



Fall 2011 Newsletter



Executive Director Comments
Biosecurity- The Important Audit Beginning

Mike Simpson, Executive Director

Our Purpose/Mission...

is to promote the humane treatment of animals through education and certification of animal auditors, as well as the review and certification of animal audit instruments, assessments and programs.

Calendar

OCTOBER 2011

16-17: PAACO Meat Plant Welfare Auditor Training, Nebraska

18-19: American Meat Institute Animal Care & Handling Conference, Kansas City, MO

MAY 2012

9-10: PAACO Meat Plant Welfare Auditor Training, Nebraska

TBD: PAACO Board of Directors Meeting

SUMMER 2012

TBD: PAACO Poultry Welfare Auditor Training, Arkansas

TBD: PAACO Poultry Welfare Auditor Training, Canadian version

I want to address an area that gets overshadowed in all of our work when we get focused on welfare criteria and standards and validating them. This especially came to light to me this spring when we were planning the Pork Quality Assurance Plus® (PQA+) verifier training.

This was reinforced this summer when I read an e-mail news blurb by Geni Wren, editor of *Bovine Veterinary* magazine:

We all know biosecurity is a great defense against the spread of diseases and pathogens, some of which can be quite deadly. We talk about it ad nauseum in the cattle industry and rail on the benefits of clean gloves, new needles, sanitized equipment and boots washed between farms. But sometimes I don't think we take it to heart as much as we should, and until other events happen that showcase the need for biosecurity, we don't always give it the proper respect.

To start with the seriousness of this area, one of the last things that we would want to occur would be for an auditor to be responsible for some disease being introduced into a production facility from an audit exercise that was being performed.

With that thought, PAACO structured a whole section of our PQA+® training on this area. It was a challenge in our training of about 18 people to take in the full gamut of “shower in, shower out” for different stages of production and the biosecurity supplies to complement – boots, coveralls, hair/beard nets, earplugs and hand sanitizer – as well as audit materials like clipboards, papers and air quality equipment.

Trainees who have attended our poultry training have received the message of the importance of biosecurity by the requirement of a minimum of 72 hours away from birds prior to our third day on-site trainings. It is also evident in all training areas that we stress going from “clean” to “dirty” as much as possible.

Editorial continued on next page ...

PAACO

Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization, Inc.

PAACO was formed in 2004 when leaders of the founding organizations identified a need to promote and advance sound animal auditing through standards for auditors in education, training and experience.

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All that being said, the site's own biosecurity protocol trumps all. In your audit experience, please remember to ask what is expected and utilize the most bio-secure system from your training that you can. The site might have a "double-booting" (which in some cases is where you might start) or single requirement, but make sure biosecurity is in your pre-audit checklist to cover thoroughly.

Geni closed her piece with this message, which covers my thoughts, too:

We all get tired of hearing "wash your hands, clean your boots, keep everything clean between animals or groups of animals". But as we've seen recently, these measures aren't just a "nice thing to do". Veterinarians [and auditors] especially have a duty to do everything they can to prevent disease transmission from farm-to-farm. They can save lives, human or animal, and shouldn't be taken for granted.

Auditor Recertification and Continuing Education

I have frequent requests to clarify the policy on recertification as it requires 12 contact hours of continuing education (CE).

Obviously, the object of CE is to reinforce or add to your information and knowledge in the auditing or animal husbandry sector. We have a very broad scope of areas we consider appropriate to count/qualify for CE. In general, most all subjects dealing with animal or poultry husbandry are eligible to qualify. They do not have to be strictly titled "animal welfare" but can be on husbandry subjects that affect welfare—environment, health, housing, disease, etc. These can be conferences/sessions that you attend in person or through distance learning. Also private or in-house training can qualify as long as experts in the subject are presenting with the intent of education. (It is best that these internal sessions be prior approved by PAACO to qualify for CE.)

New this year for certified poultry auditors, you can earn CE credit by paying a fee and attending one or two days of the classroom sessions of our annual poultry auditor

training. Sorry, we are not able to offer this for the meat plant area.

Also remember that up to 4 hours of CE credit can be earned from contact hours with another PAACO certified auditor. (Note: Performing audits in itself is not qualified CE unless with another PAACO certified auditor.)

Another caveat to CE credits is that a minimum of 4 hours must be with group or personal interaction/contact. This can be met, for example, by conference attendance or work with another certified auditor.

Particularly for those of you in the customer segment (retail and food service), who often struggle to find CE activities with husbandry, websites listed on the next page are ones to monitor for programs and activities. I would also suggest subscribing to some weekly e-newsletters to find programs in the different meat or species areas. Another source would be your regional/state land-grant agriculture university's animal/poultry/dairy science departments.



PAACO Officers/Directors

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O.K. Farms, Inc.

Vice Chair:

Terry Mader, PhD
University of Nebraska

Secretary:

W. F. Owsley, PhD
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Hy-Line International

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Tom Noffsinger, DVM
Benkelman, NE

Cassandra B. Tucker, PhD
University of California - Davis

Jennifer Walker, DVM, PhD
Dean Foods

Executive Director:

Mike Simpson, MS

Shadowing Tips

The shadowing requirement for our training and certification programs is a very important part of the education/training experience. This is where “the rubber meets the road” and trainees get real life and applicable experience while learning from the shadow supervisor.

Getting the shadowing scheduled and done with a cooperating site and PAACO auditor is not easy, though. After the exercise, the shadow supervisor needs to file a

satisfactory report on your skills in the auditing process.

Trainees who are being trained and evaluated should request a copy of the report. This not only documents your strengths and weaknesses but provides some assurance that the report has been filed with PAACO. Those shadow supervisors who cooperate in this training are greatly appreciated – but they are encouraged to file the reports promptly.

SURVEY TO COME!

In November, PAACO will be distributing an electronic survey to past attendees of our auditor trainings. The purpose of the survey is to get feedback as to how we could better serve you and ideas on resources we could provide.

The survey is intended to be short and to the point and to address the education and training area. The input will be summarized and reviewed by the board’s committees covering this area to help determine future direction.

Please plan to participate!

Website calendars:

All species:

<http://www.meatingplace.com/membersonly/calendar/init.aspx>

Poultry:

<http://www.wattagnet.com/events.aspx?taxonomyid=162>

Cattle:

http://www.beefmagazine.com/cattlemans_calendar/?cid=resources

Swine:

<http://www.nationalhogfarmer.com/calendar/?cid=rresources>

Science:

<http://www.fass.org/index/asp>



Check out our web site:
www.animalauditor.org

Headlines/News Briefs

NEW PAACO OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

At the fall board meeting, new and re-elected officers are:

Chairman: Karen Christensen, PhD, O.K. Foods
 Vice Chair: Terry Mader, PhD, University of Nebraska
 Secretary: Frank Owsley, PhD, Auburn University
 Treasurer: Kenton Kreager, DVM, HyLine International

Newly appointed directors are Cassandra Tucker, PhD, University of California – Davis; and Jennifer Walker, DVM, PhD, Dean Foods.

2012 POULTRY WELFARE AUDITOR TRAINING

While the dates are yet to be determined, PAACO expects to hold this annual training in the summer of 2012 in Fayetteville, Ark. This will be the second year at this site and details of the training will be forthcoming in the spring.

2012 MEAT PLANT WELFARE AUDITOR TRAINING

This twice-a-year training continues to be in high demand due to limited class size (20 trainees). At this time, tentative dates of May 9-10 and October have been identified. If interested in this training area, you are advised to contact PAACO of your interest now so that registration

information can be e-mailed directly to you when available. This greatly improves your chance of getting into the class.

PORK QUALITY ASSURANCE PLUS®

PAACO held a “by invitation only” training for 16 individuals identified by the National Pork Board (NPB) to serve as verifiers of 14 specified swine welfare criteria to be applied at approximately 90 randomly selected swine production farms. This PAACO-directed training was consistent with our training system (lecture, demo, testing, shadowing, etc.) and designed to have uniform reports from the verifiers of a documentation of NPB’s welfare education program’s (PQA+) implementation/compliance.

CANADIAN TRAINING – POULTRY

The Poultry Industry Council (Canadian) and we are working to develop a welfare training for the Canadian poultry industry to be U.S. equivalent and provide for trainee auditor certification. The program is in preliminary development and targeted for a training date in the summer of 2012 in the Toronto area.

CANADIAN TRAINING – MEAT PLANT

Previously, PAACO has held two meat plant trainings in Canada following the same agenda and format as the

U.S.-based program. Those were in Ontario and Alberta. Interest has been expressed and is being pursued for a 2012 training in Alberta.

“CUSTOMER” COMPANY MEETINGS

During the months of August and September, PAACO staff and officers have held 1-hour briefing sessions with diversified staff of several retail and foodservice companies. The process has been mutually beneficial in that PAACO has been able to explain our programs, how we can advance animal welfare and our mission of quality audits and auditing. For the customers, this has allowed very diversified individuals and departments of the companies to understand welfare issues instead of just the QA group who deals most directly with auditing.

These sessions have been at the invitation of the companies and if you are interested in more information on this, please contact Mike Simpson at PAACO.

Meet Your PAACO Trainers

Dr. Karen Christensen

When Karen Christensen was in 5th grade, she built an incubator out of two cardboard boxes and hatched two chicks – “and the rest, they say, is history.” When her family’s garage filled up with chickens, they moved from town to the country. Thus began the newly-elected PAACO chair’s lifelong involvement with the poultry industry.

Christensen grew up in Bellevue, Washington, and earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in animal science from Washington State University. She worked for H&N International, a primary genetics company for table eggs, while in college and for five years after graduation. A stint with Draper Valley Farms, a broiler company based in Mt. Vernon, Washington, followed.

Fourteen years ago, Karen and her husband, Nick, moved to Ft. Smith, Ark., where she serves as director of technical services for O.K. Farms. Christensen is responsible for animal welfare programs, the feed lab, bird health testing and the micro-lab. O.K. Farms also has several large research facilities, where they conduct research for the company and outside customers.

Her company places strong emphasis on animal welfare. “Because we raise these birds for food, we have the responsibility to take care of them the best way we can,” says Christensen, who recently completed her PhD from

Mississippi State University in poultry physiology. “About 10 years ago, animal welfare became a topic that our customers were also interested in, so our corporate responsibility and customer requirements have matched up very well. We feel it is ‘the right thing to do’.”

It was O.K. Farms’ strong welfare emphasis that brought Christensen to the attention of the Federation of Animal Science Societies when they needed a representative on the PAACO board of directors. Now in her fifth year on the PAACO board, Karen jumped at the chance. “I was excited by the opportunity and have enjoyed it a lot,” she says. She served as vice chairman the past two years.

Christensen became a certified PAACO poultry auditor after attending the organization’s second training; she has been a broiler auditor trainer now for four years, another role that she enjoys. She cites consistency of audits as one of the primary reasons for the training, stating “I want to train not only auditors but anybody that may attend so that at the end of the day, we get very consistent quality evaluations so that both the facility and customers get a very quality look at what is being done. It is very important that auditor training produces auditors that consistently audit so that no matter who goes into a facility there will be consistent evaluations.”



*Karen Christensen, PhD
O.K. Foods*

The popularity of the PAACO training reflects well on the industry, she believes, noting that it is gratifying to see such strong interest that the sessions are always full, even though only a small percentage may actually work as independent auditors.

Karen and Nick live on 85 acres near Ft. Smith, where they raise registered Simmental and Red Angus cattle, with an eye toward producing Red Sim-Angus. Nick is a business analyst, who currently telecommutes to support a company in Iowa. In her limited spare time, Karen also enjoys riding cutting horses.