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IIT Institute for Food Safety and Health Receives FDA Funding for Preventive Controls Alliance and Training

Aim is to help food companies access food safety information and materials to comply with pending FDA rulemaking

(Bedford Park, IL) December 21, 2011 – Illinois Institute of Technology’s Institute for Food Safety and Health (IIT IFSH) will coordinate a national food safety alliance designed to assist the human and animal food industry in complying with upcoming Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)-related preventive control regulations.

The new Food Safety Preventive Controls Alliance (FSPCA) is a one-year, $1 million partnership grant funded by the FDA Office of Foods through the IIT-IFSH-FDA collaborative agreement. Funding has been allocated to the development of a standardized industry-oriented training curriculum, including hands-on and web-based training modules. The curriculum will be widely available to those who will provide training to the industry. IIT IFSH also will establish a distance learning training portal at its Bedford Park, IL-based campus.

The FSPCA will provide and disseminate the technical and scientific basis for identifying hazards associated with specific food commodities and industry sectors per the FSMA regulations. The group will also develop preventive control models for major industry sectors, and provide guidance to industry for maintaining preventive controls.

In 2012, the FDA is expected to issue a proposed rule on the hazard analysis and preventive control measures for food facilities. The FSPCA initiatives are designed to provide U.S. food facilities, particularly small- and medium-sized companies, the science-based information required for compliance with these pending regulations, said IIT Vice President and IFSH Director Robert E. Brackett, Ph.D.

“IIT’s Institute of Food Safety and Health is particularly well-placed to coordinate the
activities of this vital alliance,” said Brackett. “With key provisions related to the preventive controls component of the FSMA coming to the fore next year, the time is now for all stakeholders to work together to ensure that all food companies, no matter their size, have access to the education and training that will be needed to ensure compliance.”

The goal of the alliance, Brackett added, is to serve even the smallest companies wherever they are based. "The new learning portal that IIT IFSH will establish through the alliance will be invaluable in reaching such companies with practical compliance information."

The alliance's organizing committee recently began the process of steering committee selection at its first face-to-face meeting Dec. 20-21, 2011, at the Department of Health and Human Services headquarters in Washington, DC.

"In addition to IIT IFSH and FDA officials, the Food Safety Preventive Controls Alliance steering committee will include representatives from stakeholder groups in academia, human and animal food industry trade and scientific associations, and government," said Purnendu C. Vasavada, Ph.D., FDA ORISE Fellow and FSPCA coordinator. "We expect that the steering committee will be named and announced by the end of the year, and technical working groups formed by mid-January 2012."

Vasavada also reported the group's significant progress in a number of areas, including formalizing agreement on alliance management and organizational structure, creating a work plan and timeline for technical working group assignments, and drafting a list of proposed mechanisms for development of the training curriculum.

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**Illinois Institute of Technology’s (IIT) Institute for Food Safety and Health (IFSH)** is a one-of-a-kind applied food research institute that provides stakeholders in government, industry and academia the opportunity to develop and exchange knowledge and expertise to address key issues in food safety, food defense and nutrition. Powered by a singular combination of in-depth food science expertise and state-of-the-art research capabilities, IIT IFSH's collaborative research model helps stakeholders define and design innovative and practical approaches to solving real-world challenges in food industry operations. Located at IIT's Moffett Campus in Bedford Park, IL, IFSH is also home to the FDA CFSAN Division of Food Processing Science and Technology. [For more, visit](http://www.iit.edu/ifsh)