

## **Marion Aller**

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

### **A State Perspective - Talking Points**

#### **FSRC Workshop: "Assuring Safety of Imported Food"**

**1 February 2010**

Recognize limited resource from federal partners and the impracticality of testing every lot of every food in every shipment

Nonetheless, collectively, states and local jurisdictions conduct the majority of inspections (80-90%) and regulatory food sampling analyses and it is the states that are usually left to deal with the adulterated/misbranded product once it leaves import status.

NY: 30% of imported foods enter thru NY ports. Diverse population, many products remain in the state. 75% of the recalls initiated by NY involve imported products

Frustration from states centers around the repeated nature of the problems. Port shopping – product is allowed to be returned to exporting company, where it may be returned to the US under a different name or to a different port. As a result, some states have taken the position that adulterated product may not be returned under any circumstances....

– CA has developed a lead in candy program following years of finding elevated levels in imports.

Frustration with federal authorities regarding acceptability of laboratory analyses. Recent case in one state involved elevated lead in plums – state analytical results were not considered sufficient – and level of federal response greatly diminished (not on import alert).

Additional examples include dietary supplements (heavy metals); raw milk cheeses (listeriosis)..

Point being that while some of these cases eventually gain size and attention sufficient to rise to federal attention, in the meantime it is the states that are left holding the bag.

We are all 'government' but the media and public recognize the state has authority to regulate most foods and expect the state not only respond to the finding, but prevent the problems to begin with. "It's not my job" doesn't cut it.

Need to develop mechanism to use state information - mine existing data to inform risk based approaches. Then use states to assist w/ monitoring of effectiveness of federal efforts. Must develop criteria for acceptance of inspection, lab analyses....

*Prepared by Marion Aller, February, 2010*