

Food Innovation Team Press Release

June 6, 2018

Announcing the Food Innovation Team (FIT), a new subcommittee of Minnesota's governor-appointed Food Safety and Defense Task Force!

The role of the Food Innovation Team is to learn from complex food licensing cases, untangle the issues, and use the information gathered to help food businesses obtain correct licensing in a timely manner. The Food Innovation Team will allow a food business to consult with regulatory, local food system, and food safety experts. FIT's goal is to help Minnesota accommodate new and innovative food business models, while maintaining our state's high standards for food safety.

In addition to helping individual food entrepreneurs, another goal of the Food Innovation Team is to improve the functioning of the food regulatory system as a whole. As FIT hears cases and resolves issues that are complex or unclear, that information will be captured in a database that will be available to the public. The knowledge gained in each case can then be applied to future, similar cases. Over time, regulators, food system advocates, and food entrepreneurs will strengthen their ability to deal with complex food licensing scenarios.

The Food Innovation Team was developed through a collaborative process that involved the food regulatory divisions of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and Minnesota Department of Health; community groups including the Minnesota Farmers' Market Association and Renewing the Countryside; University of Minnesota Extension and the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture.

The Food Innovation Team will hold six meetings per year and report its activities to the Food Safety & Defense Task Force. The eight members of the team will be appointed by the Task Force co-chairs. The team will be balanced with four regulatory agency staff members and four community-based members.

Food Innovation Team documents have been created that include Standard Operating Procedures, an intake form for cases, a reporting form, and an application form for membership. The set of Food Innovation Team documents is available in PDF format on Google Drive:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ICAGDgs00_G0masu8LdhsLfvfaCdcPX7/view?usp=sharing

If you have questions about Food Innovation Team or think you have a food licensing case that should go to FIT, please contact Jane Jewett, jewet006@umn.edu, 218-670-0066; or Kathy Zeman, kzeman@mfma.org.