



U.S. Food and Drug Administration

Protecting and Promoting *Your* Health

Overview of Traceback

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What is Traceback

- Just one of many tool that can be used to enhance an investigation.
- Generally used in conjunction with:
 - Epidemiology information and/or
 - Laboratory information.
- The method used to determine and document the distribution and production chain, and the source(s) of a *product* that has been implicated in a foodborne illness investigation.

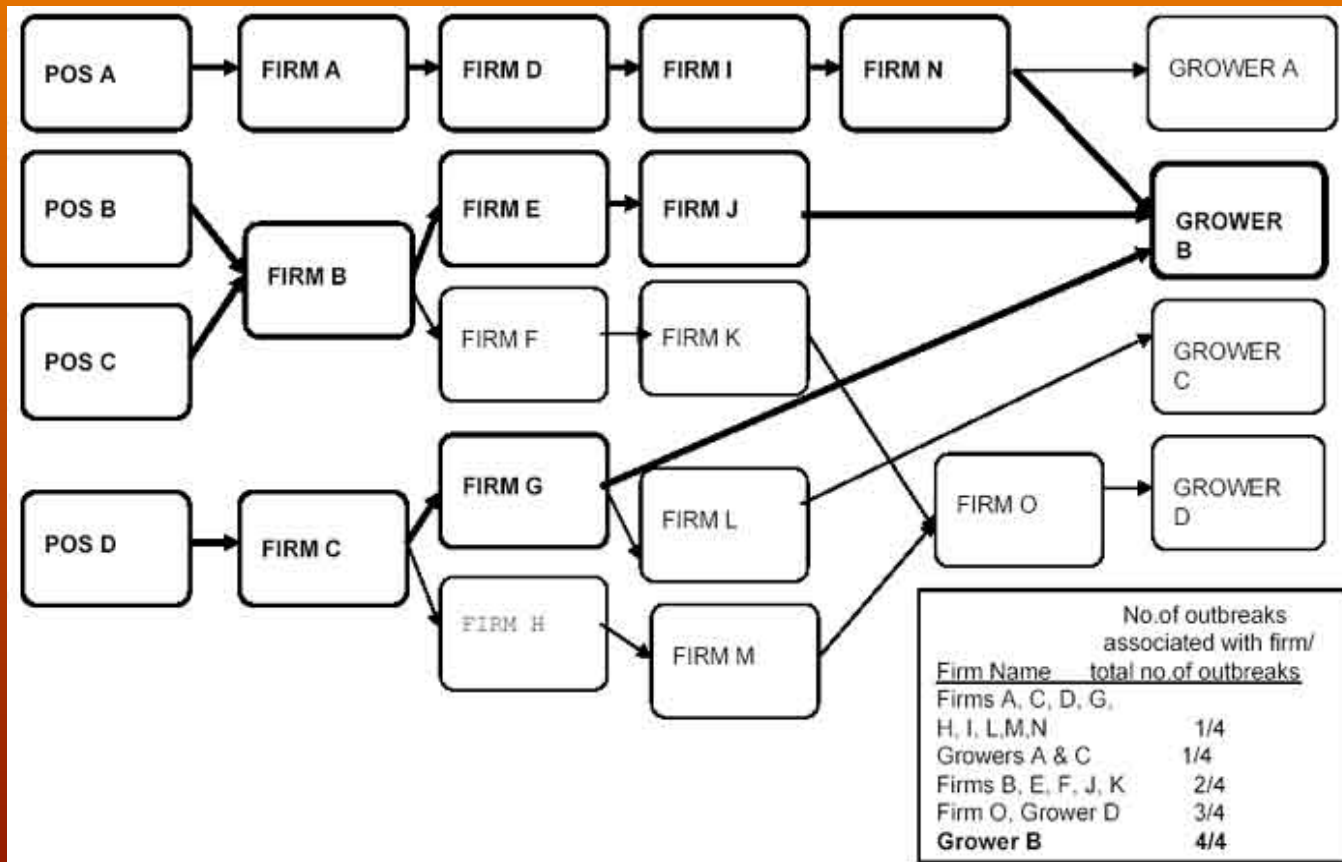
What is Traceback

- Involves:
 - Good interviewing techniques
 - Complete record review
 - Timely reporting to meet its intended purpose.
- A subsequent source investigation may be conducted to determine possible routes or points of contamination by:
 - Inspecting common distribution sites,
 - Processors, and/or
 - Growers identified in the traceback investigation.

What is Traceback

- FDA works with and relies upon our State and local partners as well as CDC to assist with ongoing outbreak investigations by
 - Obtaining good food histories
 - Collecting records
 - And much more!
- It can be a time consuming process when hundreds, if not thousands, of records have to be reviewed to put the puzzle together.

Example Master Diagram



Criteria Considered: When to begin a Traceback

- Many factors are considered to begin a traceback
 - Sufficient epi evidence (i.e. clusters, good food histories, geographic distribution, etc.)
 - Availability of Records
 - Adequate Environmental Investigation
 - Is the outbreak ongoing?
 - Are resources available to conduct a traceback?
 - And many more!

What FDA Looks For....

- Commonality in Sources
- Record reliability
- Industry information
- Understanding of normal commodity shipping patterns.
- And many more!

Challenges

- Lack of traceability within a distribution center
- Co-mingling of produce
- Unreadable records
- Business purchasing from suppliers outside of their normal suppliers (like a grocery store)
- And many more....

Current Resources Available

- Guide to Traceback of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Implicated in Epidemiological Investigations (located on FDA.gov)
- Traceback Course hosted by ORA U (“Train the Trainer” format)
- CORE website – past investigations
- RRT Manual – chapter on Tracebacks

Ongoing Development Projects

- Tracing by 3rd Parties
- Use of technological tools like Palantir

Questions????

