

## Food Safety Alert – 1/09/07

The *Salinas Californian* is reporting that Gov. Schwarzenegger plans to double funding to investigate food-borne illness cases. He is planning \$3.8 million, up from \$1.7 million for the current year. The new dollars would help pay for the newly created Department of Public Health, including teams of investigators to help with future E. coli type outbreaks. The new department will go into operation on July 1, 2007 when the budget is to take effect. All funding will have to be approved by the legislature. "State Sens. Dean Florez, D-Shafter, who chairs the Senate Governmental Organization Committee, and Abel Maldonado, R-Santa Maria, who chairs the Senate Agriculture Committee, have both said they plan to hold separate hearings on the industry's proposals after the CDFA meeting Friday." Maldonado is considering hearings wherever leafy greens are grown, including Southern California. Assemblyman John Laird (D-Santa Cruz) says he is pleased with the funding. "I think that is good news, because there can be a better response (to food-borne illnesses),' Laird said." Sen. Jeff Denham (R-Merced) is pleased by the proposed increase in funding and looks forward to seeing how the money will be spent. "I support any kind of quick-response help,' Denham said. 'We have got to be able to track (an outbreak) very quickly before you have the FDA come in and say there's a ban on all spinach.'" "Joseph Pezzini, chairman of the Salinas-based Grower-Shipper Association of the Central Coast, said he wasn't aware of the budget proposal but would welcome a quicker system."

<http://www.californianonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=200770109002>

According to eMediawire.com, the largest independent food distributor in Florida is offering instant E. coli and Salmonella test strips. Cheney Brothers will offer the tests strips in the southeastern portion of the US. "Now restaurants, hospitals and caterers will have the added safety of testing their food, water and hard surfaces to insure public safety,' says Robert Greene, General Manager for Nevada based Magna Medical Products and Services, Inc." Magna Medical has seen a surge in orders due to the recent E. coli outbreaks. " The MMS Salmonella instant strip can detect 50 of the most common and deadliest strains. The strips are submerged in food samples and, if the organism is present, the strip will change color. The MMS E.Coli instant strip can detect the most common and deadliest strains including E.coli 103 and 0157:H7. Detection time is less than 20 minutes which is the fastest test currently on the market. Lowenkamp Laboratory of Missouri was the independent lab that was contracted to verify the confirmation levels for each product. The product is available for commercial use only."

<http://www.emediawire.com/releases/2007/1/emw496014.htm>