Industry collaborations for a safe food future

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Overview

• The food safety operating environment
• Supply chains and suppliers
• Australia New Zealand initiative to lead safe fresh produce for the future
The Food Safety Operating Environment – Consumer Issues

- Price, quality and convenience
- Extended shelf life yet fresh
- Everything, everywhere, anytime
- Wholesome, healthy, safe food

Health promotion

SAFE FOOD

Other important attributes
- Clean food
- Ethical issues
- Organic/green

SUPPLY CHAIN
Imported, domestic and exported fresh and processed product
QA from grower → packer → wholesaler/exporter/processor/food service → retailer/restaurant

Customer requirements

Regulatory requirements

Underpinning systems and processes
- Issues/crisis management
- Consumer and industry education
- Chemical and microbial verification
- Critical limits for chemicals and micro
- Plant protection product registration
- Product identification and traceability

- Business continuity/resilience
- Industry resources for guidance
- Food safety system facilitation and audit
- Programs for documents and records
- Relationship/integration with biosecurity, WH&S, organic/environmental, ethical, fraud, marketing programs, other requirements
Modern supply chains put more at stake

- Supply chain or supply web?
  - Many chains are still straightforward
  - Many are becoming more complex

- Increasing food service sector for QSRs, event catering, institutional meals, airlines, etc
- Meal solutions have moved on from ‘meat and three veg’
- Higher shelf life expectations from higher risk products
- Greater opportunity for cross contamination
Suppliers
– global, complex and risky

• How safe are suppliers?
  • SGS Research – typically, just 25% of a company’s supply chain is risk assessed
  • “Supply chains are characterised by poor collaboration and communication”
  • Nestle EV olive oil – 6 tiers/250 vendor sites; 2X sold
    • Fraud, substitution
What’s at stake?

Trust and reputation

• Failure tests consumer loyalty
  – Many options
  – Hard earned – easily lost

• Cost of recall

• Downtime
A new paradigm for future food safety - the Fresh Produce Safety Centre

- Produce Marketing Association Australia-New Zealand (PMA A-NZ) and University of Sydney recognized need for a greater focus for food safety R&D and outreach
- PMA A-NZ and University of Sydney had Horticulture Australia (HAL) project to quantify the need – matched funds
- Further project established the structure
- Now have an industry-based Board and a Technical Committee both with A-NZ representation
- FPSC is hosted by The University of Sydney
FPSC Objectives

Research
- Identify priorities for research into food safety
- Commission & manage research projects

Outreach
- Increase awareness, provide information, news, education
- Forums and conferences

Collaboration
- Across all sectors of fresh produce supply chain
- Regulatory authorities
- International organisations (e.g. Center for Produce Safety)
The Research Projects...

1. Guidelines for Fresh Produce Food Safety
   • Through-chain from planting to retail store
   • Australia and New Zealand best practice
   • Sponsors:
     – Woolworths
     – NSW Food Authority
     – Freshcare
     – N2N
     – Fresh Select
     – AUS-QUAL
The Research Projects...

2. Understanding the Gaps – A Food Safety Literature Review

- Focus is on microbiological contamination
  - Agricultural (pre-harvest) water
  - Organic inputs and composting
  - The storage environment
  - Other production inputs
  - Interaction of sanitisers and fungicides
- The latest research results, plus identifying gaps in our knowledge for future R&D
- Insights that can be incorporated into the Guidelines
- Sponsors: Pipfruit NZ, NSW Food Authority, GSF, Fresh Select
Outreach – The challenge

• To turn “delete, delete, delete” into “yes, yes, yes”
Outreach - What does FPSC currently do?

- Website news: Averaging 4.5 blog posts and chosen news updates per week since project inception (March 2014)
- Website resources (e.g., Tomato Guide, Melon Guide, Crisis Guidelines, etc)
- Website visitors: 824 unique visitors in January 2015, over 2,000 in February 2015
- E-newsletter: every two weeks, drawn from web & blog; to 420+ subscribers
Outreach - What does FPSC currently do?

- 10 workshop presentations to industry and regulatory bodies (eg DataBar/Traceability/Recall with FSANZ and GS1)
- Food Safety Conferences in August 2014 and August 2015
- 13 meetings with key stakeholder groups
- 25 articles appearing in the media about the FPSC
Lessons from the PMA A-NZ Member Survey

• 83% say that food safety is important or very important to their business
• 51% say that the FPSC is a valuable or very valuable resource for the fresh produce industry
• 20% “sometimes” utilize resources from the FPSC website
• Open question on what members want more of:
  – Updates on outbreaks
  – Latest research
  – World events
  – Traceability
  – Changes to standards
  – Allergen management
  – Etc…
Conclusions

• Fresh produce is a complex business and industry
• Many challenges as supply web evolves
• Food safety profile has risen for right and wrong reasons
• Australia and New Zealand fresh produce industry is being proactive in addressing issues with research, outreach and collaboration
• Looking forward to safer *Food for the Future*

• *Thank you…*
Any questions, discussion.....