



General Meeting, 4/28/2026, 1:00 pm
6200 Park Avenue Walnut Woods Conference Rooms
Des Moines IA

Zoom Link:

<https://dial-iowa-gov.zoom.us/j/81127677569?pwd=cEjC3kaoSUCUJcZzIRj9M0UHxflpZM.1>

1. **Welcome** – Thao Schlichte, Task Force Advisory Board Chair and Rapid Response Team (RRT) Coordinator, Iowa Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licensing (DIAL)
 - a. Thao welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

2. **Floor Nominations for Advisory Board Election** – Michelle Boyd, DIAL
 - a. Michelle described the duties of each Board position
 - b. She also gave an overview of what new Board members could expect over the next term, including updating the Governance Guidelines.
 - c. Michelle then described the terms of office for any Board member. The election is held every two years, and Board members can be re-nominated for any position if they choose. The call for nominations for the current election went out on February 12, and the slate of nominees was approved by the Advisory Board on March 16. Absentee ballots were sent out to members upon request and will be tallied with the votes during today's meeting
 - d. Michelle opened the floor to any floor nominations. She described that Merri Cross would review the nominees for their attendance record, because Board members need to be current, active members of the Task Force.
 - i. There were no floor nominations submitted.
 - ii. Thao asked for a motion to cease nominations. Janis Hochstetler made the motion and Tim Link seconded. Nominations ceased.

3. **Introduction of Nominees** – Michelle Boyd, DIAL
 - a. Each nominee in attendance introduced themselves.
 - i. Ellen Ciarimboli was absent
 - ii. Bambi Press was present in-person works for Iowa Health and Human Services and is responsible for the state's Older Americans Act nutrition programs (congregate meals and meals on wheels). She explained she enjoys the Task Force, learning from members and values networking with everyone. She described something she recently learned from



another state – meal packing questions. This was a situation in another state, when there were questions whether or not the packaging was considered “reduced oxygen packaging”. She said they were able to bring federal and state partners together to resolve the issues and answer the questions, just like the Task Force does.

- iii. Kyli Beaulieu was absent
- iv. Adam Hahn was present in-person. He works with Black Hawk County Health Department as an inspector and is the treasurer for the Iowa Environmental Health Association. He also serves on the advisory board for the NEHA Rural Frontier Committee and on the planning committee for the Public Health Conference of Iowa.
- v. Hannah Hansen was present in-person. She is a food safety professional with a background in food manufacturing and currently works for Iowa State University Extension with the Food Innovation and Business Hub. She has degrees in food science and chemistry, and a masters in food science from Iowa State University. She conducts training for food manufacturers. What motivates Hannah is collaboration in food safety – when regulators, industry and academics come together with the goal to produce safe food.
- vi. Tim Link joined virtually. Tim has worked for the City of Dubuque Health Services for 31 years. Prior to being a food inspector, he worked as a medical technologist and served on the State Hygienic Lab’s Advisory Committee. He believes in the science of food safety and it’s important to keep the science in mind with all the changes in today’s world. He is a past president of the Iowa Environmental Health Association.
- vii. Dan Riskowski joined virtually. He is the Controlling Contaminants Lead for the Mid-America Carpenters Regional Council. He works to advocate food safety during construction, because he feels it is usually forgotten. The Council represents 57,000 members in Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri and Illinois. Dan feels it is important to provide a unique perspective to the Board, due to his construction background.

4. Advisory Board Election

- a. Michelle passed out the paper ballots in the room.
- b. Merri Cross activated the virtual poll set up with three questions:
 - i. Voting for Board Chair (Choose 1): Ellen Ciarimboli or Bambi Press
 - ii. Voting for Board Vice Chair (Choose 1): Ellen Ciarimboli or Bambi Press
 - iii. Voting for Members at Large (Choose 3): Kyli Beaulieu, Hannah Hansen, Adam Hahn, Tim Link, or Dan Riskowski



- iv. Brian Church moderated the polling. 14 members voted.
- c. Absentee votes were already tallied in advance of the meeting and were indicated on the tally sheets provided to Michelle Boyd and Brian Church.
- d. After voting, in-person attendees left the room while the votes were counted and the meeting slides updated with the results (for announcement at the end of the meeting).
 - i. The meeting paused during this time and the meeting resumed with the panel discussion at 1:45 pm.

BREAK

- 5. **Small Ag-based Business Panel Presentation** – Moderator, Dr. James Dickson, Iowa State University
 - a. **Hannah Hansen, Iowa State University, Food Innovation and Business Hub**
 - i. Hannah (attending in-person) presented on the services the Hub provides to small businesses, including:
 - 1. Coaching
 - 2. Analytical Lab services (food and beverage), including chemical analysis, water activity, pH, moisture content, and soluble solids. Microbial analysis is a goal of theirs.
 - 3. Recipe validation, nutrition facts, label review, shelf stability and food product reviews are also included
 - 4. Food safety support, including food safety and HACCP plans, auditing services, and trainings.
 - a. The Hub offers workshops on Preventive Controls, HACCP, and Better Process Control
 - b. Other workshops include starting a food business, cottage food law, and home-based kitchen operations
 - c. The Hub also offers lunch and learn sessions monthly.
 - ii. The goal of the Hub is to see economic growth of small businesses by partnering with regulatory agencies, including DIAL, IDALS, and ISU.
 - iii. Hannah provided the URL for their website for more resources and to contact team members directly. The Hub also has email subscriptions and connection on LinkedIn!
 - iv. During Q&A, Michelle Boyd asked if people need to sign up for the Lunch and Learn sessions. Hannah said registration is available on the Hub's website.



- v. Jim Dickson also asked if he were a new food processor and wanted their help, where would he start? Hannah said there is an intake form to help them connect with the right people at the Hub.
- b. Dr. Heather Hallen-Adams, Associate Professor, University of Nebraska-Lincoln**
 - i. Dr. Hallen-Adams (joining virtually) spoke on Mushroom Safety, from Harvest to Point of Sale
 - ii. Dr. Hallen-Adams spoke on the wild mushroom certification course provided by Iowa State University, training that is valid for 3 years and covers eight types of mushrooms.
 - iii. She described accurate identification of mushrooms for sale is very important, and storage and preparation of mushrooms are also vital.
 - iv. Dr. Hallen-Adams described the types of mushrooms most often sold and their ease of production. She detailed the specifics of each species and sub-species, and the general issues or observations associated with each one.
 - v. Next, Dr. Hallen-Adams said traditionally the emphasis has been on accurate mushroom identification, but now the focus is addressing consumer knowledge gaps and misperceptions. She told a story of a 2023 morel mushroom outbreak in Montana that sickened 51, with 2 deceased. The morels were served uncooked – the sushi chef assumed they were safe to serve raw because they were cultivated morels, but that is not true. This experience also pointed out Montana’s Food Code regulates wild mushrooms, not cultivated ones. She also discussed the many recalls and outbreaks due to Enoki mushrooms contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes*.
 - vi. Dr. Hallen-Adams discussed the key things to remember to promote food safety of mushrooms during post-harvest and preparation. She explained most mushrooms should be cooked, but you will not find preparation instructions or information in various popular cookbooks. She believes all mushrooms should be cooked.
 - vii. Last, Dr. Hallen-Adams provided the information that should be on the label of wild or cultivated mushrooms sold by small businesses, and to include cooking information on the labels. She said a couple of recipes available at a farmers market food stand would be a great idea to educate consumers.
 - viii. During Q&A, Dr. Jim Dickson asked about how common false morel mushrooms are. Dr. Hallen-Adams said they are not common in Nebraska. Tim Link said they are common but more half-free morels are found.

c. Janis Hochstetler, HACCP and Labeling Coordinator, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS)

- i. Janis discussed regulatory aspects of selling meat/poultry products, direct-marketing from those operators who want to build a plant or start sales of meats they process and market.
- ii. Her presentation described the process she undergoes when talking to operators from the beginning, finding out what they want to process and sell, and what options they have to meet the regulations. She focuses on labeling requirements and how they can choose approved processors.
- iii. Janis described working with DIAL on cottage food and home food processing establishment requirements, forwarding emails and phone calls to staff at DIAL.
- iv. Janis described the regulations for custom exempt processing and IDALS' recommendations for producers and owners. She provided examples of Not For Sale custom exempt labels.
- v. Janis then described Official Inspection options, for federal inspection, and the differences between federal and state inspected plants.
- vi. Next, Janis talked about selling cuts, dressed poultry and further processed/value added products and the requirements in order to legally sell those products.
- vii. Janis then discussed the common questions she asks on where people propose selling their products, where the products will be stored, and how are the sold (they must be sold by weight). Each step may require reaching out to other agencies for more information.
- viii. For small processors, Janis helps them find a plant to process their products (IDALS has a searchable database) and how to label their products correctly. She displayed sample labels and described the differences between each one.
- ix. Janis then mentioned Choose Iowa, a state enhancement program at IDALS that works with small processors and small businesses as a promotional/brand program for agricultural products.
- x. Janis closed her presentation with her advice for small businesses to start simple, remember liability, don't be afraid to ask questions, and be sure to network and get involved.
- xi. During Q&A, Thao Schlichte asked Janis if they get questions on exotic animals. Janis said she usually involves DIAL to help determine if certain species are amenable. For IDALS, amenable species are beef, pork, lamb, goat, domesticated poultry, and horse. Voluntary exotics are domesticated farm deer, buffalo, water buffalo, emu, ostrich and

pigeons. People tend to ask her questions about wild game such as alligator, racoon, nutria or wild deer

d. Kurt Rueber, Small Food Processing Lead, DIAL

- i. Kurt did not have a presentation but discussed some of the common issues or questions he has from the public on cottage food.
 - ii. He explained before cottage food was signed into law in Iowa, there were just home bakeries. Iowa is one of the few states in the US that has broken down the home food production definition or law to include cottage food versus home food requiring a license to operate. Cottage food must be shelf-stable food, sold direct to consumer, with no third-party involvement.
 - iii. Home food processing establishments allows the ability to wholesale some foods, except meat and poultry products, including fish and seafood. Raw, unpasteurized juice is not allowed.
 - iv. Someone in the audience asked about chicken broth, if that was a cottage food. Kurt explained some people want to dehydrate it or freeze dry broth. He said dried broth is a cottage food, but in liquid form it requires refrigeration so it may or may not qualify as a homemade food item. He said they would involve IDALS in the discussions with the operator.
 - v. Kurt said the other hot item is beef tallow. He said people think it is shelf-stable and it would fall under cottage food, but the law states anything that falls under meat and poultry regulations cannot be made as a cottage food. Beef tallow and pork lard fall under IDALS authority.
 - vi. Next, Kurt brought up freeze-dried foods, he received many questions about that process in the past. But now, he is getting many questions about focaccia bread and how the vegetables in the bread affect water activity and moisture content.
 - vii. Finally, Kurt brought up tinctures and extracts. These can be considered a conventional food or a dietary supplement or drug, depending on how they are intended for use, how they are advertised, or what the claim is on the label.
 - viii. Janis also commented that she didn't talk about pet food, pet treats, etc. when discussing issues with small business operators. The regulations to follow depend on how the products are marketed – if advertised or labeled as food, or as treats.
- e. Dr. Dickson ended the panel with questions prepared in advance. Due to the limited time, he did not touch on all the questions but started with one of his own. He asked the panel what is the difference, in their opinion, between

training and practice. He said especially for small businesses, we do training, but how do we help the operators put that into practice.

- i. Janis answered first. She said she advises small operators to find a mentor who is also a small business owner, or join the Meat Process Association, or get involved in different groups and conferences like Farm Bureau.
 - ii. Dr. Hallen-Adams answered the people who get into the business of selling wild mushrooms have a history and a background of knowledge already. She said it's not so much training but weeding out people who really don't know what they are doing. However, they may not be versed on their state regulations.
- f. Dr. Dickson's next question was for Hannah Hansen – if someone has a great idea for a product, how far along do they need to be in the process before they contact the Hub? Hannah said the sooner the better. She also advises them to start simple then build after awhile. She said the sooner they can lay the foundation for food safety and regulatory compliance, as well as making sure their business is set up properly, then the better.
- g. Dr. Dickson also brought up what if someone contacts Hannah with the idea to sell raw milk or make raw milk cheese. Hannah said she has a great deal of science facts to send them to help make up their mind.
- h. Dr. Dickson asked Kurt about the requirements for growing and selling microgreens or sprouts at a farmers market.
- i. Kurt said a sprout is a sprout if it has the root or seed intact. If it's harvested above the ground, it's produce, and is treated just like any other herb. He said sprouts are regulated quite vigorously in Iowa.
- i. Dr. Dickson asked Dr. Hallen-Adams about where mushroom growers will grow their stock. If they grow them in their basement, what are things consumers need to worry about?
- i. Dr. Hallen-Adams said growers get their supplies from recognized suppliers, and can grow the mushrooms out in the woods if they know what they are doing. She said cultivated mushrooms are in a regulatory grey area – if they are treated at all in regulation, they are treated like produce. She thinks the regulatory guidance for growers needs to change.
 - ii. She also said cooking mushrooms is generally a good idea.
- j. After the panelists were thanked, the meeting adjourned for a short 5-minute break to finish the rest of the meeting.



6. Rapid Response Team (RRT) Update – Thao Schlichte, RRT Coordinator, DIAL

- a. Thao provided an update on the activities of the Iowa RRT since the last general meeting in November 2025.
- b. The Iowa Food Emergency Response Plan was finalized in July 2025. Iowa Health and Human Services is now updating the Foodborne Illness Outbreak Manual, from a 250-page document to a 30-page guidance document. The Minnesota Center of Excellence is helping with the update and it's in its final stages of review.
- c. Thao shared the complaint responses from 2020 to present. The highest number of total complaints for Iowa was in 2023. The slide showed a graph of total complaints for Iowa, and one for Illness Complaints for DIAL. The slide also had a table of the year, total complaints, illness complaints, environmental assessments, and emergency responses for DIAL.
 - i. In 2025, DIAL had the lowest number of EAs, 7.
- d. Thao discussed the ICS activation for RAGBRAI in July 2025. Preparation is underway for this year's RAGBRAI response. DIAL has the majority of the route, all 8 days, and a couple local public health partners will also be part of the incident command system this year. It is considered the shortest route, and will be going to the Field of Dreams outside Dyersville.
- e. Thao discussed the ByHeart infant formula recall audit checks completed by Iowa. There were 59 total RACs, and 4 retail locations had product available for sale. Additional locations were identified separate from the list provided by FDA. These were identified when Iowa contacted distribution centers. Other outlets such as retail salvage operations were contacted – these would not have received the recall notices from the company.
 - i. A complaint was received that a liquidation sale was selling the products in Council Bluffs. The sale was advertised on social media, with a photo of the formula. No contact information was listed on the ad. Thao said it was determined that DIAL had no regulatory authority. She then reached out to IHHS to use their social media page to find more information and reach out to the operator, because DIAL does not have a social media presence. IHHS has an educational outreach social media account, and they helped reach out to the seller who had no idea the product was recalled. They did not know how long they had the product on site. They destroyed 40 cans of formula.
 - ii. The local public health agency visited the sale location to verify the product was destroyed
- f. Thao discussed a notification she received from a local public health agency's Healthy Homes division regarding 4 children with elevated blood lead levels in

2025. Further investigation revealed the children consumed large amounts of a shrimp paste product purchased at a retail grocery store in Des Moines.
- i. FDA has not established regulatory limits for lead in seafood. The product was not considered adulterated or an imminent health hazard based on the lead levels in the children alone. But, other factors were taken into consideration, such as how much is typically eaten, the level of contaminant detected, and the toxicity of the contaminant.
 - ii. DIAL conducted a routine inspection of the retail location in March 2025, purchasing some product and embargoing 103 one-pound containers and 35 two-pound containers.
 - iii. A second retail location was identified in Des Moines selling the same product – more products were embargoed
 - iv. Additional samples were taken after the products were embargoed. The lead levels were high in all the samples. This led to the state medical director and the state epidemiologist declaring the products were unsafe for human consumption. This allowed DIAL to determine the product as adulterated and inform FDA of the state’s findings.
 - v. FDA assisted with searching other retail locations, but the two locations in Des Moines were the only ones receiving the product. FDA did their own sampling and identified the same results as DIAL. They worked with the company to voluntarily recall the shrimp paste in January 2026.
 - vi. Thao said this was a unique opportunity to work with the Healthy Home Lead division and public health.

7. DIAL Update – Michelle Boyd, DIAL

- a. Michelle gave an update on SAFHER, the new inspection and licensing database for Iowa food and lodging as well as social and charitable gambling. DIAL has been working on building the database and doing some testing. She described licenses will no longer be mailed but will be digital. Michelle said the go-live date is in October of this year.
 - i. She said the public search portal will be improved, for licensing and complaints.
 - ii. Michelle added that DIAL has reached out to local contracting agencies for testing and there will be training conducted before October. She is working on communications for the transition.
 1. Dianna Daly-Husted, ADLM, asked if there will be training online or in-person for SAFHER. Michelle said Janel Scholten is developing training, however, DIAL staff are still learning the system. She suggested local contracting agencies keep reading the

SAFHER digest Janel sends out and watch the video clips to learn more.

2. Adam Hahn, Black Hawk County Public Health, asked what SAFHER would do for temporary events, if those licenses would only be online or what would happen with operators applying for their license in the field at an event. He asked if paper applications would be available. Michelle said they would have to go online.
- b. Michelle said there are two bills being considered for legislation.
 - i. House File 1006: Processing Plant Fees. This creates a licensed subclassification for farms and private residences that store and sell frozen packaged meat and poultry processed by a licensed locker. Nothing more is known about the progress of this bill.
 - ii. House File 2767: Farm Foods. This bill removes some obstacles for on-farm retail stores and farm-to-table events which supports agrotourism and Choose Iowa. There were some items in this bill which were struck, concerning raw milk.

8. Advisory Board Election Results – Michelle Boyd, DIAL

- a. Before the election results were revealed, Michelle thanked the Advisory Board members who are ending their term for their service on the inaugural Board. Certificates are issued for Michelle Clausen Rosendahl (joined virtually, Member at Large) and Dr. James Dickson (joined virtually, Member at Large) and will be mailed to them. Thao Schlichte, Board Chair, received her certificate during the meeting.
 - i. Dr. Dickson said he has enjoyed serving on the Board
 - ii. Michelle Clausen Rosendahl thanked Michelle for the opportunity to serve on the Board.
- b. The election results were then shared with attendees:
 - i. Chair – Bambi Press
 - ii. Vice Chair – Ellen Ciarimboli
 - iii. Member at Large – Hannah Hansen
 - iv. Member at Large – Tim Link
 - v. Member at Large – Kyli Beaulieu
- c. Thao asked for a motion to approve the election results. Thao asked the Board to approve the results. The results were approved by the Board members present (the only current Board member absent was Ellen Ciarimboli).



- d. Michelle gave a short overview of what the new Board could expect, with Merri Cross as the Board Secretary sending an email regarding how the meetings are set up, the date of the May Board meeting, and other information.

9. Open Discussion and Sharing of Partner Resources

- a. Beth Romer, Choose Iowa from IDALS, introduced herself to the membership. She said she joined Choose Iowa in 2022, which is Iowa's official brand to promote Iowa ag products grown, raised, and made in Iowa. She said next month they are launching the 2026 Choose Iowa Passport. If we like to visit farms, farm stands, farmers markets, or farm-to-table restaurants, we can sign up for the passport. This supports local farmers and you can redeem points for prizes.
 - i. The last Friday/Saturday in June will be the second statewide farm crawl, and there will be another one in October for pumpkin patches and apple orchards.
- b. Tim Link, City of Dubuque: His office has been inundated with farmers market questions. They are also the last stop for RAGBRAI, so they have been doing a great deal of planning for that.

10. Michelle ended the meeting saying that a meeting evaluation will be emailed to attendees. The presentations and minutes will be added to the Iowa Food Protection Task Force website on the Meetings page. The next meeting will be held in the fall 2026.

Meeting adjourned 4:01 pm

Merri Cross, DIAL: Advisory Board Secretary