

EVALUATION REPORT

Puerto Rico Conference on Animal and Egg Production Food Safety

August 2002

Purpose

This report presents results of the evaluation of the 2002 Puerto Rico Conference on Animal and Egg Production Food Safety. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess participants' satisfaction with the program and to provide suggestions for future improvements.

Background

Approximately three hundred people attended a two-day Conference on Animal and Food Safety, held July 9-11, 2002 in Puerto Rico. Jointly sponsored by USDA, FDA and the University of Puerto Rico with the goal of presenting HACCP applications in Puerto Rico and Latin America, all sessions were conducted in Spanish with English language translations available for major presentations. Breakout sessions covered the following topics: Poultry and Eggs, Dairy, Beef and Veal, Swine, Sheep and Goats, and Seafood.

Methodology

The evaluation used two written surveys on the overall conference arrangements and the breakout sessions. Both surveys were available in Spanish and English and were completed at the end of the conference on site. Seventy-five participants completed and returned the survey on the overall conference and sixty-seven, the survey on the break-out sessions. Responses were analyzed for overall response, language used and breakout session attended. Unless noted, the findings represent the responses of all attendees.

Key Findings

Overall those attending were very positive about the conference. Most (more than 90%) of the respondents rated the overall program content as excellent or good.

Most also agreed that the conference:

- Was enjoyable,
- met their expectations,
- provided professional development, and
- would influence their practice.

A typical comment was: "Have another symposium next year with the same speakers if they can participate."

Conference Program

- Most of the respondents (> 90%) rated the overall conference content as better than acceptable to excellent and said they would recommend it to others.
- Most (> 90%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the conference provided information that would influence animal production food safety practices and food safety education activities and they plan to attend others.
- Almost 90% rated the presentation quality and presenter preparation as better than acceptable to excellent.
- Most (>90%) rated the registration process and conference support staff as better than acceptable to excellent.
- All who used the translation equipment agreed that the equipment was effective in translating discussion information in a timely manner and was understandable.

Respondents listed the best part of the conference as:

- discussion groups,
- networking with other professionals to learn how they deal with issues, and
- specific presentations such as those by Jose Latorre, Luis Colon, Antonio Padilla, Edgardo Rivera, Miguel Borri-Diaz, Juan Cuellar, and Jose Pantoja.

A common comment was: "Las presentaciones fueron practicamente todas buenas! (All presentations were good!)"

EVALUATION REPORT

Puerto Rico Conference on Animal and Egg Production Food Safety

August 2002

And: "I hope we can continue with this kind of meeting to meet the needs of classes of people involved in farm to table food safety."

The most disappointing aspects of the conference were:

- not enough time for the material,
- not keeping to the schedule, and
- too long days.

A common comment on this topic was: "Trate en lo posible de que los conferenciantes no se excedan del tiempo indicado y comenzar ala hora indicada. (Try, if possible, not to exceed the time allotted and begin on time.)"

Many respondents objected to conference presentations during lunch and some commented unfavorably on the room temperature and food. A typical comment was: "Las charlas en el almuerzo no son productivas! (Talk during lunch is not productive!)"

Recommendations

Respondents provided a number of suggestions for future programs:

- Schedule conference for more than two days with shorter days (less than ten hours).
- Do not include lunch presentations.
- Provide more focus on local concerns.
- Provide more information on specific HACCP applications.
- Include a field training activity.
- Follow-up with a HACCP certification course.
- Encourage more participation by producers, a broader range of inspectors such as restaurant personnel, university personnel and those who work directly on the farm.
- Provide paper copies of presentations.
- Provide list of attendees and contact information.

- Provide preparation guidelines for presenters, session facilitators.

Break-out Sessions

Many respondents (80-90%) enjoyed the sessions, understood the concepts and said that the session improved their understanding. In addition they responded that the session was a good use of their time, the facilitator was organized and used appropriate training methods.

While many (80-90%) were satisfied with the workshop time and date, they were less satisfied with the time allocated and the materials (<70% satisfied).

The main sources for dissatisfaction were inadequate rooms, lack of time and no English translation.

Their reasons for attending specific break-out sessions were that the sessions addressed areas of study or work, they provided increased knowledge, attendees were interested in the topic, and they sought to gain information from another point of view.

Recommendations

Suggestions to improve the break-out sessions included:

- Allow sufficient time for discussion within each break-out session group.
- Provide for smaller groups (ten or less).
- Use local, more practical information.
- Utilize facilitators to limit irrelevant comments and improve organization.
- Provide English translation for break-out sessions.
- Provide room facilities that are adequate for participants.