

Certifying and Verifying Produce Safety in the Supply Chain

Tom Chestnut

VP – Supply Chain Food Safety & Quality

NSF International

Role of Third-Party Audits and Support in a Supplier's Fresh Vegetable Program

- Support internal programs and verify functionality on behalf of the supplier, as well as buyers
- Gives outside perspective on food safety issues
- Stress education and continuous improvement

Role of Third-Party Audits and Support in a Restaurant/Retail Fresh Vegetable Program

- Addressing field level risks
- Resource capability
- “Trust and Verify” approach
- Collaborative programs – grower/buyer/3rd party

NSF Davis Fresh - Produce Safety Verification/Certification Processes (Draft – 2/07)



Level 2

- Field Operations Program Evaluation
- Field Operations Audits – FSLC and “Best Practices” with Auto-Fail Points
- Water Testing Standards (*E. coli* undetectable)
- Compost Testing
- Risk-based, pre-harvest microbiological testing of products (*E. coli*, *Salmonella*)
- Pre-harvest “critical controls” mini-audit
- Processing/Packing Facility Audits
- Tamper-evident packaging to prevent “re-packs” during distribution
- Product-specific cold chain temperature monitoring/verification

Level 3

- Field Operations Program Evaluation
- Field Operations Audits – Client Defined Auto-Fail Points
- Water Testing Standards (*E. coli* <100MPN/100ml for non-food contact application)
- Compost Testing
- Processing/Packing Facility Audits
- Field Operations Audits - auto-fail and scoring criteria defined by clients
- Processing/packing Facility Audits – client set auto-fail and scoring criteria

Produce Safety Guidelines/Standards

- FDA
- United Fresh/WGA
- California Marketing Agreement
- Food Safety Leadership Council
- SQF
- 3rd Party Audits

Consensus National Standards

- **American National Standards Institute (ANSI)** oversees U.S. consensus national standards
- Government and industry rely on these standards
 - NSF, ASTM, ASME, IEEE, UL, SAE, AOAC
- **OMB Circular A119** promotes “Federal Participation in the Development and Use of Voluntary Standards and Conformity Assessment”

About NSF International

- Founded 1944 by University of Michigan SPH faculty
 - Originally named *National Sanitation Foundation*
 - Standards for foodservice equipment
- Product certification and education followed
- Independent, not-for-profit, 501(c)3 organization

About NSF/ANSI Public Health Standards

- More than 50 U.S. national standards in public health
- Follow ANSI accredited standards development process
- Input from all stakeholders, including Federal agencies
- Frequent reviews incorporate latest technologies

Oversight of NSF Standards by Council of Public Health Consultants

- Unique public health ratification step for standards
- Approximately 35 members; No industry representation
- Regulatory, academic and public health professionals
- Local, State, Federal and International representation
 - Includes FDA, CDC, EPA, CPSC
- Review and vote on all standards

NSF Development of National Standards for Produce Processing/Packing and GAP

- February, 2007 “pin” submission to ANSI
- Announcement – March 9th edition of *ANSI Standards Action*
- Next Steps – assess stakeholder interest, form Joint Committee
- 6-24 month process
- “Draft” Standards for interim use

Summary

- Brand Risk – getting worse, not better
- Need for an American National Standards
- Know your suppliers and 3rd party auditing companies – “trust and verify”
- Time for Action: $1+1 = 3$ (the need for consensus and collaboration)

Supplier/Grower Produce Safety

-  .01% - High Risk
-  19.99% - Excellent Programs
-  80% - Follow "Best Practices"

