Romaine Outbreak

Teressa Lopez
Arizona - Citrus, Fruit and Vegetable Division (CFV)

Fresh Produce Grade Inspection

Arizona Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement and Food Safety Committee

Citrus, Fruit and Vegetable

Organic Cost Share

FDA FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION ACT

Produce Safety Rule
Arizona - Citrus, Fruit and Vegetable Division (CFV)

- CFV Standardization
  - Licensing Program; Statistical Data Collection and USDA Market News
  - Administer Arizona Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement
    - Arizona Leafy Greens Food Safety Committee (State Entity)
    - Established in 2007 in CA and then AZ after the 2006 Spinach E. coli 0157:H7
    - Voluntary Sign Up and mandatory compliance
    - Covers 97% of Leafy Greens grown in Arizona
    - Industry funded through carton assessments
    - Food Safety Verification Audits conducted by USDA certified auditors
    - Food Safety Training Program
    - Science-Based Best Practices (Metrics) - Administrative Rules
      - Recognized as aligned with FSMA PSR and exceeds the standard
  - USDA Federal/State Inspection
    - Auditing Services (i.e. GHP/GAP, LGMA and Harmonized); Market Inspection; Shipping Point
- Produce Safety Rule - FDA Implementation Grant
  - Regulatory Enforcement
  - Training/Outreach
Challenges

- AZDA did not have a 20.88 not established until May 2018 / Communication
- AZDA had no authority at the time the outbreak
- AZDA does not have jurisdiction over Irrigation District and Feed Lot
- No Rapid Response Team (RRT) in Arizona
- FDA Advisory Notifications - Unclear
- Resources to handle media and public information requests
- Environmental Assessment sampling started two months after incident
- FDA Approach with Yuma farms and naming the grower and not the shipper
- Positive EA samples were within PSR Ag Water and AZ LGMA limits
- FDA’s Final EA report release at the start of Yuma harvest - 2 months after preseason work
April 2018

• April 12th FDA presents data on Outbreaks Associated to Leafy Greens
  • 2009-2017: 28 Outbreaks -most occur during CA/AZ Transition

• April 13th CDC/FDA 1st Advisory
  • Do Not Eat bagged romaine from Yuma Region

• Arizona last romaine shipments
  • bins April 13th and cartons April 16th

• April 20th - Grower named in Alaskan Cluster
  • Do Not Eat any romaine from Yuma Region

Leafy Greens - 70% AZ Total Production
Leafy Greens - 2 billion $ industry in AZ
Romaine 21% - AZ Total Production
Arizona Romaine Outbreak Overview / Timeline

May 2018
• Community Forum on E. coli
• Leafy Greens Food Safety Task Force established

June 2018
• LG FS Task Force- First Meeting
  • Hypothesis generation and Established Work Groups
  • 2018 Outbreak - Epidermal Peel and Weather Conditions
  • Communications on federal agencies
  • Production Near Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO)
  • Seasonality- CA/ AZ Transition
  • Traceability
• CDC/FDA - Arrive in Yuma for their 1st Environmental Assessment sampling
Arizona Romaine Outbreak Overview / Timeline

July 2018
- 2nd LG FS Task Force meeting
  - Workgroup report out and recommendation
  - Identified research needs for the Center for Produce Safety (CPS)
- 2nd CDC/FDA E.A. sampling - 3 samples matching clinical strain in an AZ irrigation canal
- FDA calls and end to the outbreak

August 2018
- AZ / CA LGMA Technical Committees began review Task Force recommendations
- 3rd CDC/FDA E.A. sampling in Yuma with
  - AZ Department of Environmental Quality (limited jurisdiction of irrigation districts and feedlots)
  - Irrigation District had University of Arizona take side-by-side samples
Arizona Romaine Outbreak Overview / Timeline

September 2018
• AZDA Director held public meetings in Yuma with Stakeholder and Production Community
• AZ / CA LGMA approved the recommended Food Safety Practices (Metrics)
  • Traceability - Requiring Specific Lot Tracking
  • Increased buffer for Production Locations near CAFOs
  • Environmental Risk Assessment Requirements- Weather Events and Production near Environmental Sources of Contamination
  • Water Treatment - Surface Water passing within 400ft of a CAFO
  • Harvest Equipment Sanitation- Prescriptive measures added
• Webinars and Workshops on the new AZ LGMA standards
  • Two New Appendix Documents developed for the AZ LGMA program
    • Addressing Production Near CAFOs and Weather Assessment

November 2018
• FDA Final EA report released
• Arizona LGMA began verification audits on new standards
January 2019 - Romaine Task Force

Continuing the efforts of the Leafy Greens Food Safety Task Force
Romaine Task Force Steering Committee and 4 Subcommittees
• Prevention/Science
• Provenance Labeling
• Investigation Improvement
• Traceability
Lessons Learned

AZDA

• Currently developing Administrative Rule for FSMA PSR implementation
  • AZDA wants to take the lead where it can for faster response
  • Better understanding of outbreak investigations and the authorities and jurisdictions needed
• Additional Science needed
  • Ag Water / Generic E. coli current indicator - FDA says it is not good enough so they should lead the charge for improvement
  • Federal limits need to be established for Agricultural Water (i.e. drinking and recreational water standards)
  • Practical science needed for farmers
• FDA FSMA PSR not enough - Ag water provisions need to be completed
• FDA recommendations to the AZDA and AZ LGMA - Challenges with measures outside of the scope and jurisdiction of the programs (e.g. commingled product and processed product)

Since the outbreak

• AZDA working to develop a voluntary Rapid Response Team (RRT)
• Increased Environmental Risk Assessment Trainings
• Two Fresh Produce Recall Ready Workshops
• University of Arizona - Water Quality Outreach/Training on Monitoring, Assessments and Water Treatment
Contact Information

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