



Food & Beverage Committee

Summary of Conference Call Meeting
February 13, 2017, 2:00 pm – 2:45 pm US ET

Roll Call

Committee Members Present

Chairman, Paul Pederson, Polymer Logistics

Laura Schneider, Black Forest

Tom Letizia, Hobart

Lyle O'Banion, Kroger

Bob Klimko, ORBIS

Michelle Fay, StopWaste

Susan Heil, Tosca

Committee Members Not Present

John McGill, CHEP

John McCurdy, Coroplast

Kevin McTavish, Drader

Arnold Lopez, Polymer Logistics

Susan Atwater, IFCO Systems

Bob Albright, Schoeller Allibert

Joe Laxamana, Sonoco ThermoSafe

Greg Gorski, Tosca

RPA Staff: Tim Debus, Sherrie Terry

Agenda Item 1: RPA in 2017 - Committee Projects

Mr. Debus reviewed the committee objective in 2017 to take on and complete 2 – 3 projects that will represent and impact the common business interests of RPA members in the food and beverage market sectors. The projects should deliver content in the form of best practices, standards, research, data development, and/or promotional material, for example. To build organizational support for the advancement of the agenda, Mr. Paul Pederson was previously appointed by the RPA Chairman of the Board as chair of the committee in 2017. In addition, the RPA budget in 2017 includes an increase of funds for additional resources necessary to complete projects.

In 2016, the committee advanced discussion on key topics and the groundwork for project development. Accomplishments included a comprehensive literary review of microbial cross-contamination and a draft test design for an Aerobic Plate Count (APC) correlation study. Furthermore, RPA published articles on the safe use of reusable packaging in food applications and responded to claims made by the corrugated industry. Documents related to the committee's work are available for download in the "members only" section of the RPA website.

Agenda Item 2: Food Safety

Chairman Pederson provided background on the competitive activity involving the topic of food safety and the increased attention due to the implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). He discussed the broader purpose of the RPA committee's work to develop data in support of the real-world risk, or lack thereof, associated with the cleaning and sanitation of reusable plastic containers for perishable commodities. Chairman Pederson described how the proposed APC correlation study would provide evidence that the presence and levels of microbial counts on reusable packaging can be in line with natural microbial amounts on food and do not reflect or indicate an actual risk from pathogen contamination.

In addition, Chairman Pederson discussed the benefit of having an industry database in which individual members can supply to RPA historical results from microbial testing in their operations. RPA can aggregate the data into a single generic database that can quantify the safe record and absence of pathogens following industry standard cleaning and sanitation processes.



Food & Beverage Committee

Agenda Item 3: Food Marketing

Mr. Debus updated the committee on activity from the corrugated industry in their promotion of corrugated boxes versus reusable packaging through their “Corrugated Delivers” and “Natural Choice” campaigns. The corrugated industry has been competitively positioning their boxes against reusable plastic containers (RPCs) in the fresh produce market by developing data and marketing messages in the areas of “cost, appeal, safety and sustainability.” Knowing that real-world facts and experience can counter the corrugated industry claims and present a favorable position for reusable packaging in this market, this committee can lead a RPA marketing campaign that creatively communicates our industry’s messaging. A smaller working group of member marketing professionals in this space will initiate the development of a RPA plan for review and consideration by the broader committee.

Mr. Klimko commented on the importance that RPA marketing messages are rooted in data. RPA statements should be based on the abundance of facts that demonstrate how reusable packaging offers superior product performance. The committee agreed on making sure that any messaging can be backed up by data.

Agenda Item 4: Industry Events

Trade shows and conferences for the perishable food and beverage industries offer convenient and valued-added venues for the committee to hold in-person meetings. The United Fresh convention in July in Chicago and the Produce Marketing Association convention in October in New Orleans present meeting opportunities in 2017, for example. RPA staff will investigate and develop a meeting tie-in and communicate back to the committee for planning.

Agenda Item 5: New Business

No other topics or issues were raised for committee discussion.

Chairman Pederson requested that the committee meet via conference calls monthly, and such calls will be recurring on the second Monday of each month. 3:00 pm ET was recommended as the call start time, which was supported by the committee including members on the west coast. Therefore, the next committee call will be on Monday, March 13, at 3:00 pm ET.

In summary, the current committee project list for 2017 includes the following:

Project Name	Description	Next Action
APC Correlation Study	Conduct a study to determine and explain comparative levels of microbial presence on RPCs with correlating results for acceptance and risk.	Version 2 of the study design and protocol to include the third-party testing organization.
Industry Database of Microbial Test Results	Establish a database of historical microbial test results in which inputs from member companies can be aggregated into broader industry data.	Build database with defined fields that can be populated with member inputs.
Food Marketing Campaign	Develop creative messaging and materials that can be used to promote reusable packaging for food applications.	A sub-working group will be formed to develop a project proposal.

With no further discussion, the conference call concluded and the meeting adjourned.