

Iowa Food Protection Task Force

GENERAL MEETING

NOVEMBER 3, 2025



Department of Inspections,
Appeals, & Licensing



Welcome

MEETING INFO

- ▶ Please add your name and agency to the Chat
- ▶ If you are new to the Task Force, please add your email address to the Chat

ICE BREAKER QUESTION

- ▶ Add your answer to this question in the Chat:

What risky food safety information or videos have you seen on social media that keeps you up at night?

DIAL UPDATE

MERRI CROSS, GRANT COORDINATOR

DIAL Staff Updates

- ▶ Aaron Baack is DIAL's new Interim Director
- ▶ The Food Safety Bureau has 39 permanent full time FTE positions
 - ▶ 23 Food Safety Specialists (inspectors)
 - ▶ 6 Regulatory Program Technical Experts
 - ▶ The rest are support staff (supervisors, managers, licensing, etc.)
- ▶ Part time staff include 3 student interns and 1 Administrative Support Assistant
- ▶ Visit the [State of Iowa Government Directory](#), search for Mark Speltz, use the Team View, and find all Food Safety Bureau staff members.



Last Year's Notable Achievements

- ▶ Added 5 counties to DIAL's regulatory responsibility
- ▶ 10,516 food safety and lodging inspections completed (+4.5% from 2023)
- ▶ Administrative Rules updated for Social and Charitable Gambling and Home Food Processing Establishments
- ▶ Successful coordination of licensing and inspections at the Iowa State Fair and RAGBRAI

Current Fiscal Year

NOTABLE INITIATIVES

- ▶ Update to Food and Lodging Administrative Rules

- ▶ <https://dial.iowa.gov>

- ▶ Modernization of the Bureau's data system

- ▶ Enhanced user experience
 - ▶ Risk level determination and base inspection frequency standardized

RRT UPDATE

THAO SCHLICHTE, RAPID RESPONSE TEAM COORDINATOR

TASK FORCE ADVISORY BOARD UPDATE

BAMBI PRESS, VICE CHAIR



Advisory Board Updates

- Governance Guidelines
 - Drafted and distributed to members
 - Posted on [Task Force Website](#)
- Advisory Board Nominations and Voting
 - Spring 2026 – watch for call for nominations
- Task Force Evaluation Summary High Interest Topics
 - Agricultural products on the farm
 - Food or feed labeling
 - Hydroponic farms

POLL QUESTION

What is your favorite Thanksgiving food to eat?

Freeze-drying and Rehydration: A Panel Discussion

MODERATOR: JAMES S. DICKSON, PH.D.

PANELISTS

Mary-Grace Danao, Research
Associate Professor, University
of Nebraska – Lincoln

Julie Kraling, Retail Program
Manager, DIAL

Ellen Ciarimboli, Director, Retail
Compliance & Food Protection,
Hy-Vee, Inc.

RESOURCES

- ▶ DIAL website:
 - ▶ Cottage Food Fact Sheet, templates, labeling requirements, limitations
 - ▶ Home Food Processing Establishments HFPE License requirements, templates
 - ▶ Training programs approved by DIAL for HFPE operators
- ▶ DIAL Staff:
 - ▶ Kurt Rueber, kurt.Rueber@dia.iowa.gov; 515.249.8352
 - ▶ Tenesha Stubblefield, tenesha.stubblefield@dia.iowa.gov; 515.829.8899

RESOURCES

- ▶ Brian Witmer YouTube videos [The Freeze Drying Community](#)
- ▶ Pam and Jim: YouTube videos [RoseRed Homestead](#) and [website](#)

Thank you!

Grace Danao mdanao2@unl.edu

Ellen Ciarimboli eciarimboli@hy-vee.com

Julie Kraling julie.kraling@dia.iowa.gov

James S. Dickson jdickson@iastate.edu

POLL QUESTION

How long have you worked in food safety?

Open Discussion

- ▶ What special projects has your agency/organization/industry been involved in which would be of interest to the Task Force members?
- ▶ What hot topics have been of interest to you and/or your organization?
- ▶ Discuss new staff, retirements, challenges, or changes you have faced



Thank you for attending!

- ▶ A meeting evaluation will be sent after this meeting
- ▶ The next General Membership meeting will be held in Spring 2026
- ▶ Board nomination information will be emailed in early 2026
 - ▶ All Board seats will be up for election