

Developing a Food Safety Culture



Food safety culture—makes you think of agar plates and bacteria. Food Safety Culture though is really about getting successful buy-in by everyone everyday (not just the week before the auditor arrives). Many of you probably chuckled involuntarily when you read that didn't you?! Well it seems it isn't impossible—**Frank Yiannas, Safety and Health Director from Walt Disney World**, should know as they have a handle over 15,000 personnel in which to practice their theories. And they work!

During Mr. Yiannas's talk on, *"Food Safety is Magical, But It Doesn't Magically Happen - A Retail Safety Overview"* at our AGM in January he proved that a food safety culture CAN happen! To Yiannas, culture is **shared** patterns of thought and behavior that characterize a social group, which are **learned through socialization processes** and **persist** through time.

The five steps to creating a culture:

1. Create Food Safety Performance Expectations, using information sources: e.g. HACCP manual, regulations,

and codes/standards.

2. Educate & Train All Cast Members on Food Safety:
 - Focus on changing behavior
 - Risk based, and,
 - Get understanding.
3. Develop a Comprehensive Food Safety Communication Plan-- remembering people are creatures of emotion, not logic - best way to get people to learn is to "feel" the reasons why it's important (e.g. using photos of people affected by food borne illness).
4. Develop Food Safety Performance Goals, such as accountability, and measurement systems. Always use clear, basic, easy to follow steps, with minimal effort required. Make it easy and logical to use everyday!
5. Develop Consistent Consequences for Food Safety. Remembering to reward them when it works! Only use discipline steps when absolutely necessary.

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Special points of interest:

- Over 75,000 meals are consumed in a lifetime
- 44% adults will eat a meal in a restaurant every day.

BCFPA Speakers' Eve—April 9th—Increasing Handwashing Successfully

Hand washing, when done correctly, is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases and yet it can be the most troublesome activity to get accomplished! Attend this session and learn how to get your employees to not only do it right, but do it regularly.

Agenda:

Registration 5:30 - 6:15 pm (Sandwiches plate and beverages)

Opening Remarks 6:15 - 6:30 pm

Dr. Gary Poole 6:30 - 7:15 pm

Networking Break 7:15 - 7:45 pm

Dr. Edith Blondel-Hill 7:45 - 8:45 pm

Closing & Doorprizes & Networking 8:45 - 9:00



Dr. Gary Poole will speak on, **“Connecting Head and Hands: How an Understanding of People’s Thinking can Inform the Promotion of Hand washing”**. Dr. Poole is a member of the Department of Health Care and Epidemiology. He teaches in the

undergraduate medical program, primarily in Doctor, Patient and Society. His research interests include health promotion, the psychological effects of high-tech medical procedures such as magnetic resonance imaging and mammography,

and factors that affect people’s ability to cope with cancer. He is the principal author of *The Psychology of Health and Health Care: A Canadian Perspective*.



Dr. Edith Blondel-Hill will speak on the **“Value of proper handwashing**. Dr. Blondel-Hill, MD FRCP(C), graduated from the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta with specialty training in internal medicine, infectious diseases and medical microbiology. In 2003 Dr.

Blondel-Hill accepted a position as medical microbiologist and infectious disease specialist at BC Children’s Hospital in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada after holding similar positions with the Royal Alexandra Hospital and Dynacare Kasper Medical Laboratories in Edmonton. With a long interest in antimicrobial utilization, she has chaired antimicrobial advisory committees in Edmonton and Vancouver, and has been actively involved in guideline and policy development for antibiotic use and prescribing. Dr. Blondel-Hill and Susan Fryters have shared a long working relationship and together have authored the Bugs and Drugs - Antimicrobial Reference Book which is presently in its 4th edition. Dr Blondel-Hill is a founder and medical director of the Do Bugs Need Drugs? program. Other interests include mechanisms of resistance and susceptibility testing and she is co-author of the Guide to Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing and Reporting.

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*To provide a forum to exchange
information on protecting the
food supply.*

Remembering When...Next Year is BCFPA's 10th Anniversary!!

The **British Columbia Food Protection Association (BCFPA)**, an affiliate of the International Association for Food Protection (IAFP) was created in 1999 as a nonprofit association to promote food safety and to encourage the exchange of information in British Columbia. We received our charter at the 86th Annual Meeting in Dearborn, Michigan, the same year that the International Association of Milk, Food and Environmental Sanitarians (IAMFES) voted to change their name to the International Association for Food Protection (IAFP).

BCFPA is the only food safety association in BC that represents the entire food industry. Our diverse membership represents industry, government, academia, equipment manufacturers, producers, suppliers and service companies working in key areas of food production, food protection and public health. Members can be found working in quality control, production, processing, regulatory and private inspection, consulting, risk assessment, research and development, management, technical service and HACCP.

BCFPA is dedicated to service of its members, industry and the community as well as invests in the future by offering opportunities and scholarship awards to students enrolled in studies related to food safety. The BCFPA is active in educating and informing members about important issues impacting the food industry and it is this network that enables them to distribute food safety information. Members join the Association to keep up-to-date on rapidly changing technologies, innovations, hot topics and regulations; to learn of the latest findings in research; and to establish and maintain contacts. The Association facilitates this information network through its meetings, technical programs and materials, newsletters, an education based website (www.bcfpa.net), sponsorship of a Student Professional Development Group, as well as interaction with other food safety professionals

and the IAFP. A sample of topics covered at BCFPA activities includes: quality assurance, HACCP, sanitation, food safety education, bio-terrorism, food processing, risk assessment, food formulation, microbiological concerns, foodborne illness, epidemiology and natural health products.

The BC Affiliate is proud to have been chosen for an international award from the IAFP in each of the past four years. 2008 promises to be another very exciting year. If you aren't a member today, we encourage you to attend a BCFPA meeting and view our website to see what BCFPA is all about. All BCFPA members are eligible to join a BCFPA committee and/or take an available seat on the Executive Board. We do need volunteers, so as a member, please consider

volunteering for BCFPA.

Membership in the BC Food Protection Association can put you in charge of your career. From quick access to cutting edge technical and scientific information to contact with a diverse network of food safety knowledge, becoming a member is your link to the food safety industry and a clearinghouse of resources.

If you have a "remember when" story from 10 years ago either on BCFPA activities or on food protection stories - we want to hear them! Similarly, if you would like to get involved in helping plan our 10 year celebratory events, please contact any of the executive (contact info pg 2).

MISSION: *to provide a forum to exchange information on protecting the food supply.*

VISION: *a safe and nutritious food supply.*

COMMITMENT: *dedicated to the education and service of its members, and the food industry.*



BCFPA—Who Are We?

The calendar year ended with the association reaching a membership of 210; consisting of 43 sustaining members, 134 regular members, 29 student members and 4 retired members. Figure 1 depicts our dramatic period of growth since receiving our Charter in late 1999 with some plateauing through 2007.

We believe our association is best served by drawing our membership from a broad cross-section with representation from academia, industry and government. Figure 2 provides a graphical representation of the backgrounds of our membership. The largest groups from which our membership is drawn is the regional health authorities, followed by food manufacturers and students. Together all industry categories make up 44.8 % of the membership. All levels of government combine for 38.1% of the membership with academic sources providing 15.2 %.

In Figure 3 we provide some sense from where our membership is geographically based using the

provincial health authority boundaries. Not surprising is that over 84 % of our membership is located in the BC Lower Mainland with 46.8 % of our members located within the boundaries of the Fraser Health Authority and another 37.4% located within the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority. Many might be surprised to see that 4.5 % of our members are based outside the province, for the most part these are representatives of some of our sustaining members for which all of whom we are very grateful.

What does this all mean to the Executive? We believe we have established a solid and healthy membership base with diverse backgrounds and interests. Although our growth slowed in the past year we feel this is an indication that to grow further we may need to consider new approaches in our programs and communication strategies. We are also very aware that we are geographically challenged in meeting the needs of 15.8 % of our membership. Our e-bulletin was purposely developed to provide a benefit to those members

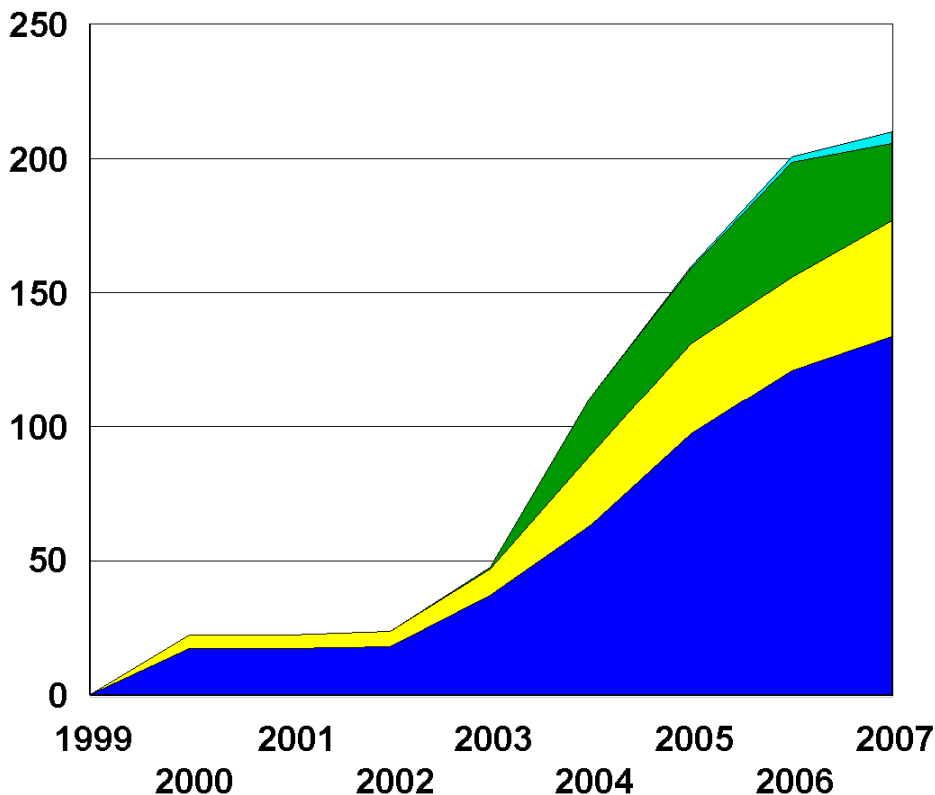
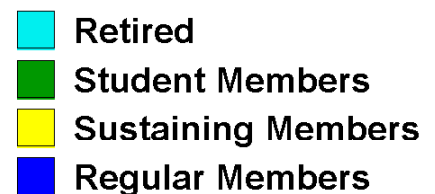


Fig. 1. BCFPA Growth



BCFPA—Who Are We? (cont'd)

who may have difficulty in attending events held in the Lower Mainland. Our By-Laws were also specifically drafted with the provisions to establish Chapters where 'pockets' of our membership may be interested in organizing events at a local level.

The Executive and the Membership Committee is

looking forward to further growth in 2008 and are appreciative to all those members who refer friends and colleagues to our association. Should you have any suggestions on how the BC Food Protection Association may better meet your needs, please feel free to contact Lance Hill, Membership Coordinator.

Fig. 2. BCFPA Membership

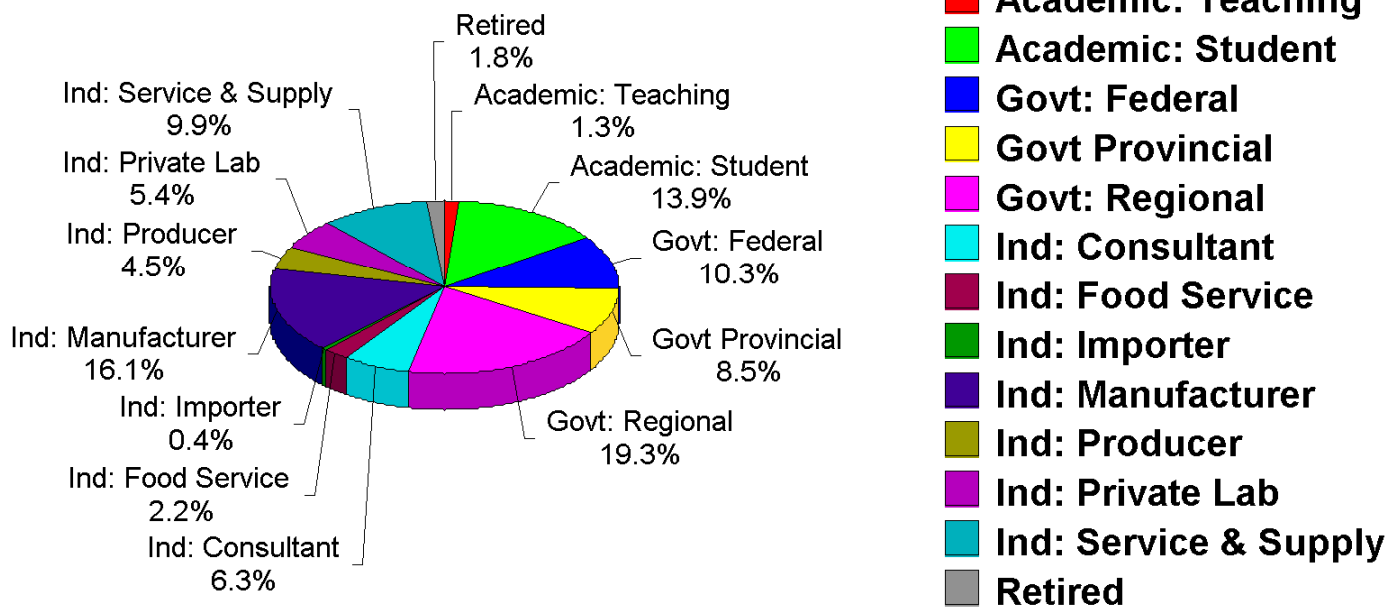
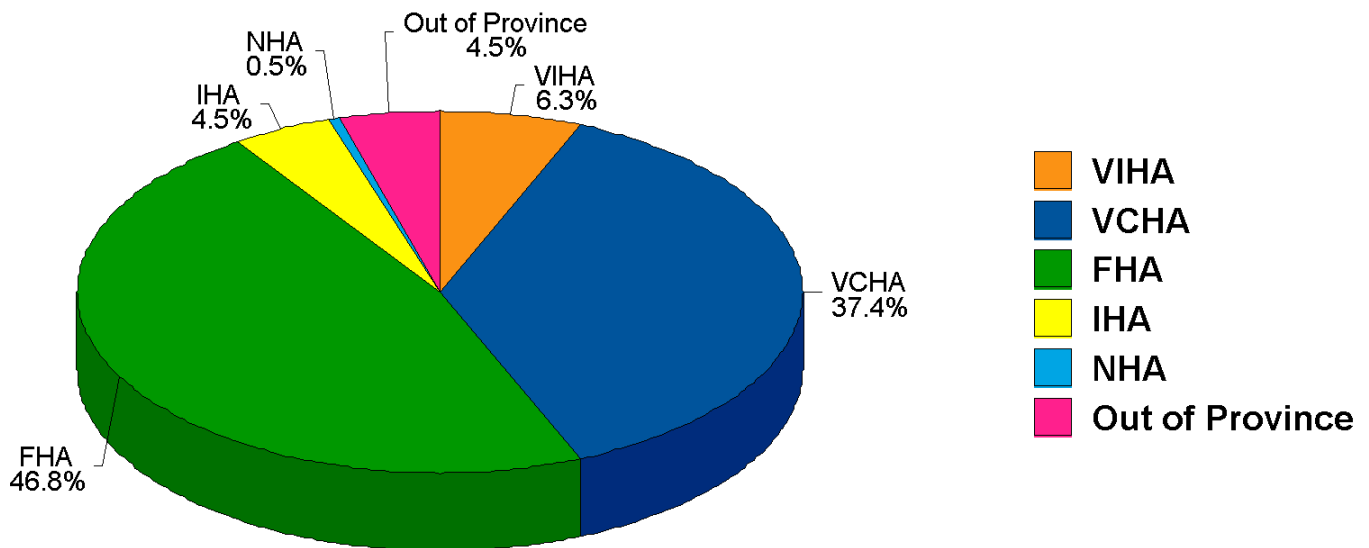


Fig. 3. BCFPA Membership—Where They Come From



Presidents Corner

Hello Again.

Thank you for taking the time to read GRAPEVINE. This is one of our many means of communications that we use [to provide a forum to exchange information on protecting the food supply](#). We were proud to be again awarded for the "Best Communications Material" last year by IAFP.

I have just completed writing BCFPA's annual report for submission to the IAFP. Not only is the annual report a mandatory requirement for all Affiliates, these reports are used to provide information to the IAFP Awards Committee to assist them in selecting the winners of the five affiliate awards. We had a very successful year last year and there was a great deal of material that I was able to incorporate into our report. We had a very busy year in contributing to the exchange of information on protecting the food supply. Thank you to all of you who contributed to our mission.

As we reflect on the past, we also look towards the future. BCFPA was created in 1999 which means that in 2009 we will be celebrating our 10th anniversary. We have grown from a handful of members in 1999 to our current 210 at the beginning of this year. The executive has been considering various activities to undertake in celebration of our 10th year. We expect that we will have a number of activities acknowledging the event. It will be a year in which we again have our conference. We plan to be presenting some awards to acknowledge some of our long term members. We hope to see some of the familiar faces who have moved on to other chapters of their lives. They have moved on but their contributions are not forgotten. We solicit your input in suggesting ideas to acknowledge our 10th anniversary. For those of you, who would like to sponsor an activity as part of our celebration, please contact one of the executive with your ideas.

Our food supply experienced a large number of incidents last year. Many of these were close to home here and in products from the USA. The USA is our largest trading partner for food and their

issues often become ours. This is also true for imports we receive from around the world. There has been a recent flurry of activity around foods and consumer goods from Asia. Some of this prompted Prime Minister Harper to bring forward monies for a new and enhanced consumer protection for imported foods under his Food and Consumer Safety Action Plan. For those of you who import food and food ingredients, remember that all of the quality control that you conduct in-house can often be negated by incorporating an unknown import into your product. Remember to ensure that your imports are also safe.

It will not be long before summer is here again and time for the IAFP annual meeting. This year it will be held in Columbus, Ohio. If you have not yet made plans to attend, begin thinking about how you can experience these valuable meetings in August and plan to visit Ohio. An excellent line up of topics awaits you. Last year, the Florida meeting exceeded expectations. For full conference details, check out the IAFP website at www.foodprotection.org. You will need to reserve soon if you wish to stay at the conference hotel this summer.

We are again seeking support for donation to the silent auction at the IAFP annual meeting. Those of you who have been to previous meetings know the popularity of this event and how keen some of the bidders can become as we near the closing time. In addition to individual and corporate donations, the silent auction is one of the many ways we as Affiliates can support the Foundation Fund.

In closing, I would like to express my thanks to all of those who gave to BCFPA and those who volunteered their precious time to build our organization and pursue our mission of "providing a forum to exchange information on protecting the food supply." Thank you to everyone.

Until next time....

Terry

Upcoming Events

EVENTS

- **April 9/08. BCFPA Speakers Evening.** Shadbolt, Burnaby, BC. (see announcement on page 2)
- **May 25-28/08. Food Science and Technology Goes Green,** Canadian Institute of Food Science & Technology / Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Joint Conference, Charlottetown, PEI, www.cifst.ca
- **July 13-16/08. The Canadian Society of Agronomy,** Montreal, Quebec.
- **Aug. 3 - 6/08. 95th Annual IAFP Meeting,** Columbus, Ohio, www.foodprotection.org/main/default.asp
- **Sept. 15/08. Food Safety Forum.** Vancouver. www.foodsafetyforum.ca

CONTINUAL ONGOING COURSES

- **BCIT—Food Technology Department short courses** related to food quality and safety, as well as an Associate Certificate in Food Safety. This industry training is delivered in the following formats: workshops; correspondence; online; night school; and CD-ROM tutorials. For more information go to: <http://www.bcit.ca/health/food/>
- **The Guelph Food Technology Centre (GFTC)** is offering **HACCP BASICS, HACCP and Food Safety Systems, Food Quality Systems, Product Development, Production, and Sanitation and Microbiology** courses in Vancouver and Kelowna. Course dates and registration information can be found on the BC Food Processors Association website: www.bcfpa.ca/GFTC_training.html
- **University College of the Fraser Valley—On-Farm Food Safety**-introduces HACCP-based on-farm food safety programs. Offered in January, 10-1.5 hr sessions. <http://www.ucfv.ca/agriculture.htm>
- **University of Guelph. Open Learning.** Certificate Program offers five degree-credit courses: Principles of Food Science; Introduction to Food Chemistry; Introduction to Food Processing; Introduction to Food Microbiology and; Introduction to Food Analysis. These courses are offered online through distance education. For more information contact the Office of Open Learning Ph: 519-767-5000 or by email at info@open.uoguelph.ca or visit: www.FoodScienceCertificate.com

OTHER ON-LINE EVENTS PAGES

- Listing of national and international conferences in food safety, food science, food technology, and all other related food research areas for 2008. <http://fsrio.nal.usda.gov/conferences.php?year=2008>
- Food Law Wiki, <http://www.foodlaw.org/wiki/pmwiki.php?n=Main.ConferenceListings>.
- **THE FOODNEWZ** is web site designed to inform busy people in the food processing and packaging industries about monthly events, trainings, seminars etc across Canada and the US with a focus on the Ontario Region. <http://www.thefoodnewz.com/>

Scholarship Winner—Fresh Produce & Food Safety

Since 1990, raw fruits and vegetables have become a possible source of pathogens. This correlates with globalization and the increased imports of fresh produce in North America. For example, between 1980 and 2001, imports of fresh food increased by 250% which corresponded with a rapid increase in the outbreaks of various diseases. Furthermore, every country has its own standards of food safety which are not necessarily the same in other countries. This makes it difficult to ensure that international exports meet food safety requirements that are consistent with the importing country.

In 2006, approximately seven hundred people were sickened and four died due to infection from the *E.coli* and *Salmonella* pathogens found in contaminated spinach. The same year another outbreak of *E.coli* in lettuce was also responsible for causing illnesses in a large group of people. Tomatoes contaminated with the *Salmonella* pathogen and *Clostridium botulinum* from fresh carrot juice have also played a significant role in causing outbreaks.

Microbial pathogens, are not the only risks associated with fresh produce. Fresh fruit and vegetables that are in direct contact with the ground can be surface contaminated for up to ten days. This makes it easier for the microbe to get into the food during cutting or peeling. Fresh produce can also be contaminated through poor food handling practices.

To reduce fresh food contamination education is a key component in raising awareness of the different ways that foodborne illnesses can become prevalent in the food chain. Using a variety of ways to educate people on food safety measures such as:

- Attending Food Safe level I and II food safety courses. Both courses teach proper food handling practices and are offered at a number of institutions at different times of the year.
- Post informative posters depicting safe food handling practices in key locations both on-farm in processing and packing rooms as well as in restaurants, hotels, community kitchens, shelters and other food outlets.

- Provide pamphlets or brochures in the produce sections of supermarkets and small food stores that describe food safety measures that consumers can do to assure proper handling and washing of fresh and cooked or preserved produce.
- Offer practical hands-on demonstrations on-site. Since personal experience is always more effective than theoretical knowledge, conducting regular training sessions for new employees or refresher courses for everyone will demonstrate and reinforce safer food handling techniques on a continual basis.
- Understanding how food is used (and abused) in the home would also help enable educators, health authorities, and consumers improve the level of care required to handle produce in the home.
- Conduct food surveys to achieve benchmark data for determining if current methods of education are working and how they may be changed to better meet the product needs.
- Improving education (and acceptance) of the safety and benefits of food irradiation. Since this method implemented during the processing of foods is extremely efficient in killing most of the microbial pathogens in fresh produce it would drastically reduce the risk of illnesses caused by contamination of fresh produce.

Although fresh produce has the potential to be contaminated during it's travels to the plate, improving education at all levels of the food chain will help to improve simple food safety measures and reduce the risk.



Components of this article were derived from the winning scholarship essay writer: Shaheen Jivanjee. Jivanjee completed a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from university of Toronto and is currently studying Dietetics at UBC. She was born and raised in Kenya and moved to Toronto, Canada four years ago moving to Vancouver last September. Her career aspirations are to work as a Dietetic advisor for the government at the provincial or federal level.

Managing Through a Crisis –Natural Selection Foods/ Earthbound Farm

Will Daniels, Vice President Natural Selection Foods / Earthbound Farm spoke at the Pacific Agriculture Show, Feb 2008. Below are some key lessons they learned through their 2006 crisis.

On September 14, 2006, they received their first call from the California Department of Health Services (CDHS) alerting them of a possible *E. coli* outbreak. From this call they immediately activated their Incident Management Team to decide next steps and begin response. As soon as the next day, even though information was still coming in from Center for Disease Control and the FDA, they opted to go to a **voluntary recall** as they felt it was the right thing to do for their customers and public safety. From this experience they learned several key points:

- If your company has something to lose from a crisis, you should have a crisis management plan in place – don't wait for it to happen to start one then. Organize and train:
 - A Crisis Management Team,
 - A Crisis Management Plan, and,
 - Meet at least annually to review your plan and train your team.
- Develop in advance some guiding principles for appropriate communications responses (to customers, media, consumers and employees).
- Put in place an effective mechanism for assessing the seriousness of the incident.
- Have on hand a basic checklist and necessary tools to ensure a response that is well coordinated and conducted properly.
- Identify key stakeholders in advance, for example, know your key contacts within:
 - Customers base
 - Media
 - Employees
 - Growers
 - Vendors

- Government
- Consider that an external crisis communications counselor is not a luxury; but a necessity and scope out in advance who that contact person may be.
- Have a strong plan for internal communication with your employees and follow it. At some point you'll think you're too busy to do this, but don't as it is truly important.
- Express sincere concern for victims, and help them understand what is happening by:
 - Notifying customers immediately with information on the recall.
 - Work with the media to get messages out about contaminated products and instructions on how to handle them.
 - Consider a mechanism for them to contact you for more information, e.g.: 1-800 number for questions and claims.
 - Keep all your Internal and external communications consistent.
- Begin trace back to the source immediately – search for the cause by working with investigators to find the source as it is in the best interest of the public and your company to give them all the information they need. Remember: Public Safety is the top priority

Don't stop once the crisis is over. For example, they have enhanced their food safety program to unprecedented levels in the produce industry and have committed to continually improving it as food safety science advances. They have also formed a Food Safety Advisory Panel with some of the country's leading food safety scientists to develop our Test & Hold program. Food safety risks are continual battle and they've certainly shown they will do all they can to always be ready to ensure it doesn't get the upper hand again.

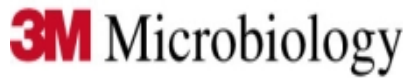
BCFPA's Sustaining Members

Is your company or organization missing?
Please contact Lance Hill, BCFPA Membership Coordinator at members@bcfpa.net to inquire about the benefits of becoming a Sustaining Member today!

Gold



Silver



Bronze

