

## **ODA staff selected to national food protection work groups and related organizations**

**April 8, 2009...** The Oregon Department of Agriculture is providing a strong voice on national food protection issues as several ODA employees have been selected to serve on various work groups and organizations. Among the key invitations extended to ODA staff are appointments to newly-formed Food Protection Workgroups, established by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to improve the nation's ability to ensure a safe food supply.

"We are fortunate to have extremely qualified people on our staff who are recognized as food safety experts and leaders at the national level," says ODA Director Katy Coba. "These folks have the credibility needed to serve important roles as our nation addresses a variety of food-related issues. They will also represent Oregon's interests in national food safety matters."

Establishment of the Food Protection Workgroups is a major step by FDA and CDC to achieve uniformity and consistency in food and feed protection across the nation. The workgroups are responsible for developing strategies for implementation that address specific areas of interest and integrate federal, state, and local food protection activities.

ODA staff members have been selected to serve on three of the four workgroups. They include Vance Bybee (risk-based work planning), Kathleen Wickman (technology), and Susan Kendrick (education and training).

In addition, ODA staff members have attained leadership positions on other national boards and associations related to food and animal feed safety. Ellen Laymon is a member of the executive board for the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO). State Veterinarian Dr. Don Hansen is vice-president of the National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials (NASAHO), and has been appointed to a national task force to establish an alert system for the pet animal industry, pet owners, and veterinarians.

Director Coba is a member of National Association of State Departments of Agriculture's (NASDA) Board of Directors and serves on NASDA's Food Regulation and Nutrition Committee.

The Food Protection Workgroups are expected to begin meeting later this month and report their progress at the next national meeting scheduled for August 2010.

For more information, contact Bruce Pokarney at (503) 986-4559.