

Bug Bytes

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While activity is buzzing around the legislation that was introduced to require a WDO inspection, there are still many other activities going on unrelated to the Bill.

SELF REPORTING – ARE GAS STATIONS ‘FOOD HANDLING ESTABLISHMENTS’?

Today at the Commission meeting, Josh Wiley reported that more companies had come forward recently to self-report. This is good.

What was revealed, however, was a common misconception that a gas station might be a ‘food handling establishment’. Does the facility have a soda fountain machine, do they have a hot dog roller, do they serve food from the dairy case? Today, most gas stations serve some type of food – and if they do the facility now becomes a food handling establishment.

I can’t think of a single gas station that I frequent (save the fast pump stations at Walmart or Kroger) that doesn’t offer some type of coffee service, doughnuts or fruit. Please be aware that you must treat these facilities the same as you would a diner or other traditional food service facility.

SCHOOLS –

If you attended the Athens Conference, you may have heard Dr. Forschler’s intern report on a research project that reviewed Georgia Department of Agriculture enforcement reports relative to school action. The intern spent days at the GDA pouring over all the Department records with the purpose of developing some type of report showing the most common violation and other critical data.

The data is voluminous and they have not compiled a final report. However, one thing that did stick out was it appears that the average time spent in a school for treatment is 30 minutes. ?????XXL#\$^*()??????? Could this be right?

Later this year, Dr. Forschler will provide the report for the Commission to review. We’ll share as soon as we see some hard data.

FURLOUGH DAYS

The Department of Agriculture will be closed February 26, March 26 and April 23 as required furlough days.

OUT OF STATE COMPANIES

GDA Inspectors have started requesting files from pest control companies who are physically located outside Georgia, but service accounts in our state. Inspectors are asking the DCO to bring specified files to a Georgia location to meet with them.

Couple of things:

- 1 These companies are licensed to do business in Georgia, but it is likely they have had ‘light’ inspection in the past. This focus will provide equal inspection for all the licensed pest control companies.

- 2 The inspectors may ask for the DCO to bring files, for example – all the service tickets for 2009. This might be tremendously cumbersome. If there is a problem, the out-of-state company should call Josh Wiley at 404/656-3641 and explain the volume of paperwork that will have to be transported. Usually, some arrangement can be made to trim the paperwork to a reasonable amount.

For many years, the Georgia Department of Agriculture had relied on the surrounding states (S.C., AL, FL, TN, NC) to do these inspections. They believe that more attention is needed – hence the new focus.

CRAM DAY

The next GPCA CRAM day will be March 11 at the GPCA office. Please see the attached flyer for more information.

SERVICE TICKETS

Don't forget to order your service tickets. We can usually get the orders turned around within 48 hours, but as spring approaches the orders have been heavier so it may take a couple more days. Please order early so there is no delay in shipping your tickets. For a sample ticket, please go to the GPCA.org website or call the GPCA office for sample and pricing information.

HOUSE BILL 1048

Since this is the 800 pound gorilla in the corner, we don't put the BugBytes to bed without an update. According to Skin Edge, the Realtors, the Home Builders and Mortgage Bankers are all opposed to HB 1048. However, when they are asked why, they are having some difficulty in explaining their reasons.

Skin advised that our members need to continue their efforts to call the House Rules Committee. We hope that it will leave Rules soon and go to the House Floor for vote. *Then we can start on the Senate!*

FUTURE EVENTS AND REGION MEETINGS

For a complete list of region meetings and events, please go to GPCA.org for the most up-to-date information.