

Online Master of Science in Food Safety: The food component of public health

Presenter: Julie Ann Funk, Michigan State University

Co-Presenters: Edward C. Mather and Paul C. Bartlett, Michigan State University

Session: Oral

Date/Time: Tuesday, April 24; 11-12PM

The Online Professional Master of Science in Food Safety is a graduate educational program targeted at developing food safety leaders. Since 2000, more than 75 professionals representing all aspects of the food industry and government agencies have enrolled in this program, with 21 graduates to date. About 5% of the students are graduate veterinarians. In an effort to increase the participation of veterinary professionals, a new program has been initiated to allow veterinary students to participate and transfer credits from their DVM curriculum. The course work is rigorous, but has a flexible schedule so that working adults may maintain their professional and personal lives. This is a trans-disciplinary degree offered by Michigan State University's College of Veterinary Medicine, but includes more than 70 faculty from many MSU colleges, other universities, industry and government. Disciplines represented in the curriculum include: toxicology, microbiology, epidemiology, packaging, law, pre-harvest food safety, protection and defense, food borne disease control methods, communication and research methodology. There is one on-campus course, Introduction to Food Safety and Professional Development, which has served a critical role in developing professional networks and "school identity" among these food safety professionals. For many students, the specific focus on food safety is a better fit for their career goals than is the broader approach to public health encompassed by the MPH degree.

Biographies:

Dr. Julie Funk is the Program Director for the Online Master of Science in Food Safety and Associate Professor in the Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences in the College of Veterinary Medicine at Michigan State University. She received a DVM from Michigan State University after which she practiced in a predominantly swine focused veterinary clinic in Wolcott, Indiana. After 2 years of practice she returned to academe and received a Master of Science from the University of Illinois and a PhD from North Carolina State University. Both of the graduate programs were focused on the pre-harvest epidemiology of food borne pathogens in swine populations. Prior to joining Michigan State University, she was an Assistant Professor at The Ohio State University's College of Veterinary Medicine. Her current research focus remains in pre-harvest epidemiology of food borne pathogens in swine (*Salmonella*, *Campylobacter* and *Yersinia enterocolitica*) as well as understanding the epidemiology of antimicrobial resistance pre-harvest.

Dr. Bartlett is a diplomat in the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine and the ACVPM – Epidemiology Specialty. He is an alumnus of the CDC's Epidemic Intelligence Service, Class of 1979. He is a professor at the College of Veterinary Medicine at Michigan State University, where most of his work is at the National Food Safety and Toxicology Center. Dr. Bartlett teaches epidemiology, public health and food safety to the veterinary students. His teaching in the food safety master's degree program includes courses in pre-harvest food safety, food safety and defense, food safety research methods, food safety epidemiology, and food safety disease control. Current research projects include foodborne disease outbreak investigation, disease surveillance software, norovirus epidemiology and antimicrobial resistance.
