



Education & Training Committee Report
2026 AAFCO Midyear Meeting
January 22, 2026, 8:00 – 9:30 AM (CT), New Orleans, LA

Committee Recommendations

None.

Board Recommendations

None.

Committee Participants

Members Present: Daniel Zangari (Co-Chair) – CO, Marissa Kost (Co-Chair) – NC, Blaine Brown – IN, Vanessa Capiz – AZ, Jason Fields – AL, Jennifer Godwin – FDA, Holly Jewell – SC, Landon Kidd – UT, Kevin Klommmhaus – FDA, Tiffany Leschishin – MN, Bethany McAnulty – TN, Samantha Moran-Defty – CA, Jo Lynn Otero – NM, Taliaa Pendergrass – MO, Jim True – KY, Pablo Viramontes – NM, Rebecca Weaver – GA, Tim Weigner – Life Member

Advisors Present: Bill Bookout – APPA & NASC, Louise Calderwood – AFIA, Dr. Berit Foss – NGFA, Charles Starkey – NARA, Amy Tryon – PFI

Virtual Attendees: Julie Berry – ME, Danielle Borchert – MN, Kimberly Hull – FDA, Traci Kelm – FDA, Rick Manthei – MN, Kate Nelson – CT, Tory Woods – NM

Others Present: Debra Brasel – KS, Jessica Gore – NC, Leah Wilkinson – AFIA

Committee Report

Committee Activities:

None.

Subcommittee Activities

None.

Committee Minutes

Dan Zangari, Co-Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:01 AM (CT). Introductions were made, and attendance was taken.

Training Availability Updates

- FDA OTED Training Update – Traci Kelm & Kimberly Hull - FDA
 - Traci Kelm and Kimberly Hull (FDA OTED) reported that FDA OTED will launch this year's animal food series at the end of January 2026, per the following schedule:
 - Current Good Manufacturing Practice (cGMP) for Animal Food Regulators Course VM102 – end of January 2026
 - Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy Inspection Course VM209 – February 2026
 - Medicated Feed Inspection Course VM214 – February 2026
 - Veterinary Feed Directive Inspection Course VM230 – March 2026
 - Preventive Controls for Animal Food Course VM220 – April 2026
 - All courses will be virtual, except PC for Animal Foods, which will be held in person in Minneapolis, MN (April 20-24); the courses are open to regulators only.
 - BSE, Medicated Feed, and VFD courses will utilize the standard enrollment request form submission process through LearnED. OTED's self-enrollment program is expected to launch in time for the PC course enrollment in April 2026. OTED is currently testing the self-nomination process for VM102 cGMP. If any participants experience issues, they should contact Traci Kelm



- or Kimberly Hull.
- Traci Kelm noted that this is the only animal food series scheduled for 2026, so participants planning to take any Medicated Feed, BSE, PC, or VFD course were encouraged to check prerequisites, as there is a limited window to take select courses this year. VM209W100, VM214W1000, VM230W100 are no longer prerequisites for their corresponding trainings. They are now offered as web-based training instead.
- Regulators are now required to confirm via attestation that they have taken basic animal food training, as required by their agency officer program. The attestation is labeled under courses as VM7000A, though it is not a course. The FD7000A attestation is also accepted as an equivalent to VM7000A
- AAFCO Basic Inspector Training Seminar (BITS) Update – Blaine Brown, IN
 - BITS 2026 – September 2026 (South Carolina)
 - Blaine Brown reported that the target timing and location for BITS is late September 2026, in South Carolina. Clemson University’s regulatory association will host the seminar.
 - The team is also exploring how it could offer the seminar to non-regulatory participants in response to Industry’s expressed interest last year for a better understanding of field inspection processes.
- AAFCO Advanced Inspector Training Seminar (AITS) Update – Jessica Gore, NC
 - AITS 2026 – June 2026 (South Carolina)
 - Blaine Brown reported that the planned timing and location for AITS is during the first two weeks of June 2026, in South Carolina. Announcement of the exact date and location is pending. The seminar may be open to any regulatory stakeholders who are interested in participating. BITS is not a prerequisite for attendance.

Sub-Committee Updates

- Feed Administrators Seminar Sub-Committee – Kate Nelson - CT
 - Kate Nelson (Connecticut Department of Agriculture) reported that the annual Feed Administrators Seminar (FAS) will be held from April 20 to 24, 2026, at the Water’s Edge Resort & Spa in Westbrook, CT. The seminar will cover a range of feed-related topics, including emergency response, AAFCO updates, sampling, and laboratory. She encouraged anyone with topic suggestions to email them to a FAS subcommittee member.
 - FAS 2027 will be held in Connecticut.
 - FAS sub-committee will be meeting the first week of February.
 - **Goal:** Draft an agenda to be posted to begin travel authorizations.
 - Marissa Kost noted that the FAS subcommittee is searching for a replacement Chair, as Rick Manthei has retired from the position. The Chair’s role is primarily to provide additional project management support to the host state as needed, to help ensure a successful event. Those interested in the Subcommittee Chair position were advised to contact Marissa Kost or Dan Zangari. Rick Manthei also shared remarks about his experience in the role and welcomed questions offline.

Workshop Calendar Request Updates

- Austin Therrell noted that AAFCO can explore providing certificates for virtual completion of CE workshops to support participants’ CEU documentation requirements.
- SRIS Workshop Update
 - Austin Therrell reported that nearly 220 people attended AAFCO’s Scientific Review for Ingredient Submission (SRIS) introductory workshop, held on January 19, 2026. The SRIS program is now live, and its website at <https://sris.k-state.edu> contains additional details. AAFCO will plan another introductory workshop during the 2026 Pet Food Forum for those who were unable to attend in January.
- Investigation Workshop Reminder
 - Austin Therrell reminded participants that the Investigations Workshop is scheduled for January 22, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. Questions should be directed to Dan Zangari, Marissa Kost, or Ashlee-Rose



Ferguson.

- Medicated Feed Labeling Workshop – 2026 Annual Meeting (San Diego, CA)
 - Jamie Good (ND) reported that the full-day Medicated Feed Labeling Workshop will be held on August 25, 2026, as part of AAFCO's 2026 Annual Meeting. The workshop is open to all and not restricted to investigators, though it will likely require separate registration.
 - Dan Zangari (CO) encouraged participants to provide feedback on suggested training topics to the FDA.

Workgroup Updates

- AAFCO Continuing Education Work Group – Dan Zangari (CO)
 - Dan Zangari provided an update on the Continuing Education Work Group through a presentation detailing the charge of the work group, work that has been identified and completed so far, results of a survey sent to states in December 2025, and next steps for the work group. A real-time survey was created for feedback after the presentation, available via a QR code to attendees.
 - The work group's next steps are to prioritize training topics, based on collected feedback and state and inspector needs, and begin developing a training seminar for Board proposal.
 - Laura Scott (CFIA) asked about the work group's intended scope, clarifying whether the professional training is meant to be continuing education succeeding BITS and AITS or a standalone course. Dan Zangari (CO) clarified that the training is meant to be a standalone seminar for professionals, with a different focus and target audience than BITS and AITS.
 - Wendy Powell (MI) noted that the work group considered ideas ranging from a third seminar option to a menu of learning options varying by region, method, and topic as a structured "curriculum" for completing this new seminar. She underscored the need for stakeholder feedback and encouraged participants to share with the work group.
 - A comment was made that there are many advanced inspectors who did not complete BITS or AITS, and asked whether they could be grandfathered in. Dan Zangari (CO) responded that yes, the committee has discussed and explored this option.

New Business

- **RLTS Course Evaluation Work Group**
 - The FDA's Regulatory and Laboratory Training System (RLTS) for Human and Animal Food provides training and education to support Integrated Food Safety System (IFSS) partners and strengthen competencies among the integrated workforce. Trish Dunn (IN) added that Industry and regulators can register for need-specific training from a third-party through RLTS.
 - Marissa Kost (NC) noted that Kevin Klomhaus (FDA) has joined the RLTS Course Evaluation work group, and she encouraged others to contact her if they are interested in joining, as the group needs more members.
 - Marissa Kost also noted that the Q-score sheets are available and can be used as a companion to the VM courses. The C-score sheets are still in development.
- **Strategic Plan (2026-2030) – Education and Training Committee (ETC) Tasks**
 - Marissa Kost (NC) encouraged committee members to review the new strategic plan and consider how they can provide support.

Other Business

- **ETC's Role in AAFCO Tool Education**
 - Berit Foss (NGFA) inquired whether the ETC is charged to help guide implementation of other AAFCO committee tools, such as the Inspector Guidance Tool and Hazard Guide. Dan Zangari (CO) and Marissa Kost (NC) responded that the ETC may have an opportunity to support training and education on the practical application of basic utility tools, but more advanced tools that require an SME may be out of scope. They plan to discuss opportunities with the Committee and the CE work



group. Bethany McNulty (TN) volunteered the Current Issues and Outreach Committee (CIOC) to assist.

- **Draft Seminar Agenda**

- Rick Manthei (MN) reported that the Seminar Committee is meeting in early February 2026 to draft an agenda for the FAS. While the Committee does not expect to finalize the agenda until late February or March 2026, it can provide an early draft upon request to those who need an agenda to begin making travel arrangements.

Adjourn 8:58 AM (CT).

Dan Zangari called for a motion to adjourn. Bethany McNulty moves/Second: Kevin Klommhaus.

Action Items

Responsible	Item	Action	Timing / Status
WG(s): Dan Zangari, Tim Weigner, Jim True, Marissa Kost, Ashlee-Rose Ferguson*, Kate Nelson, Taliaa Pendergrass, Tory Woods, Julie Berry*, Kevin Klommhaus, Wendy Powell*, Holly Jewell, Berit Foss, Ryan Morgan* *Non-ETC member	Continuing Education & Scholarships	Choose a lead and begin discussions regarding charge(s) from the work group(s). 1. Implement something to follow BITS and AITS as regular AAFCO business. 2. Refer development of AAFCO course on feed regulation & inspection for formal ag institutions to use in their curriculum to Board for consideration.	Annual 2026 – continue to update on WG(s) progress
WG: Kimberly Hull (lead), Marissa Kost, Kevin Klommhaus, Jennifer Godwin, Jacob Fleig	Course Curriculum Update	WG needs to reconvene to update ComplianceWire links for AAFCO document (Job Aid-AFRPS). Also consider adding column to assist with defining curriculum for type of inspection (AFRPS 2.3.1.1.1 & 2.3.1.1.2).	Annual 2026 – present and vote to approve updates
WG: Marissa Kost, George Ferguson , Jo Lynn Otero, Jim True, Jacob Fleig , Danielle Borchert	Leadership Training	1. UPDATE: Paused pending outcome of IFSS/RLTS outcome. 2. ON HOLD 3. ON HOLD 4. ON HOLD 5. ON HOLD	ON HOLD – 2026 (launch expected)
WG: Nathan Price, Kate Nelson, Eric Brady , Scott Absher , Marissa Kost, Kevin Klommhaus	Training Endorsement Policy	Send updated SOP (additional guidance document) to committee for e-vote. No changes to OP Table 5 or Training Endorsement Policy.	June 2026 – eVote
WG: Marissa Kost, Dan Zangari, Kimberly Hull, FDA representative (TBD)	RLTS Course Evaluations	Score OTED courses applicable for feed inspections (VM courses and courses required for contract inspections), BITS and AITS for alignment with the RLTS curriculum standards. After self-assessment, submit the score sheets for verification. Q-Score sheet available; C-Score sheet being developed.	TBD

Minutes approved 3/20/2026. 15 voting in the affirmative.



Appendix: ETC Strategic Planning

Objective 1.2 - Identify and develop organizational training for AAFCO leaders (i.e.: ED, Board, Committee Chairs, FASS)

Responsible	Task / Deliverable	Timeframe
Board WG w/ Committee Chairs (PFC, LMSC, EIC, ETC)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide improved orientation for organizational leaders <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop a checklist (ED has existing material) for duties and deadlines. Leverage the OP info into a cheat sheet <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ensure the checklist/cheat sheet is provided to leadership members ii. Reach out to newer committee chairs for input b. Provide orientation on Committee Chair/ED/Board/FASS expectations, roles, responsibilities, interactions, reporting to Board and other Committees c. Identify touch points – identify committee deliverables and flow/assign to all committees and Board <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Current committee chairs develop SOPs for each committee <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop a template – SAC responsible ii. Develop committee specific orientation on roles, Subcommittees, advisory boards, etc. d. Identify and assign leadership mentors as part of leadership framework (orientation/onboarding/ongoing) 	Midyear 2027
ETC (lead), SAC, solicit additional chairs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Offer training for new and existing organization leaders [Derived from 2023-25 Strategic Plan] <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify core training list for committee chairs, Board, ED and FASS <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Identify and utilize an off the shelf platform b. Identify work that has already been done and compiled <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Identify additional activities specific to the Board c. Develop a draft template compiling training needed for AAFCO leadership. Consider various delivery modalities. Identify process to determine needs/wants d. Identify and include ongoing training for leadership enhancement <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Including ongoing organizational specific professional development (eg Robert's Rules, Meeting Management, Conflict Management, AAFCO Bylaw Training, Committee Guidelines) e. Develop a checklist and track implementation of training 	Continuous to Annual 2030 a-c Annual 2027 d-f 2028+)

Objective 2.1 - Develop and retain animal feed regulators (regulatory and lab) including training resources

Responsible	Task (Deliverable)	Timeframe
AFC (lead), ETC, Philosophy/CIOC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore and create a roadmap for members to use to reach out to their local academic institutions to promote their reg/lab programs [Include consideration of outreach to American/Canadian Society Animal Science] <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop supporting materials/templates 	Annual 2027



CIOC (lead)/Philosophy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Implement roadmap <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Advertise/promote to members b. Push AAFCO jobs board to members to use – moved down for point 1 c. Survey to evaluate effectiveness 	Annual 2028
LMSC + ISC, ETC (lead)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Put together “professional development” documents highlighting AAFCO resources geared towards inspectors and laboratories, promote to members and evaluate effectiveness 	Midyear 2027
ETC (lead), ISC ED	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Promote and use internal resources involving members as guest speakers to address specific topics to encourage professional development [continuing education, retention, webinars, education about AAFCO]. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. AAFCO to potentially supply some resources [cooperative agreement] b. Include more soft skill speakers (to support retention) at AAFCO Meetings (including Seminars, Workshops) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 2 years b. Immediately

Objective 3.1 - Increase participation in Animal Feed Safety Systems.

AFSS = AFRPS, State adoption of FSMA + Model Bill + Regulations, FDA Contracts, IFSS (PFP), NASDA PCAF Framework, RRT and others as identified

Responsible	Task (Deliverable)	Timeframe
Model Bill – AFRPS SC (lead)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research and compile (communication + outreach) data on member participation in AFSS 	Annual 2026
Model Bill – AFRPS SC (lead), PFC, ETC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Identify gaps and areas for improvement. Assess what is influencing non-participation and what AAFCO can do to foster/improve participation. 	Annual 2027

Objective 3.2 - Advance and support implementation of integrated laboratory technology, methods, quality systems, and collaboration in Animal Feed Safety Systems.

Lab = ISO 17025, AFRPS Standard 10, PTP, FERN and others as identified

Responsible	Task (Deliverable)	Timeframe
LMSC (lead), PTP, Model Bill – AFRPS SC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research and compile (communication + outreach) data on member participation in AFSS 	Annual 2026
LMSC (lead), Model Bill – AFRPS SC, ETC, PTP	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Identify gaps and areas for improvement. Assess what is influencing non-participation and what AAFCO can do to foster/improve participation. 	Annual 2027