



Foodborne Attribution: The Communications Challenge

Presentation to Risk Communication Advisory Committee
Interagency Food Safety Analytics Collaboration (IFSAC)

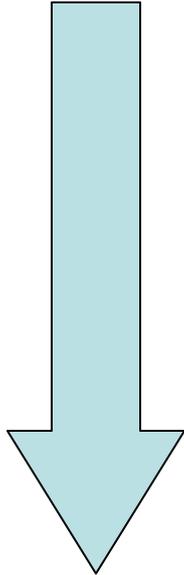
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Challenge of Evolving Methodologies

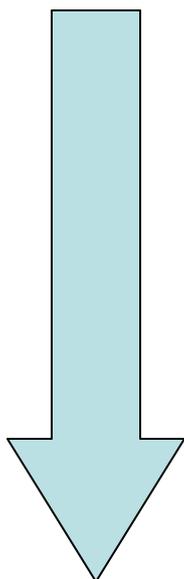
- Evolving methodologies may impact trust.
 - How do we effectively communicate that we are using the best information we have now to inform decision making, but that we are also working to improve the data and methodologies?
- Evolving methodologies challenge our ability to understand changes over time
 - How can we communicate about trends when dealing with evolving (i.e. improving) methodology?
 - Uncertainty estimates were not always included and do not always include all uncertainty

Proposal 1: Percent of Salmonella illnesses from Rogueberries



Time period (month, quarter, year)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Method 1	3.1%	4.7%	3.8%			
Method 2				4.6%	5.1%	
Method 3						7.1%

Proposal 2: Percent of Salmonella illnesses from Rogueberries



Time period (month, quarter, year)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Method 1	3.1%	4.7%	3.8%	4.2%	4.8%	4.1%
Method 2				4.6%	5.1%	3.8%
Method 3						7.1%

Challenge of Multiple Interpretations of Data

- U.S. attribution estimates exist outside of federal agencies
 - We are working to align agency fractions, but other estimates will always exist
 - What level of effort is needed from us to address these discrepancies?
 - How can we minimize stakeholder confusion as a result of these many estimates being available?
 - Stakeholders are requesting more data availability⁵

Challenge of Trust and Confidence in Results that will be used for Decision Making

- What guidance can you give us about how to communicate with stakeholders in a way that helps build trust?
- What guidance can you give us about keeping stakeholders updated on work on changing methodologies, without causing confusion?

Specific Examples of Challenges

- Negative impacts on state and local agencies who are collecting data
- Lack of comparability between the Scallan and Mead papers
 - Much effort in public messaging was about the fact that these could not be compared
- OMB wants outcome-based performance measures (which require attribution information) but they push back when goals and targets change due to methodology changes

Questions

- 1) How to communicate clearly to multiple audiences (industry, media, public) about evolving methodology producing quantitative conclusions and simultaneously project a message of confidence and assurance that the estimates we are using now are the best science-based data-driven estimates that are available to inform decision making at this time.
- 2) How to learn what degree of detail is important to different audiences, such as the nature and status of the data available and the methods of analyzing it
- 3) How can we explain the basis for our confidence in using the current method as well as acknowledging the uncertainty?

Questions

- 4) How to communicate clearly to multiple audiences when there may not be actionable steps to take for all audience members; rather, the key message for industry may be how to participate in improved food safety surveillance and reporting, but for the public, it is just to understand changing numbers as reflecting evolving methodology as well as evolving food safety
- 5) How to communicate both directly and working with media channels to communicate clearly to multiple audiences so that we appear as forthright as we intend to be, in brief, that numbers and methods are changing to reflect the improved methods available now, but not to cover up information or previous statements that were based on methods that are now outmoded but were the standard of their day.

Questions

- 6) How to help stakeholders and interested parties navigate many diverse sets of attribution information being generated outside the federal agencies, and inspire trust in the government estimates even though they will not always be consistent with other estimates.
- 7) How to integrate communications concerns such as these throughout the initiative



Thank you!