CIFOR

Council to Improve Foodborne Outbreak Response

Detect • Investigate • Control • Prevent

CIFOR Laboratory-Epidemiology (Lab-Epi) Integrated Reporting Software

The CIFOR Lab-Epi Integrated Reporting Software facilitates structured reporting of laboratory data, leading to the rapid identification of foodborne disease clusters by public health personnel.

Background

A limited number of public health foodborne disease programs receive daily reports from their public health laboratory, and fewer still receive the information in a format which facilitates rapid identification of foodborne disease clusters. Programs with good data handling practices are generally more successful at identifying and successfully investigating in-state and multistate foodborne disease outbreaks. Rapid identification of foodborne disease clusters improves case recall during investigations and increases the chance that an outbreak will be solved and public health interventions will be successful.

Under the auspices of the Council to Improve Foodborne Outbreak Response (CIFOR), the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) worked with a contractor and several pilot sites to develop software that analyzes patient laboratory results (e.g. serotype, subtype and other) to identify patterns or clusters that would suggest a possible outbreak or situation of interest. The application is intended as a tool for public health personnel conducting disease surveillance for foodborne pathogens to more quickly identify potential clusters of enteric illness within their own jurisdiction. The software can also be used to share information between jurisdictions for regional surveillance, and may be modified to accept data from both epidemiology and laboratory systems to create integrated reports.

Product Overview

The CIFOR Lab-Epi software is an open source application that accepts laboratory data files in a structured format. It is a stand-alone, desktop application that does not use a web browser or internet access and does not share data with any other application.

The software has been designed to be database independent and platform independent, and represents a universal technology which can be used to improve outbreak detection until automated and continuous electronic epidemiology/laboratory links and cluster detection and evaluation mechanisms can be established.

Contact

The CIFOR Lab-Epi Integrated Reporting Software is available free of charge at www.cifor.us. For more information about the software, please contact Kirsten Larson at APHL at (240) 485-2759 or Kirsten.Larson@aphl.org.

Member Organizations

- Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO)
- Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL)
- Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE)*
- Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- National Association of County and City Health Official (NACCHO)*
- National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA)
- National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians (NASPHV)
- National Environmental Health Association (NEHA)

*CIFOR is co-chaired by CSTE and NACCHO.