

Member Alert

March 12, 2007



Contact: [Amy Philpott](#) (202) 303-3400 ext. 425

FDA Issues Fresh-cut Guidance Document

United Fresh Testifies at Senate Food Safety Hearing

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) published today its *"Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards of Fresh-cut Fruits and Vegetable,"* a guidance document that provides food processors details on how to best apply mandatory Good Manufacturing Practices specifically to fresh-cut fruits and vegetables.

The guidance document complements the FDA's regulations of good manufacturing practices and suggests that fresh-cut processors use safety programs such as the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP), which are designed to prevent, eliminate, or reduce microbial, chemical and physical hazards associated with food production.

The document also provides recommendations on recordkeeping and on recalls and tracebacks, and it addresses areas such as personal health and hygiene, training, building and equipment, sanitation operations, and production and processing controls.

FDA issued draft guidance in March 2006, and in April 2006 the United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association and the International Fresh-cut Produce Association jointly provided to the Agency extensive formal written comments and suggested edits to enhance and improve the draft guidance document. In general, FDA CFSAN adopted our suggested edits, with a result that the Guidance provides practical recommendations that should be useful to any fresh-cut processor, and we commend FDA on this accomplishment.

Sixty-eight of our 73 submitted suggested edits were accepted and incorporated by the Agency into the final guidance document. While the vast majority of our suggested edits were incorporated into the final document, five of our comments were not incorporated. United Fresh will be extensively reviewing the guidance document with the assistance from the Food Safety and Technology Council, as well as from legal counsel and interested industry members to provide further comments to the Agency to improve the guidance document.

In his [testimony](#) before the Senate Agricultural, Rural Development and

Related Agencies Subcommittee today in Wisconsin, United Fresh President Tom Stenzel thanked Commissioner Von Eschenbach and Dr. Brackett for their leadership in moving quickly to provide strong direction to the fresh-cut processing industry. "We support specific enforceable standards for fresh-cut ready-to-eat produce, and have encouraged FDA to take the important step of completing its draft *Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards of Fresh-cut Fruits and Vegetables*," Stenzel testified.

Stenzel also stressed that one of the most important issues is whether FDA is adequately funded, has sufficient staff with scientific training and experience in our sector of the food industry, has research dollars available to address key questions, has strong working agreements with the states to provide support as needed, and has the commitment of the President and full support of Congress." Stenzel noted that "as a nation committed to reducing foodborne disease, we all must share the important task to adequately fund, staff and support the FDA in carrying out its mission."

The "*Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards of Fresh-cut Fruits and Vegetable*," issued today will be made final when the White House Office of Management and Budget completes an authorization step required by the Paperwork Reduction Act.

For more information, please contact Dr. David Gombas at (202) 303-3400 ext. 411.