



Food & Beverage Committee

Summary of Conference Call Meeting
March 24, 2016, 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm US ET

Roll Call

Committee Members Present

Kevin McTavish, Drader
Paul Pederson, IFCO
Phil Davis, Kroger
Lyle O'Banion, Kroger
Bob Albright, Schoeller Allibert
Michelle Fay, StopWaste
Greg Gorski, Tosca
Steve Teclaw, Tosca
RPA Staff: Tim Debus

Committee Members Not Present

Laura Schneider, Black Forest
John McGill, CHEP
John McCurdy, Coroplast
Bob Klimko, ORBIS
Susie Cuevas, Polymer Logistics
Tony Mosco, Polymer Logistics
Joe Laxamana, Sonoco ThermoSafe

Agenda Item 1: Summary of Call on February 11

Mr. Debus reviewed the notes from the committee's first call on February 11, highlighting the objective of the committee, priority work areas involving sustainable agriculture, food safety and food waste, and the projects under consideration from the initial discussion. Two project outlines were developed for review: a short-term project on sanitation testing; and a long-term project on cleaning agents used in wash operations. Mr. Debus recalled the committee's sentiment that RPA pursue actions leading to data and proactive messaging about the safe and effective use of reusable packaging in food applications.

Agenda Item 2: Review of Project Outlines

Two project outlines were on the agenda for discussion, and both involved continuous improvement on the *RPA Guidelines and Best Practices for the Safe Use of Returnable Containers in Food Supply Chains*. First under consideration was the design of an industry standard testing program for the effective monitoring, measurement and verification of safe microbial presence on post-washed reusable containers prior to their redeployment to packaging operations. The current *RPA Guidelines* recommend the adoption of a "comprehensive microbiological testing regime" but do not address what this entails or offer further guidance in development. The proposed project would develop written industry standards for evaluating the microbial count and type and recommended courses of action based on results.

Mr. Gorski suggested that RPA take another step forward by first determining an acceptable level of Aerobic Plate Count (APC) on containers used for food, both reusable and one-way packaging materials. He explained that the industry lacks evidence and meaning behind the presence of microbial counts in sampling, and such benchmarking and baseline understanding would be most beneficial as a more immediate and needed step prior to any guidelines.

Mr. Albright asked whether data or studies already exist that could assist the committee in this area. Mr. Pederson replied that there is a wide discrepancy of information and data among advisory and government organizations on what is considered an acceptable APC result for food contact substances. He supported Mr. Gorski's project idea for an "APC correlation study" that can provide meaning behind



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results and help to improve the assessment of risk from potential pathogen contamination. The committee agreed that this APC study can be a short-term and valued industry initiative for RPA members.

The second project under consideration was an evaluation of optimal-performing detergents and chemical mixes for the effective cleaning and sanitation of reusable containers. The *RPA Guidelines* recommend their use but do not address the types, specifications or cleaning attributes. The proposed project would create an addendum to the *Guidelines* and list performance criteria and material recommendations based on test results.

Mr. McTavish inquired about the influence of other elements in cleaning such as water temperatures and exposure times. Mr. Pederson commented that data and experience show the critical impact of these elements in replace of or in combination with detergent and chemical use for the most effective cleaning and sanitation of containers.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to prioritize its efforts around the APC study potential and table any immediate work on cleaning agents.

Agenda Item 3: Identification of Priority Projects

The committee refined their project list as follows:

Type	Project Name	Description	Action
Short-Term	APC Correlation Study	Conduct a study to determine and explain comparative levels of microbial presence on food containers with correlating results for acceptance and risk.	RPA to develop a project plan for the committee's review and acceptance.
Short-Term	Sanitation Testing Program	Develop a testing program for the measurement of the effectiveness of cleaning and sanitation of reusable containers for food.	On hold pending APC study. Project outline drafted.
Long-Term	Cleaning Agents	Research and identify optimal-performing chemical products and mixes for the cleaning and sanitation of reusable containers for food.	On hold pending APC study. Project outline drafted.
Ongoing Activity	Food Safety Defense	Pursue proactive messaging to communicate the reusable packaging industry's work and performance on food safety. Consider effective use of social media tools to advance RPA communications.	New RPA article on <i>Guidelines</i> placed in April issue of Food Quality and Safety Magazine.



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Long-Term	Food Waste Reduction	Engage the national discussion on food waste reduction initiatives and join industry coalitions based on the U.S. government's goal of reducing food waste by 50% by 2030.	RPA to investigate collaborative opportunities to promote reusables for food waste reduction initiatives.
Investigate	Global Food Safety Initiatives	Engage the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) and determine involvement and opportunity for reusable packaging.	RPA to inquire with GFSI to determine recommended course of action for the committee's review.

Agenda Item 4: Next Steps and Scheduling

RPA's priority is to advance the committee's test design and arrangement for the APC Correlation Study. The next step is for RPA to provide back to the committee a draft project document for review and feedback.

RPA is looking for an opportunity this year for an in-person committee meeting. Hosting a meeting at the United Fresh-FMI convention during June 20-22 was proposed with favorable feedback from committee members. RPA will explore and communicate this option back to the committee for scheduling.

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