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# Enhancing State and Local Roles in Food Safety

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## First notice: June 3, 2008

- “From April 23 through June 1, 2008, there have been 57 reported cases of salmonellosis...”
- “FDA is working diligently with the states...”
- Local, state health officials are the front line in outbreak detection

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# How to improve coordination

Single food agency?

- Might work at federal level but...
  - 50+ state agencies
  - Thousands of local agencies
  - Each with unique responsibilities beyond just food safety
- Need a better model

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# Outbreak Communication

- With federal agencies
  - Teasing an outbreak from the background
- With media
  - Must be accurate, timely, consistent, not misleading
- With industry
  - Rarely heard

# Outbreak Investigation

- Action plan
  - Coordinated roles / responsibilities
  - All resources fully leveraged?
  - Role for industry?
- Communication plan
  - Messaging must be consistent
  - No one wants to see it on the internet first
- Training / practice

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# Outbreak Avoidance

- No one wants a consumer illness on their watch – industry or government
- Local, state officials and regulated industry must work together before an outbreak
  - Mutual education
  - Build trust (“gotcha” model doesn’t work)

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# Florida Tomato Commission

“The Florida tomato industry has been working with FDA [and FDACS] for several years, and it paid dividends to help Florida growers survive.”

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# Outbreak Avoidance

- Understanding of abilities, responsibilities and obligations
  - Mutual respect
  - People call the people they know and trust
- Difficult to do for both sides
  - Real and perceived barriers

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# The Future

- Neither the produce industry nor consumers can live with the current approach to outbreak management
- Solutions are not going to be easy but...
- "...claims that 'we cannot take action until we know the cause' are unacceptable." –FDA, 2005