

Food & Environmental Testing

Collaborative Food Safety Forum
March 22, 2013

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Goals & Benefits of Testing

- **Trust, but verify**
- **One of the means to monitor suppliers and processes**
 - Preventive controls most important
 - But testing is an important part of the system
- **Helps keep suppliers attentive**



What is Tested and Scientific Basis

- Specify minimum testing requirements for most products/ingredients
- What is tested for depends on product risks
 - Raw materials
 - Finished products, both RTE and raw
 - Environmental pathogens



Sampling Frequency/Sample Size

- Sampling frequency depends on product and processing risk
- Guidance provided by ICMSF Book 7 and Book 8
- But, for higher risk products with limited controls, we require more sampling
 - For example, fresh-cut produce



Cost-Benefit of Testing

- **Microbial testing cost is relatively low for products with definitive control steps**
- **Cost is much higher for fresh-cut produce**
- **Benefits**
 - One tool to help monitor supplier processes
 - Suppliers do get positives, especially on fresh produce and environmental—those are diverted and not released because all testing is done on a test and hold basis



Challenges

- **Short shelf life products require rapid methods and labs on site or very close by**
- **Lot definitions are a significant hurdle for many suppliers and product types**
 - Many times other customers of our suppliers pressure our suppliers not to test fearing a positive that will impact their supply chain
- **Storage capacity (while product is on hold) is a big challenge for some suppliers**



Thank you!