

# Healthy Food Systems and Food Safety Regulation: Balancing Multiple Public Health Goals

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# carolina farm stewardship association

**CFSA is a farmer-driven, membership-based non-profit that supports farming that is good for consumers, good for our farmers and farmworkers, and good for the land.**

# CFSA's Food Safety Work

- Heavily engaged in legislative process for the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)
- Active in developing comments on FSMA proposed rules on behalf of sustainable ag
- Provide food safety training tailored to diversified and organic farms
- GAP training videos for diversified farms on YouTube
- 'Group GAP' pilot program

# Sustainable Agriculture as a Solution to Public Health Crisis

## *Annual Deaths from Diet-Related Diseases*

- Heart disease: 787,000
- Diabetes: 234,000
- Colorectal cancer: 49,000

## *Use of Conventional Pesticides Increasing*

- As much as 93% of Americans have chlorpyrifos residues
- Implicated in diabetes, ADHD, birth defects, cancers
- Glyphosate identified by WHO as 'probable carcinogen'

*Improper use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides contaminating aquifers, fisheries, estuaries*

# The Wrong Way to Balance Multiple Goals

- *E. coli* O157:H7 contamination in bagged spinach, grown and packaged in California
- 26 states, 200+ illnesses, 3 deaths
- Grocery chains demand suppliers take immediate measures
- Wildlife scapegoated as source

# The Wrong Way to Balance Multiple Goals

- Auditors, handlers, state government declare vegetative field buffers Public Enemy No. 1
- 30,000 acres of CA farmland taken out of conservation easements
- Biodiversity, water quality management, organic practices disrupted
- All with no scientific basis

# The Wrong Way to Balance Multiple Goals

- Removing vegetative buffers correlated with *increase* in pathogen contamination
- Buffers act as barriers to wind- and waterborne pathogens
- Increased costs for farms w/o commensurate public benefits



# What Works

- Make farmers equal partners at the table
- NCDA and NCSU preparing farmers and packers for cantaloupe inspections
- NC Fresh Produce Safety Task Force
- Research collaboration



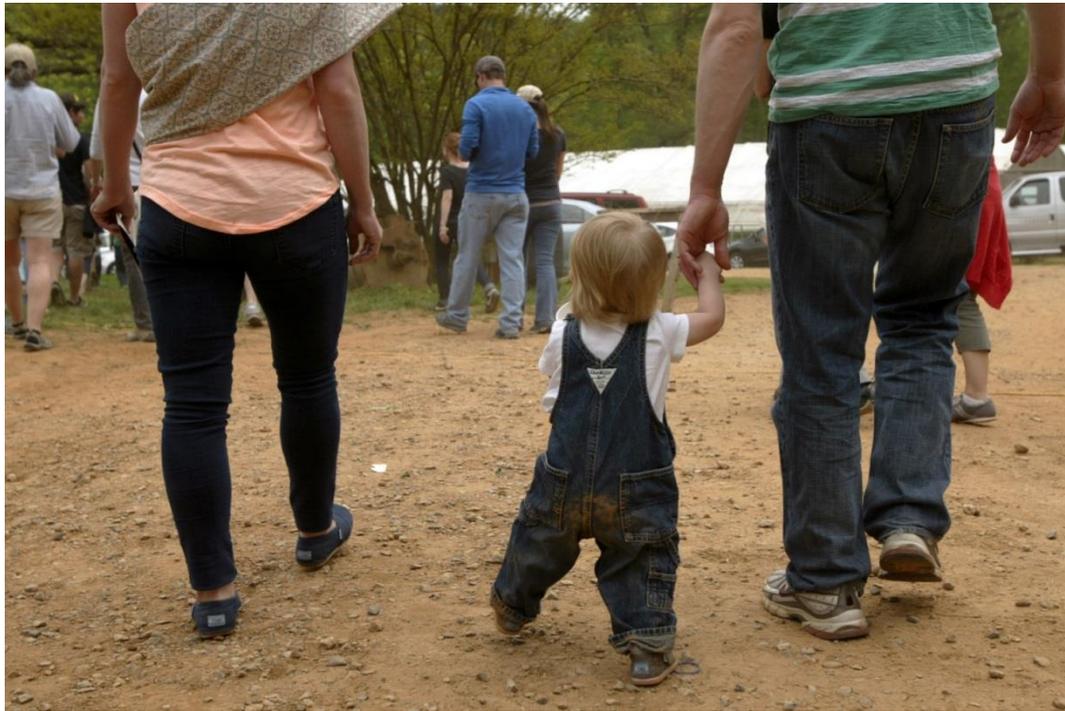
# Partnership With Farmers

- Acknowledge role of supply chain length
- Regulatory community willing to help farms reduce risk, instead of focusing on checklists
- Sharing the burden of developing and implementing food safety plans, and recognizing costs that are created for producers
- Focus in terms of delivering quality products

# Partnership with Farmers

- Investment in research
- Support diversified production systems
- Reward continuous improvement
- Inspectors need to understand conservation practices and systems, small farm economics
- One size does not fit all

# Farmers and food makers want to see their neighbors happier and healthier



# Questions?

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