

## Food Safety Alert – 11/28/06

The American Association of Insurance Services is looking to file for future exclusions of viruses and bacteria in their policies. This would affect commercial lines and farm insurance programs. Originally developed to deal with the possibility of an avian flu outbreak in the U.S., it would address any disease-causing agent. The endorsement states that "coverage is excluded for loss, cost, or expense caused by, resulting from, or relating to any virus, bacterium, or other microorganism that causes or is capable of causing disease, illness, or physical distress. In addition, the exclusion explicitly applies to any loss, cost or expense arising from denial of access to property because of any virus, bacterium, or other microorganism." The virus or bacteria exclusion would supersede any other types of exclusions.

<http://www.aaisonline.com/press/2006/Press110706.html>

The *Central Valley Business Times* is reporting today that farmers in the Fresno area met to discuss ways of creating the most effective solutions to the issue of food safety. Regulators and food-safety specialist were also on hand. Many growers echoed the same sentiments: they need to adjust their practices to cope with new challenges. They believe sharing information is the key. Many described water and crop tests as well as other procedures that will help ensure the safety of produce. "This year on leaf lettuce, we're now testing the leaf products themselves for E. coli two days before harvest," says Jeremy Lane, a Fresno County vegetable grower.

<http://www.centralvalleybusinesstimes.com/stories/001/?ID=3654>

Although I previously included an article that dealt with grocery chains requiring a deadline for the agricultural industry to come up with better "good agricultural practices" before they come up with their own, an article a few weeks ago in the Los Angeles Times is a good read. (The deadline the grocers set is December 15). Tim York, president of Markon Cooperative, a Salinas-based buyer for food distributors, states that there must be some guidelines as to how often water is tested. "People do water testing but there is no specific rule to tell growers how often they should test water — everyday, once a week or once a season," York said. He also contends that there is no industry-wide rule as to how land adjacent to row crops is used or how big of a buffer there should be between cattle grazing and produce growing fields.

<http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-produce2nov02,1,695635.story?coll=la-headlines-business&ctrack=1&cset=true>