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Getting the Message!!



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We all have a responsibility  
for Food Safety  
and the Public Trust



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The First Signal!



1998 – FDA’s Guide to Minimize  
the Microbial Food Safety  
Hazards of Fresh Fruit  
& Vegetables



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# Risk Reduction



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Marketplace begins to  
interpret and demand



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# Birth of Third Party Audit Industry



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Outbreaks continue  
to be recurring



# FDA initiates Produce Safety Action Plan



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FDA communicates concern  
to Lettuce and Tomato  
industry groups



Florida Tomato industry  
approaches USDA through  
Federal Marketing Order



Florida Tomato industry  
begins effort to regulate at the  
state government level



# North American Tomato Trade Working Group begins development of Tomato Specific Guidelines



T-GAPs and T-BMPs are formulated  
with University of Florida,  
State Regulatory Agency & FDA  
based on “best available science”



May 2006 – NATTWG publishes  
“Commodity Specific Food Safety  
Guidelines for the Fresh Tomato  
Supply Chain”



Fall 2006  
Florida Tomato industry  
voluntarily adopts  
T-GAPs and T-BMPs



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Fall 2006 –  
**SPINACH CRISIS!!**



2007 – Florida Legislature  
grants authority to  
Florida Commissioner of Agriculture  
to regulate



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June 2007 – FDA begins Tomato  
Food Safety Initiative in Virginia



Fall 2007-Spring 2008 –  
FDA brings Tomato Food Safety  
Initiative to Florida



Florida Tomato Food Safety  
Final rule becomes regulatory  
July 1, 2008



Florida Tomato industry has  
become example of collaboration  
& cooperation with FDA  
and state government



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# THE CRISIS



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May 22, 2008 –  
New Mexico Dept. of Health  
notified CDC about  
4 persons infected with  
Salmonella Saintpaul



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# Cases expand to Texas and Navajo nation



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FDA attempts to learn  
from spinach experience



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May 30 – FDA reaches out  
to industry groups



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May 31  
New Mexico Dept. of Health  
issues press release with  
narrow 3-4 state warning



June 7

FDA – CDC expand warning on  
round and Roma tomatoes  
“Nationwide”



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Tomato movement slows,  
stops, and implodes



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National news media begins  
“Food Safety Hysteria”



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Traceback on tomatoes provides  
no connection



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Additional epidemiological data  
leads to salsa  
and jalapeño peppers



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“Smoking peppers” found



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Tomatoes  
“possibly were a vehicle”



## What Did We Learn?

- The Food Safety System Has Many Challenges
- The Public Is Confused
- The Media Can Make It a Circus



- No one is in Charge
- Preventative programs that Reduce Risk are needed
- Risk Communications Must Improve
- Knowledgeable Industry Input Is Important



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# Where Is Food Safety Going???



# Everyone Is On the Same Team

- **Public Health and Public Confidence in the Food Supply is the Goal**



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# Thank You

