
Collaborative Food Safety Forum
Enhancing Early Outbreak Investigations—Information-sharing and Response
December 11, 2012
Acting Swiftly for Public Health

• Spinach outbreak of 2006
  – Word to produce industry in the summer that action would be swift
  – Sept. 14, 2006: many participants on call
  – Govt. announces not to eat spinach
  – Sept. 15: focus solely on Earthbound Farm
Opportunities for better communication

• FBI raid in October
  – Most of the information they wanted the FDA already had

• Tomato/pepper outbreak in 2008
  – Simple question to industry would have enhanced the investigation greatly and shifted focus early
Can Industry Help?

- Most knowledgeable of process/product
- Value in data?
  - Earthbound Farm’s pathogen testing program
    - FDA/NASA risk modeling tool
- Voluntary Net
  - Industry, CDC and UGA collaboration
  - Industry database of pathogens in the food system
  - Provide industry and CDC with historical information for risk assessment of regions or food products
  - Provide an early warning of emerging outbreak and link for companies to take early action
What’s Preventing Collaboration?

- History and storytelling
- Fear from industry?
- Lack of trust from regulators?
- Academic disconnect?
- Time to move forward
  - Actions speak louder than words
  - Model good behavior
  - Government agencies must work together
  - Industry must protect themselves

Trust?......... TRUST!