Jenny, Jo Lynn, Doug, Laura, Darrell, Kristi, Marissa

## **GOAL 1: Improve Organizational Infrastructure and Operations**

(Improve the organization's infrastructure and operations to be more effective and efficient and dynamic.)

### **TABLED**

#### ➤ **Objective 1.1: Evaluate current AAFCO internal protocols and processes to enhance operational efficiencies**

Narrative: Need to define internal protocols beyond what currently appears in Procedures Manual and OP (e.g. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for FASS (Executive Assistant changeover), common contracting procedures (include legal advice), document and improve financial procedures (budget process). Increase awareness of procedures to enhance use and adherence.

- T - Reconfigure internal operations to support shifting from legacy infrastructure to the operations necessary to support the future direction of AAFCO as determined by the Board.
- T - Review infrastructure and operations and adjust as needed to align with the projected programs each year in July.
- T - *Suggested alternate: Comprehensively review AAFCO roles and update as needed in the Procedures Manual. Clarify AAFCO roles and expectations and increase awareness of such.*
- T - *Needs to be part of the protocols and processes evaluation tasks. Create a comprehensive operations manual*
- T - *Needs to be part of the protocols and processes evaluation tasks. Develop additional procedures where needed to ensure efficiency and consistency. Implement steps for quality assurance and maintenance for all association functions.*
- T - *Already in progress whereby Board Liaison to Committee is responsible. Have a "committee coordinator" to maintain contact with Committee chairs to see that committee tasks are being performed in a timely manner between meetings. We have too many committees and subcommittees that don't complete tasks between meetings.*

#### ➤ **Objective 1.2 - Identify and develop organizational training for AAFCO leaders**

Narrative: Evaluate procedures, identify gaps, establish and implement procedures for onboarding and functionality in leadership roles (Board and Committee leaders).

### **Tasks**

#### 1. Improve orientation and training for Committee Chairs and Board members.

**Responsible:** Education and Training Committee (ETC) (with Subject Matter Expert help from experienced AAFCO members)

##### ○ **Deliverable:**

*Priority 1:* Develop a draft template compiling training needed and identify process to determine needs/wants (Develop a gap template).

- Identify work that has already been done and compile. Identify additional activities specific to the Board.
- Develop a checklist for duties and deadlines. Leverage the Official Publication (OP) info into a cheat sheet.
- Identify core training list for Committee Chairs, Board members, other leaders, and potential leaders. Examples include:
  - Meeting facilitation
  - Roberts Rule of Order

- Budget 101
- Strategic Thinking and Decision Making
- Exchange or shadow programs between states and with FDA (CVM or OHAFO Field)

**Timeframe:** Gap template draft by Seminar 2023 and Committee vote Annual 2023.

*Priority 2:* Develop an implementation framework. Leverage what has already been developed.

- Part of task should include identification of current training and needed training including onboarding steps.
- Ensure various roles are captured, e.g. FDA member, votes differently.
- Orientation on Committee Chair expectations, roles, responsibilities, interactions, reporting to the Board and other committees.
- Identify touchpoints – identify committee deliverables and flow. Assign to all committees and Board member to map.
- Identify leadership mentors as part of framework (orientation/onboarding and ongoing).
- Include ongoing training for leadership enhancement.

**Timeframe:** Fall 2023 - Short term

*Priority 3:* Develop a checklist to track implementation (ETC Sub-committee).

**Timeframe:** Fall 2023.

*Priority 4:* Identify leadership training (e.g. Linked In learning) available and develop AAFCO specific training based on Priority 1 for delivery.

- Develop for different delivery modalities (e.g. online and in person).

**Timeframe:** Fall 2023.

*Priority 5:* Implement training and tracking.

**Timeframe:** January 2024.

2. Future Leadership -Identify potential leaders (e.g. Vice Chairs, Sub-committee chairs and working group leads) to support AAFCO (Board and Committee Chairs).

**Responsible:** Board Work Group (include President Elect and Nominating Committee)

○ **Deliverable:**

- Detail a process to identify potential leaders and their development (e.g. Vice Chairs, Sub-committee chairs and working group leads) to support AAFCO.

○ **Timeframe:** Seminar 2023

➤ **Objective 1.3 - Identify and pursue opportunities that improve financial management and advance organizational health**

Narrative: Evaluate procedures, identify gaps, establish and implement procedures to improve financial management. Identify financial training needs (e.g. budget and investment training)(Note this could be in training activity above). Achieve two years of operating funds in reserves.

**Tasks**

1. Explore and implement grant and other funding opportunities that expand and align with AAFCO strategic goals

**Responsible:** Executive Director (ED) (could include Board WG and/or Finance Committee (FC)); National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) or Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) could be resources since they are more experienced.

- **Deliverable:** Seek new cooperative agreements. How many attempts/requests and how much received within timeframe; to achieve two years' operating costs (amount Board is comfortable with having in reserves).

- **Timeframe:** Report out to Board at midyear and annual meetings (FC will be reporting to Board monthly; recognize individual grants etc., could have more frequent reporting requirements (e.g. monthly).
- 2. Establish charitable giving/scholarship framework.
 

**Responsible:** Strategic Affairs Committee (SAC) and FC

  - **Deliverable:** Completion of guidelines for recommendations to the Board within one year and Board implementation within two years.
    - Aligns with organizational health, not with financial management improvement. Could be scaled. One charity per year that President recommends and Board approves. Could include educational scholarships or endowment foundation. Develop thresholds and guidelines when revenue allows.
    - Should report out at midyear and annual. Could include report back from recipients at member meetings.
  - **Timeframe:** Annual meeting 2024.
- 3. Develop a procedure to identify resource needs associated with proposed projects (e.g. contract) for association review and approval (e.g. Pet Food Label Modernization, Hemp, NASDA cooperative agreement).
 

**Responsible:** ED then FC

  - **Deliverable:** Need to develop tool (held in member toolkit), guidelines/procedures. Tools/templates developed, implemented (including member education) and tracked for maintenance. FC will develop criteria for decision making on when to utilize contract resources (such as for quickly needed projects).
    - Ensure tool and education for members on how to request resources is in leadership material.
  - **Timeframe:** Develop method/tool by August 2023 and implement by January of 2024
- 4. Pursue revenue-generating opportunities to maintain a sound financial base.
 

**Responsible:** ED

  - **Deliverable:** Myriad of opportunities, one example: non-regulated entities set up booths, sponsors. Additional training and refreshers. Could do biennial brainstorming session at Seminar. ED pulls realistic ideas and conceptualizes.
  - **Timeframe:** Report to Board at Midyear for consideration in next fiscal budget

## **GOAL 2: Enhance Member Support and Education Resources**

(Members are supported through the development of tools, resources, education, and other efforts).

### ➤ **Objective 2.1 - Be the leading training resource for animal food regulators and laboratories within 5 years.**

Narrative: AAFCO has and will gather, develop and/or deliver, and serve as a repository for training material and/or activities. AAFCO doesn't necessarily do all of this ourselves.

## **Tasks**

1. Develop a library of technical training resources, including both internal and external sources, (videos, white papers, etc.) for laboratories. ETC is already developing an analogous library for animal food regulators in LMS system.
 

**Responsible:** Laboratory Methods and Services Committee (LMSC), Proficiency Testing Program (PTP)

  - **Deliverable:** Create a training resources library section on the AAFCO website.
  - **Timeframe:** January 2024 and reviewed annually for relevant information.

2. Evaluate the training resources library at each mid-year meeting to determine whether any of them are appropriate for additional in-person training at future AAFCO meetings or other locations.  
**Responsible:** LMSC, PTP
  - **Deliverable:** Identify and work to deliver one in-person training opportunity each year.
  - **Timeframe:** January 2024 and reviewed annually for relevant information.
3. Develop and conduct an annual committee survey for laboratories to include with that of animal food regulators to determine training needs that can be delivered in concise timeframes (e.g. 1 - 2 hours).  
**Responsible:** ETC
  - **Deliverable:** Conduct an annual survey and create a list of training priorities for review by the Board for approval and implementation. Need to investigate and coordinate with FDA annual survey (animal food regulators; confirm not lab). Board will review and make assignments at their September Board meeting. Board will assign to appropriate committees (October 2023). Develop a documented process for proponents to identify training needs on an ongoing basis (e.g. outside of the survey timing).
  - **Timeframe:** Survey conducted Annual 2023.

**Comments for consideration when addressing the tasks:**

- Build a laboratory resource, based on methods using internal PTP data. For each method or analyte, identify any related whitepapers. Add a section for videos and start with the microbial sampling technique videos. Also consider a section on recorded presentations given previously. Kristie's talk at the 2022 Animal Feed Regulatory Program Standards (AFRPS) face to face meeting was stellar. It should be preserved.
- These resources likely exist through A2LA, Animal and Plant Health Laboratories, etc. but LMSC needs to put together the list of the most relevant ones and post it somewhere on the AAFCO website so new lab staff know where to find them.
- Resources will include, space and people. I would love to see a microscopy workshop be held with annual or midyear – however, this would require a location that could provide a university type setup with a room full of microscopes.
- AAFCO will be the repository for training resources, and once the association identifies these resources, they will need to be reviewed annually to make sure they are still appropriate. During this review we could also identify anything that could be further enhanced to in-person training.

➤ **Objective 2.2 - Enhance membership through recruitment, support and sustainability.**

Narrative: Membership activities include three areas: member engagement/services/support, member recruitment and communication.

**Tasks**

1. Reach out to members who haven't been attending AAFCO meetings. Why aren't they attending?  
**Responsible:** ED
  - **Deliverable:** Create AAFCO letter of engagement and meet with the state feed control official virtually to help identify why the state may not be attending meetings. Data could be gathered via engagement survey. Given poor survey responses, targeted calls to states might be more effective. Offer full scholarship to attend Feed Administrator Seminar. Evaluate the reasons members aren't participating and provide recommendations to increase participation.
  - **Timeframe:** March 1, 2023 (in time for FAS registration) and ongoing as permanent practice.

2. Stabilize committees with added participation.  
**Responsible:** Current Issues & Outreach Committee (CIOC)
  - **Deliverable:** Reach out to newer people to introduce them to committees and reach out post meeting to determine if they would be willing to join any committee for participation. Assess the number of contacts made and success rate measured through new members participating on committees.
  - **Timeframe:** January 2023.
3. Expand scholarship program to drive participation for new attendance.  
**Responsible:** FC
  - **Deliverable:** Establish enhanced scholarship program based on feedback from Task 1 activities and Task 5 meeting feedback. Assess scholarship program success and provide recommendations for improvement.
  - **Timeframe:** March 2023.
4. Develop and implement member toolkit and periodic newsletter.  
**Responsible:** CIOC/ED
  - **Deliverable:** Develop a member communication toolkit, and restart newsletter, to be sent periodically (TBD) to members, advisors and published on the AAFCO website. Encourage members to share communication items with their leadership. Evaluate relevancy with members at least twice per year (could be discussed at Seminar). Consider whether website “hits” (open rates on email) can be measured to assess engagement with toolkit/newsletter.
  - **Timeframe:** Midyear Meeting 2023.
5. Transfer the Event Planning Workgroup to a new Subcommittee to oversee midyear and annual meeting. Similar to Seminar Subcommittee. This becomes an ongoing subcommittee that reports to ETC.  
**Responsible:** CIOC with FASS support.
  - **Deliverable:** Confirm members of Subcommittee complete with chairperson. Evaluate attendance and consider meeting evaluations to assess meeting relevance / success to members. Ensure timely development of meeting agendas.
  - **Timeframe:** January 2023.

**Comments for consideration when addressing the tasks:**

- Engagement survey results were poor. The task was abandoned after two attempts and sent back to the Board. Engagement should be treated like a program with inputs, short term, mid term, long term objectives, and evaluation points to determine success.
- CIOC was going to break engagement survey apart and have states call states. However, they were stretched too thin.
- Increased participation/attendance at meetings, increased web and BIN traffic, and increased satisfaction of AAFCO members would be indicators of enhanced membership.
- ED could work with FASS to establish what our current membership engagement numbers are, so we have a baseline to compare to and build on.
- Enhancing membership could be measured through the survey at the end of each meeting. We should be utilizing surveys more to gauge progress. Survey results are either forgotten altogether or are developed secondarily to the meeting itself. We should be tracking progress across years via surveys. Surveys should be developed with the idea that the data will build.
- New subcommittee would serve to make sure the midyear and annual meetings have well planned activities for new members as well as being another subcommittee opportunity that members could serve on to be more engaged.

**GOAL 3: Advance Human and Animal Health and Safety**

(Regulatory and laboratory initiatives promote the health and safety of humans and animals)

➤ **Objective 3.1 - Promote and integrate Animal Food Safety Systems.**

Narrative: Develop and promote a food chain focused safety purpose, activities and coordination for animal food regulatory agencies. Evaluate current system or systems already in place, identify gaps in model bill and regulations, collaborate with State and Federal Regulatory food/feed agencies, establish and publish guidance materials and resource links. Multiple components are needed to make a strong Animal Food Safety Program that works cooperatively with FDA to advance human and animal health and safety. This objective aims to develop a roadmap that identifies some of the components that are needed to achieve this goal.

**Tasks**

1. Identify the elements (roadmap) and implement the activities needed to achieve the objective (considering the narrative (above) and tasks (below)). Note: A task related to evaluating the current system and identifying gaps may need to be added.

**Responsible:** Feed and Feed Ingredient Manufacturing Committee (FFIMC), Inspection and Sampling Committee (ISC), Enforcement Issues Committee (EIC) (joint meeting of committee leaders to develop the plan)

- **Deliverable:**
  - Identify needs, gaps and strategically plan activities (e.g. roadmap)
  - Realign the following tasks in accordance with the planned elements.
- **Timeframe:** Virtual call after Midyear 2023 (Chairs, Vices, Board Liaisons, President Elect, ED).

2. **Planning:**

- a. Promote AFRPS collaborative workplanning between state regulatory programs (SRP) on an ongoing basis. AFRPS is model template to use whether an AFRPS state or not.

**Responsible:** ISC and EIC; Involve new State-Federal Collaboration Group (SFCG) (established Midyear 2023, not a standing committee OP p. 102, SFCG interaction with AAFCO committees TBD) formed as coordinator to facilitate AAFCO communications with FDA.

- **Deliverables:**
  - Establish working group contingent on Board direction with respect to SFCG to develop process and promotion activities.
  - Promote AFRPS planning component with non-AFRPS states. Offer template (model) to non-AFRPS states to help within state planning.
- **Timeframe:** Summer 2025.
- b. Establish best practices document for collaboration between the SRP, and FDA with the goal to improve communication and work planning.

**Responsible:** SFCG with ISC

- **Deliverable:**
  - Establish working group committees within ISC to collaborate and create documents
  - Write Best Practice document(s); could be derivative of AFRPS
  - Publish Best Practice documents on AAFCO website as a resource for SRP
  - Present documents during ISC meetings to raise awareness

- **Timeframe:** Summer 2025.

- c. Develop example structure of a feed regulatory program (e.g. equipment, job descriptions) and make available through AAFCO. (Note: Has been tried unsuccessfully.)

**Responsible:** ISC

- **Deliverables:**
  - Develop example structure of a feed programs (e.g. equipment, job descriptions)
  - Make example feed regulatory structure available through AAFCO.
  - Develop a library that contains examples from feed regulatory programs.
- **Timeframe:** Midyear 2024.



- d. (Former Task 3) Align Chapter 5 of the OP with AFRPS. (Note: MBR was aligned with FSMA as part of 2017-2020 Strategic Plan. Some committees are already working on parts of Chapter 5 material.)

**Responsible:** EIC, ISC, FFIMC, Feed Labelling Committee (FLC), LMSC support (Committees with relevant sections)

- **Deliverable and Timeframe:**
  - Identify current gaps by Midyear 2024.
  - Update Chapter 5 sections by Dec. 2025.

### 3. Promotion / Communications

- a. (Former Task 2) Develop messaging on impact of animal feed safety to human health with three audiences:

- Regulatory agency leadership
- Feed manufacturers including food processors
- Consumers

**Responsible:** CIOC

- **Deliverable:**
  - Design a flyer that can be distributed at meetings and as a resource for State Regulatory agencies to use to educate consumers and manufacturers.
  - Develop a member informational platform containing guidance materials, resource links and a fact sheet to members, advisors and published on the AAFCO website.
  - Promote resources to ensure awareness.
  - Work with website redesign group to create ability to evaluate/track viewing of resources to measure impact. Add pop up to ask if information was helpful (Yes/No answer).

- **Timeframe:** Prepare and provide during Midyear meeting 2024.

- b. (Former Task 4) Increase communication/collaboration among State and Federal Regulatory food/feed agencies.

i.

**Responsible:** Board together with SFCG

- **Deliverable:** Evaluate the merit of AAFCO Board meeting with ORA/CVM leadership twice a year (one meeting could be virtual). Implement a second meeting if warranted. Develop a SOP with FASS Executive Assistant to facilitate meeting organization.
- **Timeframe:** Dec. 2023.

ii.

**Responsible:** Board - President

- **Deliverable:** Send letter to Co-Chair of PFP (Barbara Cassens & Abe Brown) to increase AAFCO participation. (Consider adding ED and AFDO liaison as AAFCO participants).
- **Timeframe:** Dec. 2023.

iii.

**Responsible:** ISC

- **Deliverable:** Integrate FDA state liaisons into Advanced Inspector Training (AITS) (in progress (total 50 of which 5 offered to FDA). Normalize the FDA participation numbers.
- **Timeframe:** **June 2023** close off with documented participant rates in AITS planning documents.

- c. (Former Task 5) Act as Liaison to other organizations to monitor impacts on animal food safety systems.

**Responsible:** Board led with ED as liaison

- **Deliverable:** Create/maintain relationships upon joining AAFCO. Identify relevant organization to connect and facilitate relationships with (e.g. Food and Agriculture Organization, CODEX, Partner Countries Canadian Food Inspection Agency, World Health

Organization, AFDO, NASDA, FDA). Evaluate the merit of liaison activities (time effectiveness).

- **Timeframe:** Dec. 2023 with evaluation annually thereafter.

#### 4. Inspection Procedures

- a. Improve documentation on inspection procedures to align with AFSS. Feed inspection manual is already in place (review for clarity).

**Responsible:** ISC

- **Deliverables:**

- Document regular process to review inspection manual and improve documentation.

- **Timeframe:** Midyear 2024.

#### 5. Training

- a. Identify training gaps with respect to AFSS and the tools needed to increase staff competencies.

**Responsible:** ISC

- **Deliverables:**

- Send regular (establish annual/bi-annual frequency) surveys to assess needs.
- Compile and present results of survey during ISC meetings.
- Prioritize needs based on survey results.
- Develop training plans, and training workshop proposals to submit for Board approval.
- Promote training through AAFCO website to increase participation and reach those programs that do not regularly attend AAFCO meetings.
- Create a training evaluation form to be completed by participants post-training.
- Collaborate to send participant(s) post-training competency evaluations to assess training effectiveness.

- **Timeframe:** Summer 2025.

- b. Publish training resources on AAFCO website. Identify and develop additional training material needed. Support training to ensure proficiency.

**Responsible:** ISC

- **Deliverables:**

- Identify and publish training resources on AAFCO website in a central place. Include existing resources.
- Identify and develop additional training material needed.
- Develop strategies to support training to ensure proficiency.

- **Timeframe:** Midyear 2024 (new website dependent).

#### 6. Information Technology (IT) Infrastructure

- a. Explore the ability to develop an integrated IT system. Optimally the IT system would integrate findings from multiple state systems to eliminate double/multiple entry. NOTE: LMSC is working on laboratory element as part of Objective 3.2. There is a need for collaboration for both inspection and sampling data collection. Recognize that a single platform has been tried with challenging results. Need IT expertise as part of working group. For example if there are results for a contaminant across several states how can inspection findings (including sampling) be compared, notably for regulatory action? Explore opportunity in the Cooperative Agreement with NASDA (RFA-FD-22-009).

**Responsible:** IT + ISC + LMSC (include SAFHER)

- **Deliverable:**

- Establish a working group to explore the ability to develop/use (SAFHER) an integrated IT system. Identify obstacles and potential ways to overcome them with an implementation plan.

- **Timeframe:** Midyear 2024.

## 7. Quality systems

- a. Provide resources related to quality and accreditation. Accredite both inspector and state program. Reference IFPTI and AFRPS. Provide a link on AAFCO website where state regulatory personnel can gain information on capabilities. LMSC are a resource if questions arise.

**Responsible:** ISC

○ **Deliverables:**

- Establish a Quality Assurance sub-committee under the ISC to update and provide resources related to quality and accreditation. Need a system ensuring comparable results from different inspections.
- Provide a link on AAFCO website where state regulatory personnel can access information.

○ **Timeframe:** In Progress: Annual 2024.

### **Comments for consideration when addressing the tasks:**

- *Possible Task:* Collaboration to include sharing non-contract inspection outcomes and analytical results.
- *Possible Task:* Create an Annual Report of what peer organizations have done every 6 months, 12 months, etc. highlighting.
- Make Roadmap a Logic Diagram for program development.
- *Task Idea:* Develop a model Animal Feed Program and define roles and responsibilities that include model job descriptions and baseline salary suggestions for each role. Specify the duties of each position, the importance it has to both animal food and human food, and then communicate this to members so it can be used to justify additional positions or reorganizations in state programs. Each role could be further developed to show how different positions interact with other agencies, FDA, NASDA, etc. to advance human and animal health and safety. Note that a Model Feed Safety Program and Development Guide were put together for this purpose a number of years ago. They were published in the OP for a number of years (last included 2016, Chapter 5, pages 260 and 262). The rationale for removal was that FDA (along with state representation) had spent considerable resources developing the AFRPS. AFRPS is a comprehensive model feed safety program. The AAFCO model was removed so there is not a "competing" feed safety program model in the OP. MBR "enhancements" might include changes to Section 10 and Regulation 11 that would have state adoption of "all applicable sections of CFR Title 21" and AAFCO's new pet-food labelling guidelines. Might also add a section on "Cottage Pet Food" to help keep the MBR relevant.
- Survey results have been poor. Engagement should be treated like a program with inputs, short term, mid term, long term objectives, and evaluation points to determine success.
- CIOC was going to break engagement survey apart and have states call states. However, they were stretched too thin.
- Increased participation/attendance at meetings, increased web and BIN traffic, and increased satisfaction of AAFCO members would be indicators of enhanced membership.
- ED could work with FASS to establish what our current membership engagement numbers are, so we have a baseline to compare to and build on.
- Task 2 could be incorporated into the website re-design. CIOC could develop separate messages for these 3 groups explaining how feed safety affects human health.
- AAFCO should consider if some incentive to states would help increase participation. Perhaps pay travel costs for one individual. Limit to a certain number that apply first depending on money available.
- Task 5: Prior to looking to external relationships, evaluate whether our liaisons currently doing their jobs within AAFCO. Do our liaisons know what is going on in committees? Some accountability or a reason why liaisons are keeping up with committee work should be

considered. Maybe some are better than others. This liaison relationship should be focused on in the plan to “build better board members”. Moving externally – external liaisons should be reporting monthly. It may be an update of nothing, but there should be time left for 5 minute updates. It is important for us to maintain relationships with other “like” organizations in North America and monitor what is happening worldwide that may eventually affect us to prepare for any changes in laws. Monitoring changes is needed so AAFCO knows if we need to reach out to members when they may be impacted by legislative changes in their state or when we should make changes to the Model Bill and Regulations.

- How is what a peer organization doing relevant to AAFCO? Perhaps an annual report highlighting what peer organizations are doing allows us to foster closer relationships with other organizations and communicate to our members different resources that may be available to help the ultimate goal of advancing human and animal health and safety. AAFCO members are busy and sometimes struggle to keep up with everything that multiple organizations are doing. AAFCO can assist by compiling and sharing the most relevant things to our members.

➤ **Objective 3.2 - Promote and integrate laboratory technology, methods, quality systems, and collaboration in support of Animal Food Safety Systems.**

Narrative: Identify training and method needs of regulatory laboratories, collaborate with State and Federal Regulatory food/feed agencies to obtain methods, establish, and publish Best Practice guidance materials and resource links on AAFCO LMSC website. Design, implement and provide a training program for state regulatory laboratorians. Establish a Quality Assurance committee under the AAFCO LMSC to update and provide resources related to quality and accreditation. Provide a link on AAFCO website where state regulatory and state laboratory personnel can gain information on laboratory capabilities.

**Tasks**

1. Identify the elements (roadmap) and implement the activities needed to achieve the objective (considering the narrative [above] and tasks [below]).

**Responsible:** FFIM, LMSC (joint meeting of committee leaders to develop the plan)

- **Deliverable:**
  - Identify needs, gaps and strategically plan activities (e.g. roadmap).
  - Realign the following tasks in accordance with the planned elements.
- **Timeframe:** Virtual calls before Midyear 2023 (Chairs, Vices, Board Liaisons, President Elect, ED).

Laboratory roadmap elements of AFSS:

2. **Planning:**

- a. Promote AFRPS collaborative sampling workplanning between lab and state regulatory programs (SRP) on an ongoing basis. AFRPS is model template to use whether an AFRPS state or not. Challenge is that FDA did not use with Lab Flexible Funding Model. Action underway to try to bring together in one. Have to be in AFRPS to be eligible for LFFM. Labs are not part of AFRPS annual meeting planning. Need to return to collaborative process. LMSC is currently running state survey to develop a library of methods and technology to support this.

**Responsible:** ISC and LMSC; New State-Federal Collaboration Committee (Eric Brady establishing at Midyear 2023) should be involved.

- **Deliverables:**
  - Establish working group to develop process and promotion activities.
  - Work with FDA to integrate LFFM with AFRPS and include labs in AFRPS annual meeting planning.

- Promote AFRPS planning component with non-AFRPS states. Offer template (model) to non-AFRPS states to help within state planning.
- **Timeframe:** Summer 2025.
- b. (*Former Task 4*) Establish best practices document for collaboration between the SRP, laboratories and FDA with the goal to improve communication and work planning.

**Responsible:** LMSC

- **Deliverables:**
  - Establish working group committees within LMSC to collaborate and create documents.
  - Write Best Practice document(s).
  - Publish Best Practice documents on AAFCO website as a resource for state laboratories.
  - Present documents during LMSC meetings to raise awareness.
- **Timeframe:** Summer 2025.
- c. Survey SRP to identify testing needs. LMSC is currently running survey to identify analytes (Consider identifying criteria to determine what types of analytes will be on the sampling plan) and develop a library of methods and technology. Prior survey through FFIMC went to SRP seeking feedback on analytes of interest (toxins) with second part to identify lab capability. This will be done on a regular basis.

**Responsible:** FFIMC, LMSC and include Pet Food Committee (PFC), due to the label modernization changes that will be taking place.

- **Deliverables:**
  - Send an annual Regulatory Method Needs Survey to State Regulatory Program Managers to assess, rank and guide laboratory method and resource needs.
  - Compile and present results of the survey
  - Prioritize needs based on survey results.
  - (*Former Task 2*) Utilize information obtained from the SRP survey to develop and administer a survey of state laboratories to see what they need to address the needs of the SRP.
  - Create or charge individual LMSC working groups with obtaining methods, planning training, and creating Best Practice Guidance documents for state laboratories
  - Publish resources on AAFCO website
- **Timeframe:** Summer 2023 (this is being done now). Annual each summer thereafter.
- d. Evaluate ability to create a network of laboratories to perform analytical work across states. State structure (legality and funding) makes fee for service a challenge.

**Responsible:** EIC lead and coordinate with ISC and LMSC.

- **Deliverables:**
  - Establish cross state coordination working group to identify a means to accomplish this. Note that methods need to be in the scope of accreditation for the third party lab. Note: PA is fee for service already and would be good participant for group.
  - Need issue examined (survey could obtain information) and ways to resolve it identified.
  - Determine legality in each state (acceptance of third party analysis) (note some states already do this, e.g.: NC and KS)
- **Timeframe:** Legality and state identification by Midyear 2024. Recommendation (including funding) in 2024 (fee for service).
- 
- e. Develop example structure of a feed lab for feed programs (e.g. equipment, job descriptions) and make available through AAFCO. (Note: Has been tried unsuccessfully.)

**Responsible:** LMSC

- **Deliverables:**

- Develop example structure of a feed lab for feed programs (e.g. equipment, job descriptions).
  - Make example feed lab structure available through AAFCO.
  - Develop a library that contains examples from feed labs.
  - **Timeframe:** Midyear 2024.
- 3. Sampling Procedures**
- a.** Improve documentation on sampling (properly, chain of custody). Sampling guide is already in place (review for clarity).
- Responsible:** ISC
- **Deliverables:**
    - Review sampling guide (clarity) and improve documentation.
    - Add chain of custody (up to point of acceptance transfer to lab). Within the lab, ISO addresses traceability.
  - **Timeframe:** Midyear 2024.
- b.** Review sampling protocols to ensure sample and analyte integrity (e.g. exposure to light, heat). Adjust protocols as necessary and share via AAFCO (could be integrated with 2.a. above).
- Responsible:** ISC and LMSC.
- **Deliverable:**
    - Review and adjust sampling protocols to ensure sample and analyte integrity (e.g. exposure to light, heat). Share via AAFCO.
  - **Timeframe:** Provide feedback on timing (leads need to assess all sampling procedures work and provide timelines).
- c.** Review sampling procedures (e.g. blocks, aseptic).
- Responsible:** ISC and collaborate with LMSC.
- **Deliverable:**
    - Review and update sampling procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose (e.g. blocks). Continue and complete procedures for aseptic.
  - **Timeframe:** Midyear 2024.
- d.** Review inspector sampling to ensure consistency and proficiency with sampling protocols. Audit type function. AFRPS has audit standard.
- Responsible:** ISC
- **Deliverables:**
    - Promote use of AFRPS audit process to ensure inspectors are proficient.
    - Integrate audit function in Sampling Guide.
    - Review and provide training resources to meet the needs identified from the audit.
  - **Timeframe:** Midyear 2024.
- 4. Analytical Methods**
- a.** (Former Task 3) Develop and submit for approval projects to address method needs as identified in annual survey.
- Responsible:** LMSC lead, with FC and Board support
- **Deliverables:**
    - Develop method needs statements for approval and plan to obtain funding for method development/validation projects for approval by Board.
    - Develop training plans, and training workshop proposals to submit for Board approval and subsequent delivery.
  - **Timeframe:** Summer 2024.
- b.** Identify actionable levels relative to method limits as component of sampling plan. LMSC has information on LoD or LoQ when method developed. Need to identify priorities to improve LoD/LoQ for enforcement purposes (and timeline). LMSC can provide template to

obtain information from state labs. (Information gathered from 2008 on, as part of method needs statements).

**Responsible:** EIC with LMSC support

○ **Deliverables:**

- Identify current levels and additional actionable levels needed. Needs FDA participation.
- Identify priorities to improve LoD/LoQ for enforcement purposes (and timeline).

○ **Timeframe:** Midyear 2023.

## 5. Training

a. (*Former Task 5*) Identify training gaps among laboratories and the tools needed to increase staff competencies.

**Responsible:** LMSC

○ **Deliverables:**

- Send annual laboratory surveys to access needs.
- Compile and present results of survey during LMSC meetings.
- Prioritize needs based on survey results.
- Develop training plans, and training workshop proposals to submit for Board approval.
- Promote training through AAFCO website to increase participation and reach those laboratories that do not regularly attend AAFCO meetings.
- Collaborate with AAFCO PTP to send participant(s) post-training competency samples to assess training effectiveness
- Create a training evaluation form to be completed by participants post-training.

○ **Timeframe:** Summer 2025.

b. Publish lab training resources on AAFCO website. Identify and develop additional training material needed. Support training to ensure proficiency.

**Responsible:** LMSC

○ **Deliverables:**

- Identify and publish lab training resources on AAFCO website. Include existing resources like ISO so information is in a central place.
- Identify and develop additional training material needed.
- Develop strategies to support training to ensure proficiency.

○ **Timeframe:** Midyear 2024 (new website dependent).

## 6. Information Technology (IT) Infrastructure

a. Explore the ability to develop an integrated IT system. Optimally the IT system would integrate findings from multiple state systems to eliminate double/multiple entry. Recognize that a single platform has been tried with challenging results. Existing challenge: Each state lab has different LIMS. How can this be integrated? Need IT expertise as part of working group. For example if there are results for a contaminant across several states how can they be compared, notably for regulatory action? Is there an opportunity in the Cooperative Agreement with NASDA (RFA-FD-22-009)?

**Responsible:** IT

○ **Deliverable:**

- Establish a working group to explore the ability to develop an integrated IT system. Identify obstacles and potential ways to overcome them with an implementation plan. Need a system ensuring comparable results from different labs.

○ **Timeframe:** Midyear 2024.

## 7. Quality systems (in good shape)

a. Provide resources related to quality and accreditation. Provide a link on AAFCO website where state regulatory and state laboratory personnel can gain information on laboratory capabilities.

**Responsible:** LMSC with Philosophy and CIOC

○ **Deliverables:**

- Establish a Quality Assurance committee under the AAFCO LMSC to update and provide resources related to quality and accreditation. Need a system ensuring comparable results from different labs.
- Provide a link on AAFCO website where state regulatory and laboratory personnel can gain information on laboratory capabilities.
- **Timeframe:** In Progress: Annual 2023.

**Comments considered when developing the roadmap in Task 1:**

- The challenge is trying to ensure the needs of both the state regulatory program and the laboratory are met and are synced with each other. The deliverable would be to develop a survey to send to the state regulatory program as well as state laboratories to identify needs of each. The committees would decide the survey questions, or what the surveys should look like. The results of the surveys would provide additional information on how to proceed further with the other Tasks.
- Should create an evaluation form to determine project success.
- *Given the limited response to surveys, additional action should be considered. Suggestion:* Daily surveys at meetings or workshops could be conducted during dedicated meeting time. The last 5 minutes during a meeting could be set aside to conduct a survey via a QR code. This might significantly improve responses.
- Improved communication and work planning should be assessed. Verbal assessment could be carried out or a survey done during workplanning meeting.
- Workplanning deliverable should be the document along with a plan to implement it.

The **Working Groups** provided additional feedback on other potential Tasks (below) associated with this Objective. They did not feel they needed to be completed at this time. Task 1 group should consider these and adjust the overall plan accordingly.

(Potential element of Task 1) Task - Funding capability from AAFCO. Needs training element too with sufficient priority and work to maintain proficiency (FERN lab concept). Consider adding microscopy to hazards. Provide funding for more method development for Biological and Chemical hazards in animal food.

**WG comment:** There is funding within AFRPS and LFFM to assist laboratories in method development. Not sure additional funding sources would be needed.

(Potential element of Task 1) Task - Develop a data base of core competencies of each state lab so all labs know where to go for assistance or training where they may have a shortcoming or lack of ability to perform certain tests. *IFPTI have one but have to be APHL member. Need to educate about APHL so people better understand value. Needs investigation regarding AAFCO role. Encourage labs to promote and participate in existing system*

**WG comment:** Not really sure how to address this topic. It might be part of Task 4 above.

(Potential element of Task 1) Task - needs elaboration to make specific task, e.g. promote PTP instead of leverage. Is it meant to align PTP with integrated animal food safety system? PTP is more nutrition than hazard: should it be expanded. Leverage PTP program and sampling data.

(Potential element of Task 1) Task - Need common consistent collection of data. If a priority, need activity broken down into manageable activities. Very big task. Need access to data first. Create data mining systems that can predict animal food mycotoxin hazards.

**WG comment:** This is currently being done through LFFM.

**GOAL 4: Foster External Stakeholder Relationships**



(Relationships with external stakeholders are fostered to provide advancement opportunities for the Association)

### **TABLED**

#### ➤ **Objective 4.1: - Identify stakeholders with common interests in order to prioritize, develop, and maintain professional relationships that advance AAFCO's Vision and Mission.**

Narrative: Stakeholder groups could be very extensive so identification and prioritization of select stakeholders will be key. Advancement opportunities could include financial, Association recognition and increased dialogue.

- T - Identify what AAFCO wants from each stakeholder.
- T - Evaluate current relationships for areas of improvement.
- T - Constantly evaluate if we have relationships with all organizations that we should be working with.
- T - *Intended for members (Richard). Moved to Group 2. Need to define what a personal relationship is. Need to define "feed regulatory agencies".*
- T - Increase attendance by new associations to AAFCO meetings and expand representation on committees
- T - Create a task force or committee that focuses on issues from stakeholders
- T - Send stakeholders a survey to assess needs for improvement
- T - *If ASAHA is defined as a priority stakeholder. Investigate possible integration/interaction with applicable committee(s) in USAHA*
- T - *See bullet above. Liaison to USAHA?*
- T - *If ASAHA is defined as a priority stakeholder. Liaison to AVMA?*
- T - *Moved to Goal 3 for consideration.*
- T - Communicate directly with AAFCO stakeholders. Identify and list stakeholders and assign a liaison (not necessarily a Board member). Assigned liaison keep stakeholders in the AAFCO loop by email and phone and reports back to the Board before each AAFCO meeting.
- Communication
  - Expand AAFCO presence at conferences and trade shows measuring the impact of our attendance. (This would include speaking engagements).
  - Increase our media presence through press releases and other promotional activities to expand our brand and awareness of important issues.
- T - *From Group 3: Doesn't fit in program alignment; moved to Group 4 as intended beneficiary is consumer. Note there is a component promoting State adoption. Added State adoption component to Group 2 for consideration as well, regarding regulatory uniformity. Complete and implement Pet Food Label Modernization Initiative (multi-year objective).*