

Food Safety Alert – 2/22/07

According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, some of the State's small and mid-sized farms will be hit hard by the new Marketing Agreement rules, some may even go out of business. "I've had so many calls from farmers, saying this is going to change our way of life," says Judith Redmond of Full Belly Farm in the Capay Valley. She's also president of the board of the Community Alliance for Family Farmers (CAFF), whose members number a couple of thousand small and mid-size farms." She feels the regulations are not being focused on the greatest risks. "A lot of us think it's probably about bagged lettuce. Why not focus on those products?"

"CAFF member Ken Kimes, a Watsonville-area sprouts farmer who had to adapt to new regulations after E. coli hit sprouts in the 1990s, says the minefields are many and the learning curve steep. He saw the rules drive fellow sprout farmers out of business -- not because of E. coli problems, but because false positives made doing business impossible."

Western Growers Association sees these concerns as proof that the Marketing Agreement has teeth. "When you get to reality on any kind of step like this, everyone is going to be unhappy about everything -- legislators, small farmers, big farmers, consumers," says association spokesman Tim Chelling. "But you're going to have something in place."

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2007/02/21/FDGIJO5I9N1.DTL>

MeatNews.com is reporting that the FDA has approved a rapid diagnostic test that can detect E. coli within 20 minutes and can differentiate between two toxins. The test is called the ImmunoCard STAT! EHEC.

<http://www.meatnews.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=Article&artNum=14087>

Here is a link to the Spinach Research and Recovery Act of 2007 introduced by U.S. Rep. Sam Farr:

<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?c110:49:./temp/~c110Xu0YAx::>

Here is a link to the Safe Food Act introduced by Sens. Durbin and Schumer:

<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/F?r110:1:./temp/~r110MaqLFR:e816584:>