

The Journal

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Highlights:

- Meeting rooms filled to capacity with nearly 200 attendees.
- Dr. Kris Box, State Health Commissioner gave the keynote address.
- Multiple concurrent sessions added a variety of speakers, topics.
- Several speakers made virtual presentations.

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Annual Fall Conference overflows Abe Martin Lodge

The main meeting room in the Abe Martin Lodge at Brown County State Park was at capacity, with nearly 200 attendees. Some of the breakout sessions also overflowed their rooms as listeners enjoyed the educational opportunities the Annual Fall Educational Conference (AFEC) consistently provides.

The colors were presented by the color guard of the Brown Co. American Legion, then attendees were greeted by conference chair Jennifer Heller (top right), IEHA President Holley Rose (bottom right).



The keynote address was presented by State Health Commissioner Dr. Kris Box, with the timely message “Lessons Learned: Moving Public Health Forward in Indiana”.

Dr. Box discussed the timeline of the COVID pandemic and the challenges for health professionals to get needed personal protective equipment they needed.

She also emphasized everyone eligible to get the vaccines and boosters.

“Investment

up front reduces investment at the end,” she said.

Dr. Box also talked about the recommendations of the recent Governor’s Public Health Commission and acknowledged that Indiana lags behind the nation in funding public health, which she hopes

(Continued on page 3)



The conference keynote address was given by Dr. Kris Box, Indianan State Health Commissioner.



IEHA Confrence dates, places, set for 2023

The location and dates for the IEHA Spring and Fall Educational Conferences have been announced. The Horizon Convention Center in Muncie (shown here) will host the fall event on September 25 to 27, says conference chair

Krista Click. Andrew Pappas has selected April 13 for the Spring gathering, with the location possibly at the Garrison in Indianapolis. Finding a suit-



able location on days that work for us has been a challenge, Andrew says.

From the Ed Desk



IEHA is fortunate to have so many “volunteers” to help out, and they are recognized in each issue. (Do you ever look at the back page?) Usually their “area of expertise” is rather obvious, but this time, it’s more subtle. Can you figure it out?

Also, Holley has offered a link to a short video you will like. It’s on page 11.

Keep the comments and contribution coming with the contact information on the back page. I hope you find many items of interest inside these pages.

Ed

From the President

Dear fellow IEHA members,

As we enter into the final months of the year, I hope you all will reflect on the past year. 2022 was a year full of re-establishments: in person meetings, conferences, events and getting back in to the “groove of life” prior to the pandemic. Think about where you were in your life in December of 2019 and how, unbeknownst to us, the world changed the way in which we live, work and play. The life of a Public Health professional changed greatly as we had to make difficult decisions, create / enforce mandates that were not always in favor of our communities, and constantly research and stay up-to-date with mandates. Guidance was ever changing due to the spread of the virus changing and we became accustomed to answering questions (from family, friends and the public) with statements such as “at this time” or “the current guidance states”.

Throughout it all, we became stronger and more resilient. Our association experienced many changes. We cancelled our fall conference, held our spring conference virtually, and our monthly IEHA Executive Board meetings went virtual. The switch to virtual allowed for us all to have an eye into each other’s offices, and homes where sometimes pets made appearances, which always made for fun conversation. A comment I recall hearing from a fellow IEHA member stated “We went from the ‘Flintstones’ to the ‘Jetsons’ overnight!” A highlight of mine at the beginning of 2022 was hearing how many chapter meetings were back to in-person meetings and were back to educational tours and in-person speakers, it was so refreshing!

Reflecting back on 2022, I personally feel a sense of not just re-establishment but excitement for our future as Public Health and as an Association with an opportunity to continue to grow. I have truly enjoyed my time serving you over the years as Vice President, President-Elect and currently as President for a few more weeks. Thank you IEHA Members for being such a dedicated group of individuals that I am proud to call colleagues and dear friends. Cheers to a great 2023!

Holley

“This was a full year of re-establishments, in-person meetings, conferences, and getting back to the ‘groove of life’ prior to the pandemic.”

Annual Fall Educational Conference (continued)

(Continued from page 1)
the legislature will address.

Clint Studebaker, retired engineer, talked to attendees about the residential sewage disposal issues in Brown Co. Clint has a goal of making water



bodies safe for full human body contact, something not safe today due to contamination from E. Coli. Problems are extensive, he says, with 90% of homes on septic systems, "if there is a system," he says. Brown Co. ranks much worse than the nation. He adds it's a largely "green" county, and to-

pography, and poor soils, makes septic system installations difficult. Records are lacking, and the older the dwelling, the less likely there is a record, or even a system. Besides humans, agricultural runoff and animals add to the pollution. Safe waterways will enhance the tourism of Brown Co. he believes.



IAFP is a leader in worldwide food safety efforts

Gale Prince, as chair of the International Association for Food Protection (IAFP) Foundation, has created a career by helping others worldwide in solving food safety problems. Gale was in a perfect position to discuss "Dynamics of Change" before attendees at the recent fall conference. Gale outlined the benefits



of being a part of IAFP and pointed out that there are many food safety publications available, and that meetings draw attendees from all over the world. He added that another benefit is access to unique food safety icons that may be used. He added that the pandemic led to food safety

changes with more people eating at home and that food "traceback" has been enhanced by searching store "shopper's cards" to see who purchased recalled foods. Another change he said is the ability to "fingerprint" to identify specific foods. He said that one cannot accept complacency and that food safety is a journey, not a destination.

"One cannot accept complacency as food safety is a journey, not a destination."

Protect water sources by proper septic management

Sara Heger, President of National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association says there are three approaches to handling wastewater: centralized, decentralized, and combined. She told



conference attendees that decentralized is for individual homes, and centralized handles many. She mentioned that centralized doesn't mean a higher level of treatment and that many of the country's old infrastructures are failing, and up to 75 thousand sewage

overflows happen yearly. Environmental and public health concerns has led to improved treatment methods. Reusing treated wastewater for non-potable uses saves a valuable resource. She said that decentralized systems are always cheaper.

A F E C

Is that second refrigerator worth it? Maybe not



What may have been a side effect of the pandemic, *WBAA News* reported that we in Indiana are more likely than those in other states to own a second refrigerator. The report cited information from the Energy Information Administration that about 40 percent of Hoosiers have two or

more such units. Only Idaho, Iowa, and the Dakotas ranked higher than Indiana in refrigerator ownership.

Obviously, these units use energy and push owners' utility bills higher. A refrigerator's efficiency is affected by its environment. Place the unit in a hot garage, for example, and it must work harder by running

more, and using more energy. And that second unit might be an older, less efficient, unit that was replaced in the kitchen.

One can argue that using more electricity has a negative effect on climate. And, the cost of ownership might be more than any savings from buying food in larger quantities and freezing.

“A broader approach will be more effective in addressing the issues of climate change.”



Climate change challenging public health

One can not doubt that climate change will affect everyone and the question may be how, not if, the issue is addressed, and changes to public health look to be major. While there may be needed scientific, economic, and technological approaches being considered separately, the *Frontiers in Public Health* study says new metrics may be needed to determine the impact on public health.

Frontiers in Public Health, an often-cited and one of the larger science research platforms, proposes new metrics to measure at least these four areas: circularity, climate change, biodiversity, and health (well-being). An Energy Return on Investment (EROI) study can

include the negative health effects and environmental impact from energy production. EROI is the difference between available energy and the energy needed to produce energy per source. They add that a similar concept could be utilized when evaluating food production. They say studies have been too focused in the past, and a more inclusive approach is better. *Frontiers in Public Health* study is poised to offer a new way to measure climate impact they say is “EROI augmented” and include climate and health impact. The cost of treating diseases at least partially blamed on fossil fuels causing pollution and climate change could be considered. It's believed that fossil fuels in-

directly lead to stress on the public health systems and therefore add considerable costs.

Frontiers in Public Health writers say ESG ratings like given to financial bonds (Environmental, Social, Governance or ESG is a rating system to measure impacts.) could be considered as a means to measure public health impacts but have been found to have shortcomings. The authors feel a multi-pronged approach is needed to fight the climate change threat to public health and have proposed metrics to measure the problem. A broader approach will be more effective in addressing the issues, not just a focus on specific effects of climate change.

(Thanks to Andrew Pappas)

Fall conference rooms were filled to capacity



Some photos in this issue are by Ed Norris. The better photos are courtesy of Steve Cale.

Some presenters at the Annual Fall Educational Conference made virtual presentations including Bill Marler, attorney specializing in foodborne illness cases. Marler Clark, is in Seattle, Washington. He is just visible on the screen.

Major award winners announced at the conference



Northeast Chapter members pose after receiving the Harry E. Werkowski Outstanding Chapter Award.

“At the awards banquet, honors were presented by Holley Rose, JoAnn Mercado and Jennifer Heller.”

A F E C



Left, Alice Quinn was recipient of the Environmental Health Specialist of the Year Award. Above, Reba Taylor Hill re-



ceived the Chris Ulsas Volunteer of the Year honor, and the Tim Sullivan Memorial Award went to Ed Norris.

Southern Chapter members learn pretzel twisting



Above, Sandy Smith, owner of Tell City Pretzel Co. (left) points out part of the pretzel making operation to Simeon Baker. Below, owner Brad Smith (right) explains part of the business to Matt Baker



The Southern Chapter of the IEHA toured the Tell City Pretzel Company as part of its summer meeting. Sandy Smith, co-owner of the Pretzel Company with her husband Brad, led the group through the facilities as she explained the operation. Tell City Pretzels has been operating since 1858, although not always in this current location. The group learned that the original recipe is adhered to strictly, so today's pretzels have the same taste and hard texture as the originals. The new owners have expanded the operation to include seasoned and flavored pretzel chunks, with

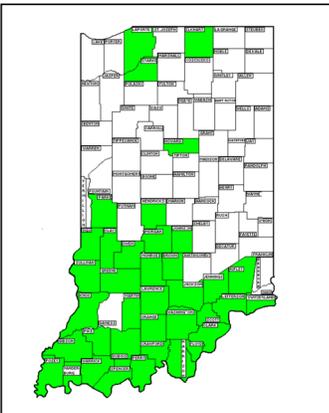
flavors such as Honey Mustard, Sharp Cheddar and Honey Barbeque. These flavors are added to individual batches before being packaged at the facility and are sold throughout Indiana. Soft pretzels are a new addition to their menu and they also operate a gift shop at the facility. Members got to try their hands at pretzel twisting, and observed the automated machines that form, roll and twist the pretzels prior to baking. They visited the "hot room" where the pretzels are dunked in a lye solution and salted prior to baking. Of course, a high point was the chance to taste the various flavors and purchase pretzel items. At its meeting, members also heard from Hank Wolfe who explained

how wholesale and retail operations differ at the Indiana Department of Health. Hank also shared experiences dealing with rodent and pest issues at food facilities.

(Thanks to Jennifer Heller)

Membership Numbers

Total active members in the Indiana Environmental Health Association is 373, according to Membership Chair, Jason Ravenscroft.



Indiana counties where Kudzu has been found.

DNR calls Kudzu an unwelcome invader in state

It's an invasive plant, originally imported from Japan and used in Southern states to control erosion. But the "Vine that ate the South" has become a problem and not just in the south. It has invaded Indiana as far north as the Michigan border.

The Indiana Department of National Resources (DNR) says the plant causes serious damage to forests and will harbor pests and diseases. DNR's Division of Entomology and

Plant Pathology is working with landowners where kudzu has been found on or near their properties to reduce it to manageable levels. The vine is known to survive Indiana's droughts and the cold winters.



Breakout sessions continue to add a variety of speakers



At left, Erik Ohannesian talks to listeners in one of the General Environmental Health Services session. Above, Dr. Dave McSwain talks during a Food Protection session about the Conference for Food Protection.

Below, Mindy Waldron talked to attendees virtually at the Local Health Department Managers meeting on Monday afternoon.

AFEC



“Breakout sessions on Monday and Tuesday afternoons followed three or four concurrent tracks.”

Litigation holds violators accountable

Attorney Bill Marler of Marler Clark, the law firm known for its work in food safety cases, talked to AFEC attendees about “Foodborne Illness Litigation” and the history of going to court defending victims of foodborne illnesses.

During his virtual presen-

tation from his office in Seattle, Washington, Bill told the group that for every foodborne illness outbreak, there was at least one warning sign.

He cited the suit involving *Jack in the Box*, the original case he handled. He said that restaurant operators had been told often that meat was being sold

“undercooked” but did not address the problem.

He added that “public outrage leads to change” and USDA’s meat inspections were “reinvented to utilize a HACCP model”. Litigation tells operators they have to sell safe products, and safety has to start “upstream”.



Indiana local health department wins CDC grant



A map shows the CDC's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program. MCPHD is the only local governmental unit named a grantee.

This summer, the Marion County Public Health Department (MCPHD) was awarded funding for a CDC grant titled "Modernizing Environmental Public Health Tracking to Advance Environmental health Surveillance in Indianapolis, Indiana". Marion County was the only local unit of government to receive this 5-year grant award: all other grantees are state agencies. The purpose of the grant

is to build environmental health surveillance capacity to create "modern, interoperable, and real-time public health data surveillance systems". As environmental health professionals, we collect a large amount of important and useful data. This funding will allow the Marion County Public Health Department to continue modernizing, integrating, and disseminating environmental health data, specifically in the areas of food safety, water quality, and radon.

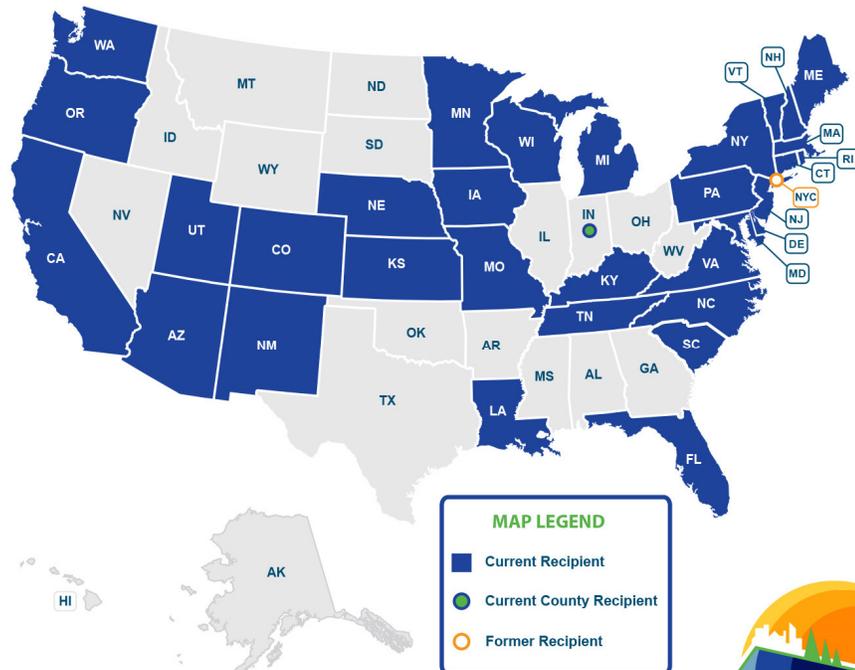
A key component of this initiative is developing a county tracking portal in addition to providing data for the CDC's national tracking portal.

Better and easier access to this data will allow internal and external stakeholders to understand better and act on patterns of environmental risk and health outcomes.

For more information on the CDC's National Public Health Tracking Network, visit <https://ephtracking.cdc.gov/>

(Thanks to Jason Ravenscroft)

CDC's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program



How long for one drop to travel the Mississippi?

The Mississippi River is the nation's second longest (the Missouri River is longer) starting in Minnesota and ending in Louisiana and the Gulf of Mexico, a distance of 2,320 miles, according to *AmericanRivers.org*. Over its history, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers dammed and channeled the river into its current form to carry barges and

boat traffic. American Rivers say the river might have been over-engineered reducing it from the natural system it was many years ago.

Gunge.com has said that in 2013, a group of women walked the river's entire length to draw attention to water quality issues. The trip took them about two months.

So how long would a

drop of water take to travel the same distance? First, water speed varies upon location, moving faster past narrower spots and generally flowing faster the further it goes. Speed varies from 1.2 mph to 4 mph. So a single drop would take about 90 days.



The Mississippi River has tributaries that drain from 31 states and two Canadian Provinces.

Using easy-to-hack passwords? Change them now

Is one of your passwords "123456"? The folks at Nord Security say a hacker could figure that out in a second. So much for security as that password choice was used over 3 million times last year, just in the U.S. It was also the most common password worldwide.

Other too-common passwords were "football123456", "password", "qwerty" and "abc123".

So, how should you make a password that's not easy to crack? Experts say use a mix of numbers, letters, and symbols and make it more than 8

characters long. Avoid personal information like birthdays, mother's maiden name, or names of relatives.

The trick is to pick a password not easily guessed. And avoid using the same password on multiple sites, and change them often.

"Pick passwords not easily guessed by others, and avoid the same password on multiple sites."

BOAH at the front of care and regulation

Indiana is second in the nation in ice cream production and leads in low fat ice cream. That was one of many facts that Bret Marsh, DVM, Indiana State Veterinarian shared with attendees at the recent IEHA Annual Fall Educational Conference. Dr. Marsh outlined some

of the history of the Board of Animal Health (BOAH) saying that in 1996, the Dairy Inspection, and Meat & Poultry Inspection Departments moved from the Department of Health to BOAH.

He shared a number of statistics including that Indiana farms produce

over 4 billion pounds of milk yearly. The number of dairy farms has decreased but the size of remaining farms has risen. Automation has increased with 177 automatic milking installations inspected.

Custom exempt meat processors has steadily risen over the years.

AFEC

A new problem with plastic waste: pathogens



Plastic waste in water is now known to harbor pathogens, carrying them as the waste floats along.

A hundred years ago, we didn't know about plastic. Now, the overwhelming amount of plastic waste is causing growing environmental issues, but a product that breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces in the oceans, but never goes away. Microplastics can harm humans and animals that may consume it.

Defenders magazine re-

ported that such plastic waste can actually move pathogens around. Researchers studied *Cryptosporidium*, *Giardia* and *Toxoplasma gondii*, parasites long connected to deaths of mammals and humans, and found traces of pathogens in plastic waste that had floated for miles.

Besides the plastic waste, microbeads, a plastic product often used in

cosmetics and the microfibers in clothing end up in waterways and can float hundreds of miles carrying pathogens.

Plastics can fool marine life into thinking its food, or sink to the bottom of oceans to be eaten by filter feeders such as zooplankton. Better waste filter methods are needed to keep plastic waste out of waste water that ends up in oceans.

Moov-ing away from methane for the climate

“Feed additives can interrupt the microbial processes in a dairy cow’s gut reducing methane perhaps as much as 70%.”

Bovine bodily functions, or cows being cows, are a problem contributing to climate change. Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) has shared its research into how cows contribute to climate change by dispelling methane (from both ends!) that can have a greater impact than carbon emissions. Cows account for about 35% of methane emissions in the U.S. from 94 million cows.

This is a growing concern because methane is a more potent greenhouse gas with about 80 times the world-warming power as carbon dioxide. This translates to about a quarter of the global warming happening today, says EDF.

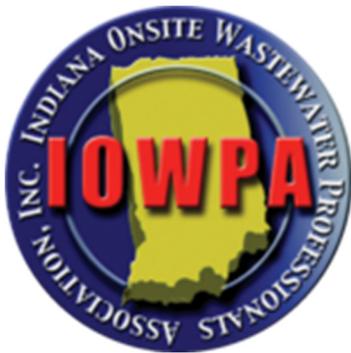
Addressing methane from livestock doesn't mean getting rid of cows. Solutions might include anaerobic digesters for manure, and covering waste lagoons which can contain the methane.



Feed additives can “interrupt” the microbial processes in a cow’s gut, reducing methane. Some feed additives could reduce the gas released by 70%. This might work for dairy cows, but not beef cows that graze in fields. Or a vaccine might be another answer.

Do you have an opinion about a NEHA conference coming to Indiana? There are pros and cons. Watch for an email survey to be sent to IEHA members soon and make your views known. One plus is having a great conference close by. But a negative is the cost to IEHA.

Here are IEHA's sustaining members



IEHA sponsors help IEHA achieve its mission with their strong financial support.



Check out this link presented to members.
It's offered by IEHA President Holley Rose!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjOKIKYAn3s>

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"The Mission of the Indiana Environmental Health Association, Inc. is to promote, preserve and protect environmental public health in the state of Indiana, and to encourage a spirit of cooperation among all environmental health stakeholders while serving its members in the regulatory, industry, and academic communities."

More about IEHA

The Indiana Environmental Health Association, Inc. (IEHA) was founded in 1951 as the Indiana Association of Sanitarians (IAS). There were 16 charter members. The name was officially changed to the Indiana Environmental Health Association in 1985. IEHA is affiliated with the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA), and the International Association for Food Protection (IAFP).

IEHA is comprised of eight regional chapters. They are Central, East Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southeastern, Southern, Wabash Valley, and West Central. There are four standing committees, which include Food Protection, General Environmental Health Services, Terrorism And All Hazards Preparedness, and Wastewater.

The operations of IEHA are governed by an Executive Board that meets regularly. The Board and various standing committees are made up of voting and non-voting members. Information plus meeting dates, times and locations for the chapters and standing committees may be found on the IEHA website listed on this page. All meetings are open to any member or guest but only "voting members" as defined may vote or hold an office.