



Food Safety Regulation, Small Farms, and Local Food

Carolina Farm Stewardship Association

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Market Opportunity

- 91% NC farms are small farms by USDA standards
- Market for locally-grown and organic food driving expansion and jobs on small farms
- 83 percent of consumers look for locally grown food when choosing a grocery store



Market Opportunity

- US sales of local food in 2008 were worth **\$4.8 billion**.
- Fruit and vegetable farms selling into local and regional markets employ **13 fulltime workers per \$1 million** in revenue.
- **95 percent** of farms selling primarily local food have annual revenues under **\$250,000**.



Market Opportunity

- Farmers selling local food are **30% more likely** to rely on farming as their primary source of income than those that do not sell local food
- Dietary guidelines that Americans eat more fruits and vegetables = **bigger markets** for NC small farms



One-Size-Fits-All Food Safety Rules Don't Fit Small Farms

- Industrial food manufacturing standards can cost a small, diversified farm from \$9,500 to \$20,000 per year, and require from 150 to 750 hours of farmer labor per year



Listening to Farmers...

Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council
Listening Session November 11—farmers
discussed:

- Egg handling
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- Raw milk policy
- Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs)
- Want more education, not 'exemptions'



Indiana Ag Regulation Findings:

"Agencies are most successful in achieving their objectives when the regulatory focus is on training and compliance assistance instead of enforcement actions, fines and prosecution. In this way, agencies become resources to help small business address market needs, and markets become the driving force for food safety expectations."



Cost-Benefit Approaches to Food Safety at the Federal Level

Eggs: The FDA's egg safety rules requires addresses *Salmonella enteritidis* (SE) contamination. Producers...

Who sell all their eggs directly to consumers

or

- Who have less than 3,000 hens...

are excluded from **the** rule. Too many farms, too few eggs, for public health to be



Cost-Benefit Approaches to Food Safety at the Federal Level

The FDA Food Safety Modernization Act: **Tester-Hagan** amendment protects farms from new FDA production and harvesting rules for fresh fruits and vegetables farms if...

- Less than \$500,000 in sales, and
- Sell the majority of their food in local markets.



Cost-Benefit Approaches to Food Safety at the Federal Level

The FDA Food Safety Modernization Act: The **Tester-Hagan** amendment also protects food manufacturers from new FDA food processing regulations if they

- Have less than \$500,000 in sales,
- Sell the majority of their food in local markets, and
- Can show compliance with existing state law.



All of Agriculture Must Be at the Table

Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council well-positioned to facilitate agreement among all scales of farmers in this state to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of food safety regulations without prejudicing large-scale or small-scale producers in this state



More Research and Education is the Best Approach

Examples:

- Acidified Foods School, also known as the Pickle School, which is put on regularly across the state so that small businesses have easy access to critical information on food manufacturing in home kitchens
- CFSA partnership with NC State and the North Carolina Fresh Produce Safety Task Force to develop **scale-**appropriate approaches to Good Agricultural Practices on small farms



FSMA Left Small Farms Alone for a Reason...

NC should affirmatively avoid imposing new on-farm food production and processing rules on small farms.

Some observers suggest that states should develop food safety mandates for the small farms and businesses that are excluded from the FSMA by the Tester-Hagan Amendment.

This would be BAD for NC's

- small farms and agricultural economy
- regulatory enforcement budget



Thank you!



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