

Food Safety Alert – 1/10/07

An article in the *Monterey County Herald* says that the leafy greens processed at Natural Selection Foods “are safer than they have ever been.” Myra Goodman, co-founder of Natural Selection Foods, made this statement this week as she begins a tour for her new cookbook, “Food to Live By.” “I can only say for our company that I think all of our salads, including spinach, are safer than they’ve ever been,” said Goodman, who serves as executive vice president. “We’re taking food safety to a level that’s never existed before in the produce industry.” Natural Selection has also created a “firewall” that will protect consumers from E. coli and salmonella. The new firewall means that greens will be lab tested and held until results from the tests confirm that there are no bacteria. From there they may enter the processing stream. After they are processed, they will be tested again as a finished product. “Testing raw and finished product ‘is mandatory for us,’ Goodman said.”

<http://www.montereyherald.com/mld/montereyherald/news/16425080.htm>

An article in the *Hollister Free Lance* says that the Marketing Agreement Hearing and subsequent Marketing Agreement are a step in the right direction, yet it may not be enough to completely protect the public or regain their confidence. The Hearing, to be held at the Monterey County Fairgrounds on Friday, January 12, proposes having the state Department of Agriculture set up a food safety board for growers and processors, according to the article. The state agency would then oversee the board and utilize inspectors that would monitor compliance with the new regulations. Those in compliance with the new rules would then receive a “seal of approval” that is meant to assure consumers that leafy greens with the seal are free of contaminants and safe to consume. Consumer advocacy groups, however, are requesting the state Department of Health Services to create and enforce food safety rules, instead of leaving it to the Department of Agriculture. The groups believe the CDFA lacks both the scientific knowledge and staff to deal directly with health issues. The *Hollister Free Lance* applauds the industry for taking the lead in developing the new regulations, but believes it won’t fully assure consumers because it is “essentially self-regulation, and even that would at first be only voluntary.”

<http://www.freelancenews.com/opinion/contentview.asp?c=201874>