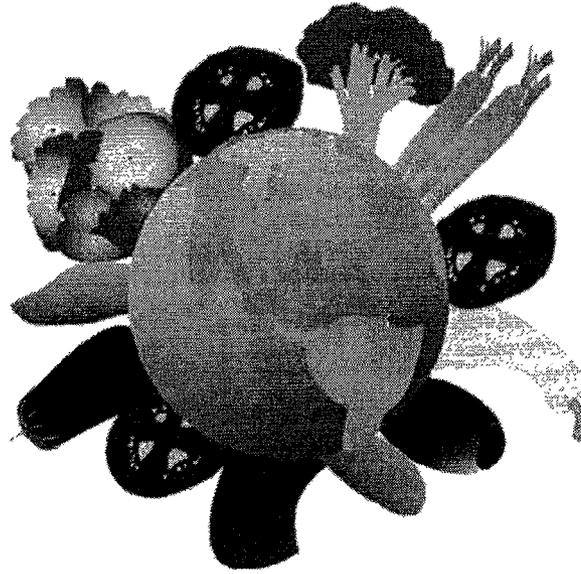


2004N-0258



Toward A Real Action Plan

Laurie J. Girand
Safe Tables Our Priority

www.safetables.org

June 29, 2004

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You know, we, as always, have the most to lose and, you know, the newspapers and the press seem to forget that. But, you know, I would encourage everyone, each and every processor, to do their best to upgrade the safety of their product.*

-- Marc Isaacs, President, Sun Orchard,
FDA Technical Workshop, Lake Alfred, Florida; 11/12/98

* "we" refers to unpasteurized citrus juice producers

Lettuce Outbreak Victims



Haylee, 1996



Rustin, 2003

Not Just A “Little” Diarrhea: Food Poisoning

- Laboratory-defined biohazards
- Explosive, bloody diarrhea
- Convulsive cramping
- Proceeding to blood poisoning, organ failure, miscarriage
- Sequelae include autoimmune disorders, kidney failure
- Groups Most Affected: children, elderly, immune impaired, including pregnant women

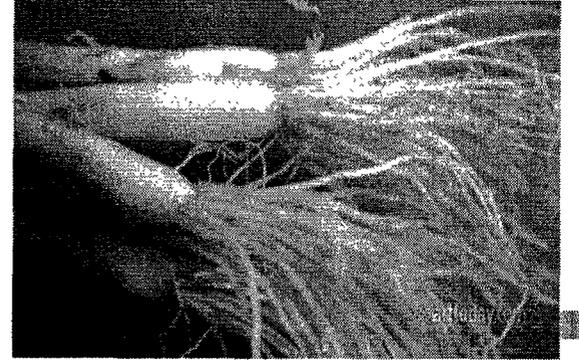
Food Safety Facts

Produce Outbreaks are Mostly Caused By Contamination of Food with Animal Feces

- Direct contact/application
 - Intentional: “fertilizing”
 - Unintentional: farm and wild animals in growing areas, food on ground
- Indirect contact/application
 - Flies, birds
 - Windborne dust from nearby feedlots, preserves
 - Contaminated water (sprayed, irrigated, runoff)



MORE Food Safety Facts



- Sprouts uptake pathogens and become contaminated from root to “leaf”
- Broken edges of lettuce absorb pathogens
- Tomatoes and apples can absorb pathogens in water through stem or flower end
- Pathogens form tough biofilms on exterior of produce to withstand normal washing
- Pathogens survive for many months in soil, at least a year in manure

EVEN More Food Safety Facts

- The only effective method for consumers to prevent illness is cooking to high temperatures.
- Rinsing/washing fecal pathogen-contaminated fruit and vegetables with cold water as a prevention against severe illness is contradicted by science

Underlying Principles for 2004 Produce Safety Action Plan

- Focus on preventing contamination in the first place
- Treat ground grown foods differently from pole foods, differently from orchards. Add additional regulations by food and process.
- Regulations must be mandatory across all producers. Inspect for compliance.

Ten Steps to Safer Produce

1) Regulate Manure and the Application of Human Waste to Crops

- End use of untreated manure on crops and crop fields
- Mandate manure aging of at least one year or composting
- Composting and aging should be verified by testing
- No manure bought, sold or distributed without composting or aging

Ten Steps to Safer Produce

1) Regulate Manure and the Application of Human Waste to Crops (continued)

- Manure/compost to only be applied before crop is planted
- Soil quality standards set vis a vis pathogens
- Mandatory soil testing if near animal farm or wildlife; produce testing if soil is contaminated
- Prohibition of human waste or undertreated human waste water to be used on crops

Ten Steps to Safer Produce

2) Restrict proximity of animal farms to crop farms

3) Mandate water quality

4) Inspect farms for fecal hygiene and sanitation

5) Require national registration of growers, others in the food business



Ten Steps to Safer Produce

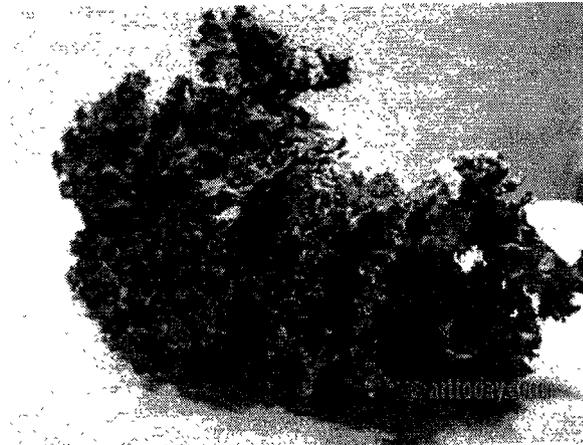
6) Require safety certification

7) Require traceback

8) Require Farm-of-origin and
Country-of-Origin labeling

9) Maintain list of national outbreaks

10) Penalize industries that cause repeated outbreaks



Hard Choices?

- Delay and experiment
- Embrace and act on current science



Anna McGregor, Survivor
Seven Years After 1996 Odwalla Apple Juice Outbreak,
in which a toddler died

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