



## **Current Issues and Outreach Committee**

2024 AAFCO Annual Meeting Minutes

August 7, 2024

11:05 a.m. CT

San Antonio, TX

### **Committee Participants**

Members Present: Jo Lynn Otero (NM) Co-Chair, Bethany McAnulty (TN) Co-Chair, Kristen Green (KY), Debra Gray (KS), Nathan Moon (FDA), Wendy Powell (MI), Alan Keller (IA), Matthew Gerst (MN), George Ferguson (NC), Katie Simpson (IN) Advisors Present: Bill Bookout, Steve Yonker, Dave Fairfield, Louise Calderwood

### **Committee Report:**

#### **Strategic Plan Workgroup**

Bethany McAnulty reported that the one-page information worksheet was completed and will be sent to the Committee members with one month for their review. Once approved, the information worksheet will be sent to Philosophy Communication for branding. It is anticipated to be ready for the Board by the next Board meeting.

#### **CIOC/Philosophy Workgroup**

Rachel Cella of Philosophy Communication reported on Philosophy Communication's management of AAFCO's online media reputation, highlighting the growth of AAFCO's social media presence and increase in online engagement during 2024. AAFCO's new e-commerce site, AAFCO Depot, was recently launched and can be accessed at <https://shop.AAFCO.org>.

#### **Technical Assistance Workgroup (TAN)**

Austin Therrell provided an update on the TAN Workgroup, which has met three times to carry out its charge to develop an avenue for members and industry to submit a question on the AAFCO website and receive a uniform interpretation. The questions will be submitted to a five-person subcommittee, consisting of a mix of regulator and industry subject matter experts; membership is still to be finalized. It was noted that the non-binding interpretation provides clarification on AAFCO's position, but the States can still make their own decisions. The product is almost ready, with the final suggestions to be reviewed by the Current Issues and Outreach Committee in preparation for approval by the Board.

### **New Business**

#### **FDA/AAFCO Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Transition**

Austin Therrell welcomed Tim Schell from the FDA to present on the FDA/AAFCO MOU transition. Tim Schell acknowledged the AAFCO leadership and the success of the MOU program over the years including the outstanding safety record. He noted that it was a difficult decision not to renew the MOU, and the FDA put forward an aggressive timeline for the transition in order to reduce program uncertainty.

Tim Schell reviewed the reasons that the FDA decided not to renew the MOU, and reported that the FDA's proposed interim plan for handling ingredients would be posted on August 7, 2024 at 8:45 a.m. CT. Tim Schell



provided highlights of the FDA premarket animal food ingredients, the draft guidance documents, and the public consultation process. He noted that the details of the consultation would be available on the Federal Register. It was noted that the MOU expires as of October 1, 2024. Tim Schell affirmed the FDA's commitment to working with AAFCO, and recognized AAFCO as the conduit between the FDA and the state regulatory programs for animal food ingredient safety. Austin Therrell thanked Tim Schell and the FDA for the opportunity for dialogue on the MOU. Austin Therrell noted that the current AAFCO process will be in place until October 1, 2024 and AAFCO will continue to accept ingredients submissions until September 1, 2024. Austin Therrell highlighted the potential changes from AAFCO's internal perspective. He further reviewed AAFCO's plan to explore a new pathway for ingredients review, potentially with a new scientific partner. Austin Therrell confirmed that AAFCO will continue to work with the FDA on other issues based on their strong working relationship. Austin Therrell opened the floor to questions from the Committee and the floor.

**Unknown Participant:**

Asked whether there was any thought to changing the copyright status of the AAFCO Official Publication (OP).

**Austin Therrell:**

Responded that there were no plans to change the copyright of the OP, but there has been an ongoing AAFCO discussion to make it available at no cost. If this were the case, the revenue from the OP would need to be offset as the sales support AAFCO. Chapter No. Six of the OP is currently available for free online and can be accessed by anyone.

**George Ferguson:**

Responded that while looking to make the OP available for free, AAFCO would retain copyright protection.

**Unknown Online Participant:**

Asked if ingredients approval from the FDA and AAFCO would be required if AAFCO also develops a new ingredients approval pathway.

**Austin Therrell:**

Responded that he did not anticipate any ingredient would require dual approval but the details of AAFCO's pathway will need to be discussed.

**Tim Schell:**

Responded that the reason for the MOU was to agree on pre-market ingredients. He added that the answer to the question is difficult without knowing the AAFCO process, but the FDA has historically not accepted third-party ingredient evaluations.

**Susan Thixton:**

Requested that as the FDA and AAFCO move forward, not to neglect pet food consumers as the largest stakeholder.

**Tim Schell:**

Responded that the FDA will involve as many people as it can in this process.

**Meeting adjourned at 11:39 a.m.**