

**NEHA's Position on
Retail Food Protection on the
Local, State and Tribal Levels:**

***Left Out of the New Federal Food
Protection Initiatives?***

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Local Autonomy, National Standards

- **Any successful federal food protection system must recognize the independence of each agency and jurisdiction ...**
- **... while creating nationally recognized and accepted retail food protection program standards**

Adoption of FDA Food Code

- **Rapid adoption of the latest version of the FDA Food Code by reference**
- **Remove obstacles that make code adoption slow and politicized**
- **Assures consistency and interoperability from agency to agency and from state to state**

FDA Model Program Standards

- **FDA's model program standards provide an excellent blueprint for quality food protection programs**
- **Focuses programs on foodborne illness risk factors and public health interventions**
- **FDA should provide financial incentives to programs meeting the standards or making measurable progress towards meeting the standards**

Improved Enforcement Authority

- **Localities need clear authority to enforce food safety standards**
- **Laws are needed enabling embargo and condemnation of contaminated food products anywhere in the food supply chain**
- **FDA should develop a clear model enforcement framework to help executive, legislative and judicial officials understand food protection enforcement needs**

Improved Communications Between Agencies Are Needed

- **To enable response to foodborne illness outbreaks, food tracebacks and recalls**
- **Networking between professionals is important BEFORE an emergency response is needed**
- **Educational conferences and regional meetings are a good venue for improved communication and collaboration**
- **Federal funding support is needed to help support these activities**

Improved Systems Needed for Information Sharing

- **Ability needed to rapidly share information between local, state and federal agencies**
- **Established protocols for sharing confidential information**
- **Standardized data formats and clearly defined data elements to allow data sharing and aggregation of data from different localities, states and agencies**
- **Federal funding and leadership for data system development**

Improved Foodborne Outbreak Response

- **A national model is needed for rapidly identifying and tracing foodborne illnesses cases back to the food source**
- **Public should have one 800 number to call to report foodborne illnesses nationwide**
- **Pre-established multidisciplinary FBI investigation teams for investigation of large regional and national outbreaks**
- **Federal funding to establish regional FBI response teams for large outbreaks**

Reduced Pathogens in Raw and Processed Foods

- **Strong federal leadership is needed to improve regulatory oversight of food producers and processors to assure foods sold at retail come from safe sources**
- **Improved surveillance of imported foods is needed both in their countries of origin and at ports of entry**

Better Coordination of Recalls and Tracebacks

- **Nationwide standardized policies and procedures for coordinating tracebacks and recalls**
- **A federal system is needed to conduct recall effectiveness checks without relying on local and state regulators**
- **Pre-established multidisciplinary teams at national level to coordinate national and regional recalls and tracebacks**

Well Trained Food Protection Professionals

- **A standardized national training curriculum based on widely accepted core competencies for EH professionals at different levels**
- **Would assure universally consistent terminology, inspection methodology and knowledge base**
- **Would include food defense training**
- **Federal funding for curriculum development and training**

Standardization of Food Protection Professionals

- **All field EHSs working in food protection should be standardized in the field**
- **Standardized using the protocol in Standard 2 of the Model Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards**
- **Enough FDA regional retail food program specialists to certify a sufficient number of standardization officers**

Credentialing of Food Protection Professionals

- **Credentialing assures that professionals possess the knowledge to operate competently in their field of expertise**
- **Credentialing assures continuing education of EH professionals**
- **Food protection professionals should hold both the REHS and CP-FS**
- **Employment of staff credentialed or eligible to be credentialed**

Federal Funding Is Needed to Support Local, State & Tribal Food Protection Programs

- **“Of all the elements that NEHA believes are critical to a successful national retail food protection system, none is as important as the need for significant federal funding to help support local, state and tribal retail food protection regulatory programs”**
- **Due to the recession, a significant portion of retail food protection capacity is being lost at the local, state and tribal levels due to budget cuts**

Federal Funding Support Is Needed For:

- **Staffing of local, state & tribal food protection programs**
- **Improved compensation for retail food protection EH professionals**
- **Training, certification and continuing education**
- **Equipment and information systems**
- **Epidemiology support**
- **Laboratory support**

CONCLUSION

“Implementation of the twelve recommendations above would greatly enhance our national retail food protection infrastructure and move the United States in the direction of a more effective and unified food protection system.”

QUESTIONS ?



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