

Welcome and USDA-NIFA & FSMA Regional Center Updates

Keith Schneider:

Dr. Schneider's research focus has been on food safety, with particular emphasis on produce safety and food defense. The University of Florida is heavily involved in improving the quality and safety of fresh fruits and vegetables. Dr. Schneider's program has been influenced by an increase in the number and frequency of foodborne illnesses associated with the consumption of raw fruits and vegetables. His on-going research program has examined etiologic factors, contamination mechanisms, and intervention strategies, as well as the production of educational materials.

Elizabeth Newbold:

Elizabeth Newbold is the assistant director of the Northeast Center to Advance Food Safety (NECAFS). She coordinates the day-to-day activities of the regional center and oversees project development and implementation.

Ellen Johnsen:

Ellen Johnsen is an Extension Education Specialist at Iowa State University. She works for the North Central Region Center. She joined the project in 2017 and has been grateful that the Center has received FSOP funding several times.

Sam Kilgore:

Sam got her bachelor's degree in food science and technology from Oregon State University. After graduating, she took a faculty research assistant position with Dr. Joy Waite-Cusic at OSU doing food safety and food microbiology research for 5 years. She has been in her current role as the WRCEFS coordinator for a year now but will be leaving soon to work in Joy's lab doing research again in July.

Session #1

Carla Schwan:

Carla is a food microbiologist and director of the National Center for Home Food Preservation. Her research and Extension work focus on emerging issues in home food preservation and the connection between food safety and food access.

Kantha Channaiah:

Dr. Channaiah is currently working as Assistant Professor and State Extension Specialist at the University of Missouri, Columbia, MO.

Patrik Banerjee:

Dr. Pratik Banerjee is an Associate Professor and Food Safety Extension Specialist in the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Manreet Bhullar:

Manreet Bhullar is an Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist in Produce Safety in the Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources at Kansas State University. His research primarily focuses on agricultural water quality, including testing and treatment methods, with a particular emphasis on the application of ultraviolet (UV) light technologies across the fresh produce supply chain.

Yaohua (Betty) Feng:

Dr. Yaohua Betty Feng is dedicated to reducing foodborne illness and enhancing food safety through effective risk assessment, messaging, and communication. Her research program employs a socioecological approach to exploring cultural, social, and environmental factors that influence food safety behaviors.

Matt Bengé:

Dr. Matt Bengé is an associate professor in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication (AEC). Originally from Yulee, FL, Dr. Bengé is a three-time alumnus of the University of Florida.

Taylor O'Bannon:

Taylor O'Bannon is the State Specialized Agent-Food Safety based out of the Citrus Research and Education Center in Lake Alfred, Florida. She has developed a broad foundation of food safety knowledge ranging from meats, animal food, and produce.

Session #2:

Amanda Kinchla:

Amanda Kinchla is an Extension Professor of Food Science at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where she leads applied research and outreach programs focused on food safety and product development.

Emily Round:

Emily is the Technical Assistance Manager at New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, and she is dedicated to supporting new farmers on their journey to establish thriving and economically viable farms.

Marcus Roberson:

As a Bronx native and former Army logistician, Marcus has spent 12 years mastering strategy and efficiency—skills that proved invaluable when, near 50, he took on farming. Now in his eighth season as a **Certified Naturally Grown** farmer, industrial hemp grower, and beginner farmer trainer, Marcus champions soil health, sustainability, and stewardship, proving that farming isn't just about food—it's about healing the earth, strengthening ecosystems, and empowering people.

Session #3:

Razieh Farzad:

Dr. Razieh Farzad is an Assistant Professor and Seafood Safety Extension Specialist with the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences and Florida Sea Grant. Her work focuses on sustainable seafood systems, including aquaculture nutrition, seafood safety, and cellular agriculture.

Abigail Snyder:

Abby Snyder is an associate professor of microbial food safety at Cornell University. One area of her work focuses on low moisture food safety, including translational approaches to help small and mid-sized businesses.

Nettie Freshour:

Dr. Nettie Puglisi Freshour, a licensed and registered dietitian currently serves as Teaching Professor and Director of the Graduate Dietetic Internship and Graduate program coordinator for the School of Agriculture and Food Systems.

Ellen Shumaker:

Dr. Ellen Shumaker is the Director of Outreach for the Safe Plates program at NC State University. She designs, implements, and evaluates food safety messages throughout the farm to fork continuum.

Session #4:

Alexis Hamilton:

Alexis Hamilton is an Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist in the Department of Food Science and Technology at Virginia Tech. She works with the food industry to identify food safety risk mitigation strategies and develop educational programming for food processors and other value-added producers.

Kristen Gibson:

Dr. Kristen Gibson is a Professor in the Department of Food Science and Director of the Center for Food Safety at the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture.

Lynette Johnston:

Lynette's interests include working with NC food processors and fresh produce growers to reduce microbial risks through a comprehensive education and extension program, with a particular focus on the implementation of FSMA regulations.

Nicole Bell:

Nicole A. Bell, dubbed The Food Safety Lady, provides food safety education and outreach to small-scale farmers and limited resource operations for the Mississippi Association of Cooperatives

Angela Walla:

Dr. Angela Walla is a Professor at Texas Tech University in the Department of Animal and Food Sciences. As a trained microbiologist and food scientist, her research focuses on developing intervention strategies to control and prevent foodborne pathogens from entering the food supply.

Kristin Woods:

Dr. Woods has 26 years of experience in food systems. She began her career in the food processing industry followed by many years in university extension developing training programs for small farmers on food safety, regulations, and improving profitability.

Terri Lewis:

Terri Sherell Lewis is a passionate food safety advocate, beginning farmer, and current mid-career intern with the Tuskegee University Cooperative Extension Program, where she collaborates with Deep South Food Alliance, and a member of The United Christian Community Association.

Jennifer Stone:

Jennifer Stone leads the instructional design team. In this role, she manages the instructional design process, including capacity planning, assignment of duties, and quality control of work. She works with her team and course instructors to design and develop course materials, create new courses and programs, and enhance existing course offerings.

Laurel Dunn:

Laurel L. Dunn is an Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist in the Department of Food Science and Technology at the University of Georgia (UGA). Her program focuses on pre- and post-harvest interventions to reduce the incidence of produce-associated foodborne illness, and she provides food safety education to Georgia's produce industry.