

Food Safety Alert – 10/17/06

The *Monterey County Herald* ran an article today about a \$ 1.2 million study which was planned by the U.S. Agriculture Department prior to the recent outbreak. The study was planned to research the transmission of E. coli between cattle ranches and lettuce fields. It went nearly unnoticed when the press release was given back in June. Tests will be conducted by the USDA's microbiology unit to determine the role cattle and other wildlife play in infecting produce with the bacteria. The testing will be done over a two year period, provided that researchers are able to test in light of the recent outbreak and criminal investigations. However, once concern expressed in the article is that new crop safety procedures might have to be revised once the results come out.

<http://www.montereyherald.com/mld/montereyherald/15777942.htm>

The *Salinas Californian* has an article detailing the battle that local growers face in revitalizing their brands on the market. The article notes that spinach has made unfavorable appearances in Letterman's Top 10 list, political cartoons. Among the measures discussed are media tours of farms, trade association meetings and roundtables, focus on health benefits of spinach and other produce, endorsement by celebrity chefs, and implementing and publicizing verifiable safety measures.

<http://www.californianonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20061017/NEWS01/610170314>

Yesterday's editorial in the Packer proclaims that produce industry members can ensure consumer confidence in the produce supply by quickly initiating consumer recalls and evaluating liability and recall insurance policies to make sure that the high costs of medical expenses for infected consumers as well as the high cost of recalls are covered.

<http://www.thepacker.com/icms/ dtaa2/content/wrapper.asp?alink=2006-171523-647.asp>