Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Growers

Recall/Traceback
Introduction, Recall and Traceback
RECALL PROGRAM

BE PREPARED

FDA Recalls are Mandatory

Class I: Reasonable public health hazard for illness or death
Class II: Remote probability of adverse health consequences
Class III: Will not cause adverse health consequence
Importance of Recall

The ability to successfully recall a product can:

- Prevent unnecessary consumer health effects such as illnesses or deaths
- Minimize negative publicity and the impact on the firm’s reputation
- Minimize the potential for civil and criminal lawsuits.
 Causes of a Recall

A number of product issues:

- Allergens or other undeclared ingredients
- Pathogenic microorganisms
- Foreign objects
- Chemical contamination
- Packaging defects
- Nutritional or content different from label
Traceback investigations reach far back to the source of contamination
Traceability: ability to follow movement of food through production, processing and distribution
Traceback

- Ability to track food through the food system back to their source and forward to the next destination
- **DOES NOT** prevent a foodborne outbreak
- **CAN** quickly identify the source of a product and speed an investigation
- **CAN** limit damage to the consumer
- **CAN** prevent damage to the innocent grower
Traceback

You need to:

- Be able to trace the product one step forward (who you sold the product to)

- And one step back (which field did the product come from?, or, if co-packing, who provided the product)
  - Your customer must be able to trace the product back to you and forward to any of their customers.
Two-way information flow

Field → Grower → Packer → Distribution center → Retailer (Store, restaurant, hospital, etc.) → Consumer

Trace-back

Trace-forward
Traceback

System developed so lot is traceable

- Develop a lot system
  - Labeling system/codes
    - Date of harvest, field number, box number etc.
- Written procedure is recommended
- Maintain records
  - Harvest dates
  - Field, orchard
  - Boxes within lot, shipping date
How to make your products traceable

**Step 1** - Map field production areas

Field #1

Field #2

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Step 2 – Label all produce containers with the date and location of harvest

Field #1

Field #2

Tomatoes

ABC Farms
1 Farm Road, Anytown, PA 16803

Grown in Pennsylvania

TOTAL NET WT 16 oz (1 lb)

072411-2

072411-2 Means the tomatoes were harvested on July 24, 2011 from field #2

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Traceback: Finding the Source

- Traceback is the ability to identify the source of a product—important if a foodborne disease outbreak occurs and you need to find out where the food came from.

- A good traceback system can:
  - Protect you from false association with an outbreak
  - Minimize consumer anxiety and bad publicity
  - Give you a competitive advantage
Traceback: What can you do?

- At the minimum, you should identify your product with:
  - Date of harvest and/or date of packing
  - Farm identification
- Document your handling chain from the farm to your distributor/customer
- Document all aspects of your packinghouse operations
- Get help from industry trade groups for information on coding, labeling and tools available to make the job easier
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