



ORA Data Exchange (ORA DX)

Steven Honn

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The Partnership for Food Protection (PFP) Information Technology Workgroup (IT WG) recently had the opportunity to catch-up with Steven Honn, Environmental Health Specialist, FDA Contract Coordinator for Illinois Department of Public Health, for *Coffee Talk* about the ORA DX.

Given that Illinois was the first state to integrate with the Data Exchange, it has been a few years since their first [Coffee Talk](#), and now they share an updated perspective of participating in the Data Exchange.



Hello Steve, tell us about yourself and your role on the ORA DX project.

I am an Environmental Health Specialist with the Illinois Department of Public Health. I initially started as a field inspector with the Illinois Department of Public Health but now act as the FDA Contract Coordinator for Illinois. I manage the FDA contract program and review and submit most of the FDA contract inspections that we complete to eSAF using NFSDX.



Now that Illinois has been using the ORA DX System-to-System capabilities for a few years, what efficiencies have been gained by your department for data sharing activities?



With a few exceptions, field inspectors no longer have to complete double entry in both USA FoodSafety and eSAF. Staff prefer not to have to spend time in eSAF. Some staff are not as comfortable with eSAF as USA FoodSafety.



What challenges have been encountered using the ORA DX?



FDA will make changes or additions in contract submittal requirements in eSAF, and then our vendor has to make changes in USA FoodSafety. Unfortunately, the USA FoodSafety changes trail behind when contract changes are effective, meaning we have to create workarounds until USA FoodSafety catches up with the changes. Coordination of changes could be better between FDA, USA FoodSafety vendor, and the states.



Have you and/or your team members attended any ORAPP trainings? If so, how was it helpful for data sharing activities?



I have attended an ORAPP training. It was helpful to learn to navigate the ORAPP platform.



What ORA DX capabilities does Illinois plan to use in the future?



We very much look forward to the upcoming attachment functionality when submitting FDA contract inspections. We hope this new functionality will eliminate an extra step of emailing all materials to our FDA State Liaison. We also look forward to having the Intentional Adulteration (IA) questions added to the inspection transmittal so that we no longer have to login to eSAF and add that information.



What changes have occurred within your agency related to inspections and data sharing due to COVID-19?



We are calling firms ahead of time to discuss the COVID situation/inspection protocols, such as requesting firm records/information so that we can spend less time at the site. We are also coordinating with the firm so that some of their staff can remain at home but be available for questions if needed during inspection time. In addition, we will verify that the firm has COVID-19 screening procedures, requires masks, and ask when the last COVID positive case was at the facility.



Looking ahead, are there functionalities you would like to see in the DX? How would this impact your data sharing activities?



The ability to request changes from FDA on assignments through USA FoodSafety without having to access eSAF (for example, firms that are out of business). Also, it would be helpful to build in some functionality on billing so that we do not have to submit a list of completed assignments each quarter to FDA (so it is all seamless).



What is your advice for states considering the DX?



I would say that the DX is very useful in terms that it can reduce the burden on individual inspectors and entering data into eSAF. I would develop a training aid to educate staff on how to properly enter information into the state system for transfer to eSAF. These states should consider becoming involved with the Partnership for Food Protection (PFP) Information Technology Workgroup and be prepared to have staff dedicated to attend all of the meetings between the states, FDA, and AFDO.



Is there anything else about your DX experience that you would like to share?



In my time working with the data exchange, I feel that FDA and AFDO have a strong commitment to make the process successful and very much look forward to all the new functionalities coming down the road.

The PFP IT WG thanks Steven Honn and his team for their support of the ORA Data Exchange (DX) program and the PFP. We look forward to continued collaboration with the Illinois Department of Public Health on expanding the ORA DX program.

For questions or information about the ORA DX program or the PFP IT WG, contact us at Info@fda.hhs.gov.



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