FOODBORNE ILLNESS
MULTIPLE FIREWALLS
&
SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES

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Multiple Firewalls Are Key to Prevention

- Farmers and ranchers
- Packers and processors
- Educators
- Consumers
Farmers and Ranchers

• Need to be able to identify sources of microorganisms without destroying the economic viability of farms and ranches.
  – May need a new form of crop insurance.
  – Importance of “testing to find.”
Packers and Processors

– $500,000,000 invested in innovation using open technology.
– Recalls cost $billions in loss of demand
– Hudson Foods and Beef America went out of business when facilities were tainted by E. coli O157:H7 outbreaks.
– Subject to USDA comprehensive regulations and the risk of suspension of operations.
– Exposed to litigation, which Economic Research Service describes as inefficient.
**E. coli O157:H7**

The costs during the past 10 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost Category</th>
<th>(in millions of $)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact on demand</td>
<td>$1,584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on boneless beef prices</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital expenditure by top 10 packers</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased operating costs for top 10</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending by next 20 packers</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recall costs incurred by packers</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government and industry research</td>
<td>65</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,671</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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Educators

– Food safety education must be more than public-service announcements.

– Food safety education needs to be given higher priority and deserves more resources.
Consumers

• Must be engaged by industry, government and educators.

• Consumers are the last firewall, where failure can be unspeakably tragic.
Government

• Needs to accommodate new technology.
• Needs to maintain uniformity in managing thousands of inspectors.
• Needs to provide incentives for excellence and innovation, while punishing willful or negligent non-compliance.
Responding to Food Safety Failures

- Corrective actions - HACCP
- Suspensions and notices of intended enforcement.
- Financial liability – a blunt instrument and a minimal deterrent.
- Criminal liability for willful violations – ultimate deterrent.
Who is Responsible?

• Responsibility for preventing foodborne illness is shared by all of us.

• When one of us fails, we all fail.