

**ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN FEED CONTROL OFFICIALS (AAFCO)  
1800 SOUTH OAK STREET, SUITE 100  
CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS**

**MINUTES OF THE CURRENT ISSUES AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE MIDYEAR MEETING  
HELD AT THE STATEHOUSE CONVENTION CENTER  
101 EAST MARKHAM STREET  
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS  
JANUARY 21, 2025, 1:00 P.M. CT**

**MEMBERS:**

Jo Lynn Otero  
(Co Chair)  
Bethany McAnulty  
(Co Chair)

Kristen Green  
Katie Simpson  
Alan Keller

Wendy Powell  
Debra Brasel  
Nathan Moon

**ADVISORS:**

Bill Bookout  
Steve Younker  
Betsy Flores

Berit Linnehan Foss  
Charles Starkey  
Louise Calderwood

Kathy Alinovi  
(via teleconference)

**GUESTS:**

Austin Therrell  
Sandra Tudge

Executive Director, AAFCO  
Recording Secretary, Minutes Solutions Inc.  
(via teleconference)  
(via teleconference)  
FDA

Kathy Alinovi  
Jenny Murphy

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

There being a quorum present, and adequate and proper notice of the meeting having been given, the meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m.

**2. WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS**

Jo Lynn Otero welcomed the attendees to the AAFCO Current Issues and Outreach Committee (CIOC) midyear meeting.

**3. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (TAN) WORK GROUP UPDATE**

**On a motion by Kristen Green and seconded by Alan Keller, it was resolved to accept the TAN Work Group final report as presented. Motion carried.**

Jo Lynn Otero noted that the TAN Report was e-mailed to the Committee members on November 22, 2024 and uploaded to SharePoint. No comments were made on the report from the Committee prior to or during the meeting.

**4. AAFCO ONE-PAGE FLYER**

**On a motion by Kristen Green and seconded by Alan Keller, it was resolved to replace the one-page sheet with the video and adjust the Strategic Plan accordingly. Motion carried.**

Bethany McAnulty reported that the Strategic Plan Work Group had created a one-page information sheet but later determined that the video produced by Philosophy Communication was sufficient for the Strategic Plan. The Work Group recommended that the Strategic Affairs Committee update the Strategic Plan to incorporate the video instead of the one-page information sheet.

## **5. CIOC/PHILOSOPHY WORKGROUP UPDATES**

Jo Lynn Otero noted that Philosophy Communication was unable to attend the meeting but reported that AAFCO communication efforts have been effective, and the new e-commerce site is performing well. She encouraged AAFCO Committee leads to contact her or Austin Therrell for communication support from Philosophy Communication.

## **6. NEW BUSINESS**

### **6.1 Industry Updates**

#### **6.1.1 National Grain and Feed Association (NGFA)**

Berit Linehan Foss from the NGFA announced that she has replaced Dave Fairfield as the NGFA representative on the CIOC following his retirement.

#### **6.1.2 Pet Food Institute (PFI)**

Betsy Flores reported that the PFI Label Laboratory will be held in February, 2025 to provide industry training and ensure adherence to pet food label modernization guidelines.

#### **6.1.3 American Feed Industry Association (AFIA)**

Louise Calderwood from AFIA expressed appreciation to the Food and Drug Administration for its participation in the Animal Food Ingredient Consultation (AFIC). She highlighted several staffing changes at AFIA: Megan Dicks was hired as the Director of Membership Affairs, Mallory Gains was promoted to Director of Global Affairs, and Ivy Torres was promoted to Manager of Global Affairs.

She then reviewed upcoming educational opportunities:

- AFIA 600 course: Offered twice annually, with the first offering scheduled for March 11, 2025, to April 15, 2025.
- AFIA 500 course, *Fundamentals of Feed Manufacturing*: Offered quarterly.
- In-person PCQI training: Scheduled in Nashville from July 15, 2025, to July 17, 2025. AFIA also offers this training upon request year-round.

#### **6.1.4 National Animal Supplemental Council (NASC)**

Bill Bookout from NASC and APPA noted that Austin Therrell will present at the NASC annual conference in April, 2025. APPA is developing regulatory and educational webinar updates. AAFCO and FDA will be consulted for suggested topics, including AFIC, and potential speakers.

### **6.1.5 North American Renderers Association (NARA)**

Charles Starkey from NARA stated that the association plans to introduce courses on laboratory methods, analytical methods, and food safety. CICO members were invited to attend the International Production and Processing Expo (IPPE) meeting scheduled from January 29-30, 2025, in Atlanta.

## **6.2 Adding Subcommittees**

### **6.2.1 Industry Relations and Consumer Relations Subcommittees**

Austin Therrell explained that in the fall of 2024, the Board and Committee Chairs met to review the Committees and are scheduled to meet the week of January 27, 2025, to vote on proposed structural changes. The Board has recommended adding two subcommittees under the CIOC: the Industry Relations Subcommittee and the Consumer Relations Subcommittee to provide forums for industry and consumer advocates, respectively, to discuss updates. CIOC members interested in joining either subcommittee were encouraged to contact Jo Lynn Otero or Bethany McAnulty.

## **6.3 Update on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A(H5N1) Virus**

Jenny Murphy from the FDA provided an update on H5N1, noting that the strain has been circulating in the United States since March 2024, with seasonal variance. In recent months, cases of H5N1 have been confirmed in domestic and large cats, most of which have succumbed to the virus. The severity of the outbreak is high, with many unanswered questions.

Although the science is still evolving, current evidence suggests that the primary route of exposure is through the consumption of food. As of January 17, 2025, the FDA announced that specific manufacturers of cat and dog foods, as well as those using uncooked or unpasteurized poultry- or cattle-derived materials, must reanalyze their food safety plan within 90 days to address H5N1 as a known or foreseeable hazard. However, it was noted that the FDA lacks the authority to mandate preventative controls.

The floor was open to questions. Cathy Alinovi requested that the regulatory community ensure that an active virus is isolated from any unopened food package to ensure accurate testing. Jenny Murphy from FDA highlighted that while the PCR test is useful as a screening tool, a virus isolation test is necessary to confirm whether the virus is active.

## **6.4 AAFCO Name Change**

Austin Therrell explained that the Board was considering changing AAFCO's name, with "Association of Animal Food Control Officials" being one option. The name change discussion stems from considerations related to international membership and AAFCO's current bylaws.

Committee members reflected on previous discussions about a potential name change, noting that a similar proposal was brought to the Strategic Affairs Committee approximately 10 years ago but was not approved. Several factors were highlighted for consideration, including:

- The term "feed" is required by other jurisdictions for animal-related matters.
- A name change might require adjustments to regulations and legislation.
- AAFCO's core mission remains rooted in animal feed.

The Committee also suggested that the Board consider ensuring the majority of AAFCO's membership is from the United States.

**The Committee decided to create an AAFCO Name Change Work Group: Josh Arbaugh, Cathy Alinovi, Deborah Jones, Bill Bookout, Austin Therrell, Darrell Clinton, Tim Weigner, Bethany McAnulty, Jo Lynn Otero**

**6.5 New AAFCO Members**

Jo Lynn Otero asked first-time AAFCO members to stand and the Committee welcomed them to AAFCO.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

It was agreed that there was no further business to transact; the meeting closed at 1:47 p.m.

**DISCLAIMER**

The above minutes should be used as a summary of the motions passed and issues discussed at the meeting. This document shall not be considered a verbatim copy of every word spoken at the meeting.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## CIOC TAN Workgroup Report

### Recommendation:

The workgroup recommends that the CIOC committee accept the final workgroup report and initiate action to establish the AAFCO Technical Assistance Network (TAN) as described below:

- The TAN review group should initially consist of Austin Therrell, Jo Lynn Otero, Alan Keller, David Fairfield, Leah Wilkinson.
- This review group will receive submissions through the SharePoint form included with the link below.
  - o <https://forms.office.com/r/rNrCKhdcbM>
- The group will work as expeditiously as possible to answer all questions and keep accurate accounts of responses and answers.
- Questions addressed by the TAN should be regulatory in scope and related to interpretations of the AAFCO Model Bill, Model Regulations, Definitions, or Guidelines.

### Charge:

To establish a new AAFCO Technical Assistance Network (TAN)

1. This topic originated from conversations with several trade associations around the potential PFI PURR Act proposal in 2024.
2. A TAN might provide a more formalized structure for interpretations than the listserv
3. A TAN would need to consist of individuals with extensive state and AAFCO experience that can provide feedback in a timely manner
4. Interpretations would not be legally binding, strictly AAFCO interpretation about an issue or conflict
5. Discussion:
  - a. For further discussion: Incorporating this in the Model Bill as a mediation step for states and industry to utilize – decided not to proceed forward.
  - b. Concerns: Responses shouldn't be binding. Do not want to speak on behalf of AAFCO, but rather provide guidance.

### Workgroup Members:

Dave Fairfield, NGFA

Emily Helmes, ETA

Austin Therrell, AAFCO

Alan Keller, Iowa Dept. Ag

Matthew Gerths, MN Dept. Ag

Jo Lynn Otero, NM Dept. Ag

### Call #1 Notes – (5/20/24)

- Should be a broad TAN that could be used by both industry and regulators
  - o This would create a larger pool of volunteers to assist in answering questions
- Should field questions that are regulatory in nature, not scientific
- Could move answers to a commonly asked questions page on the website
- Workflow could be similar to the CFI review group with SharePoint
- Review group should consist of industry/regulators – 5 members + investigators and advisors as needed
  - o Maybe involve new members instead of “seasoned” ones.
- Guidance for questions:
  - o Questions should be regulatory in nature

- What are you hoping to gain/change from this question?
- What is your goal in asking the question?
- Maybe provide a “not in scope” answer if questions aren’t appropriate
- FDA TAN may not have many filters
- Capture contact information
- No anonymous submissions
- No confidential information

**Call #2 Notes – (6/21/24)**

- Review group: Austin Therrell, Jo Lynn, Otero, Alan Keller,
- The intent is to set the SharePoint form up in the same way as the current CFI submission process.
  - All review group members should be notified when a submission is made and have access to add comments, etc.
- The review group should create an internal SME list as needed to use as a resource for future review group members.
- The review group will need to consider how to handle different viewpoints or dissenting opinions within the group and sometimes provide a robust response.

**Call #3 Notes – (11/18/24)**

- <https://forms.office.com/r/rNrCKhdcbM>
- TAN Members: Austin Therrell, Jo Lynn Otero, Alan Keller, David Fairfield, Leah Wilkinson
- Work on setting the responses up on the backend of SharePoint. (Austin task)
- Confirmation of details above and final recommendation.