

ASSURING SAFETY OF IMPORTED FOODS

Public and Private Roles in a Risk-Based System

February 1-2, 2010 | RFF Conference Center, 1616 P St NW, Washington, DC

Agenda

The Food Safety Research Consortium (FSRC) – a multi-disciplinary collaboration of eight US research institutions – and the Emerging Pathogens Institute of the University of Florida (EPI) present a two-day workshop that will bring together participants from the private sector, government, academia, and advocacy communities to discuss the obstacles and opportunities to improve the safety of food imported into the United States.

The workshop focuses on the implementation challenges to creating a more risk-based approach to food import safety built upon coordinated efforts of both government and the private sector. Such an approach can be described as a differentiated system in which government defines an overall system of safety assurance including systems in exporting countries and within the United States, and private firms take steps to ensure and verify the low-risk status of their imported foods in exchange for expedited ease-of-entry. The goal of the workshop is to make concrete and actionable recommendations on such a system, particularly in light of pending food safety legislation.

The workshop will include presentations, panels, and discussions that center on five areas:

- **Defining a risk-based approach:** What do we mean by a risk-based approach to import safety? What are the key principles that define such an approach?
- **Measuring risk factors:** What are the most important physical and behavioral factors influencing the risk associated with a given country, type of product, or specific shipment? What criteria can be used by the public and private sectors to monitor these factors or evaluate risk?
- **Developing risk-based protocols:** What tools and approaches could be or should be used to evaluate imported foods for risk, or to organize them into risk categories? How could such risk categorizations or evaluations be used to target resources towards high-risk goods or facilitate ease of entry for low-risk goods?
- **Coordinating public and private efforts:** What are the available and preferred options to enable public and private coordination for imported food safety? What steps are necessary to ensure that third-party audits or other private schemes are legitimate, accurate, and meaningful?
- **Identifying information needs:** What information is needed by public and private parties to support a risk-based system? Which of these needs are not currently being met? Which of these data are being collected but inefficiently shared, and which are not being collected at all?

The workshop is funded through a conference grant awarded by the National Integrated Food Safety Initiative (NIFSI) of the USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The workshop planning committee includes representatives of all eight FSRC institutions: Glenn Morris (chair) and Michael Batz (the University of Florida), Bob Buchanan (the University of Maryland), Julie Caswell (the University of Massachusetts), Mike Doyle (the University of Georgia), Sandy Hoffmann (Resources for the Future), Michele Jay-Russell (the University of California, Davis), Helen Jensen (Iowa State University), and Ewen Todd (Michigan State University).

Directions to the workshop and additional information can be found on the workshop website: <http://www.thefsrc.org/importsafety.htm>. Slide sets and support materials will be posted following the workshop, pending speaker permission.

FEBRUARY 1

8:00 – 8:30 REGISTRATION AND CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

8:30 – 10:50 SESSION 1: CHALLENGES IN FOOD IMPORT SAFETY

This session will provide various perspectives on the challenges and solutions to food import safety, start to define a risk-based approach, and discuss the impacts of pending food safety legislation.

Welcome: **Mark Cohen**, Resources for the Future

Opening remarks: **J. Glenn Morris, Jr.**, Emerging Pathogens Institute, University of Florida: *Workshop Background and Goals: Towards Risk-Based Food Import Safety*

Panel remarks, followed by question and answer discussion:

- **Steve Solomon**, US Food and Drug Administration
- **Ronald Jones**, USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service
- **Art Liang**, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- **Marion Aller**, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- **Tony Corbo**, Food and Water Watch
- **Bob Brackett**, Grocery Manufacturers Association

Presentation and discussion:

- **Caroline Smith DeWaal**, Center for Science in the Public Interest: *Implications for Import Safety in Pending US Food Safety Legislation*

10:50 – 11:00 BREAK

11:00 – 12:30 SESSION 2: INFORMATION NEEDS FOR A RISK-BASED SYSTEM

This session will discuss the physical, behavioral, and economic factors that influence risk, the criteria that might be used to evaluate risk, and the information needs to support such evaluations.

Moderator: **Helen Jensen**, Iowa State University

Panel presentations, followed by question and answer discussion:

- **Frank Busta**, University of Minnesota: *Risk Factors: Product and Process Specific Criteria*
- **Spencer Henson**, University of Guelph, Canada, and Institute of Development Studies, UK: *Food Safety Risks in Global Supply Chains: A Behavioural Perspective*
- **Laurian Unnevehr**, Economic Research Service, US Department of Agriculture: *Information Needs for Creating Incentives in Global Supply Chains*

12:30 – 1:15 LUNCH

1:15 – 3:15 SESSION 3: TOOLS AND APPROACHES FOR EVALUATING RISK AND TARGETING RESOURCES

This session explore some of the approaches used by the public sector to target limited inspection resources and to evaluate risk at the country, product, or shipment level.

Moderator: **Sandra Hoffmann**, Resources for the Future

Panel presentations, followed by question and answer discussion:

- **Sabine Hertveldt**, International Finance Corporation: *Country-Level Indicators: Lessons from the World Bank Group's "Doing Business" Project*
- **Erin Dreyling**, USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service: *Risk-Based Approach to Foreign Country Audits and Port-of-Entry Reinspections*
- **Steve Kendall**, US Food and Drug Administration: *The PREDICT System for Import Screening*
- **Bjarke Bak Christensen**, National Food Institute, Denmark: *Case-by-Case Risk Assessments of Domestic and Imported Foods in Denmark*

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3:15 – 3:30 **BREAK**

3:30 – 4:30 **FIRST BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION**

Moderators: **Mike Doyle**, University of Georgia
 Ewen Todd, Michigan State University
 Juliana Ruzante, JIFSAN, University of Maryland

The goal of the first breakout session is to draw on previous discussions to address principle issues related to defining and implementing a risk-based approach to import safety. Informal groups will work to identify and prioritize responses, and prioritized responses of the three groups will be compared the following day. Topics of discussion are likely to include: measuring risk factors (e.g. What are the most important factors affecting likelihood of contamination? What measurable criteria should be used to evaluate risk?); developing risk-based protocols (e.g. What approaches should be used to categorize imported goods into risk categories? What are the biggest challenges to the development and use of such approaches?); and identifying information needs (e.g. What information is needed by public and private parties to support a risk-based system? Which of these needs are not being met, and why?).

4:30 **ADJOURN**

FEBRUARY 2

8:00 – 8:30 **CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST**

8:30 – 10:00 **SESSION 4: COORDINATING PUBLIC OVERSIGHT AND
PRIVATE FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT**

The goal is to explore the implications and challenges of a differentiated regulatory model in which the public sector provides primary oversight and defines an overall system of safety assurance, but in which private firms take steps to ensure and verify that their imported foods are of low-risk.

Moderator: **Julie Caswell**, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Panel and presentations:

- **Bob Buchanan**, University of Maryland: *The Emerging Role of Risk Management Metrics*
- **Albert Chambers**, Monachus Consulting, Ottawa, Canada: *Understanding and Comparing Food Safety Schemes: Private Benchmarking & Government Recognition*
- **Linda Calvin**, Economic Research Service, US Department of Agriculture: *Produce Imports and Food Safety*

10:00 – 10:15 **BREAK**

10:15 – 12:15 **SESSION 5: MANAGING FOOD SAFETY IN GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS**

The goal of this session is to examine the challenges for food safety in global supply chain management, to learn from those implementing safety assurance programs for imports on a worldwide, and to discuss how these tools can be expanded and improved moving forward.

Presentations:

- **S. Andrew Starbird**, Santa Clara University: *Incentivizing the Buyer/Supplier Relationship for Food Safety*
- **Jennifer McEntire**, Institute of Food Technologists: *Food Supply Chain Complexities: Real World Challenges*

Moderated panel discussion:

- **Bob Bauer**, Association of Food Industries
- **Bobby Love**, Phillips Foods
- **Jason Lambros**, Coastal Sunbelt Produce
- **Susan Brown**, McCormick and Company
- **Gale Prince**, Your Food Safety Coach LLC

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12:15 – 1:30 LUNCH AND SECOND BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION

Moderators: **Mike Doyle**, University of Georgia
Ewen Todd, Michigan State University
Michele Jay-Russell, University of California, Davis

The goal of the second breakout session is to draw on the previous sessions to address principle issues in public and private roles and information needs to assure import safety. As much as possible, groups from the first day will gather together again to address a second set of issues. Topics of discussion are likely to include: coordinating public and private efforts (e.g. What are roles for the public sector and private sector in assuring imported foods are safe? What verification or enforcement mechanisms are necessary to support the use of third-party certification in government import safety programs?); developing risk-based protocols (e.g. What tools or approaches are needed to support the use of private food safety schemes in a public system of safety assurance?); and identifying information needs (e.g. What information is needed by public and private parties to support a risk-based system? Which of these needs are not being met, and why?).

1:30 – 1:45 BREAK

1:45 – 2:30 BREAKOUT GROUP REPORTS AND CONCLUSIONS

In the final plenary session, the breakout groups will briefly report their findings and recommendations to the full conference, and the full group will discuss areas of consensus and disagreement. The most important recommendations will be identified, along with suggested next steps.

2:30 ADJOURN