

Dear Friends of the Family Farmers Food Safety Campaign,

We have had a lot of recent activity in CAFF's Family Farm Leafy Greens Campaign and we are writing to keep you apprised of our activities.

It is over a year since last year's tragic spinach E. coli 0157:H7 outbreak. That outbreak led California's agriculture industry to create uniform "food safety" growing standards that threaten traditional and biological leafy green family farmers. These rules are enacted through the voluntary industry-sponsored California Leafy Green Marketing Agreement (LGMA). More than 100 handlers (companies that move fresh produce from growers to retailers) signed the Agreement and are now legally bound to buy only from growers that adhere to the industry's rules. The industry wants to make these rules mandatory for ALL growers that sell to stores or restaurants. CAFF is working against this effort because the way these rules are currently written, they are inappropriate for most local traditional leafy green farmers and California's thriving local food system.

There is movement on the federal level that could implement rules that threaten local leafy green farmers nationwide. We are going to ask you to help support the nation's local food system by signing the letters at the end of this update.

CAFF sent out a [press release](#) in September and was quoted or represented in 10 articles and two radio shows. CAFF president Judith Redmond had an [Op-Ed](#) printed in the Sacramento Bee that was reprinted in the web-based magazine, the Daily Grist's [blog](#). We have also discussed this issue at farmers markets, meetings and we will have the opportunity to discuss it with federal lawmakers at a State Agriculture and Rural Leaders Summit in January.

Our most exciting news is that CAFF played a big role in preventing a potential threat to local leafy greens nationwide! Earlier this month, Senator Dianne Feinstein introduced a Leafy Greens Amendment to the Farm Bill that, if enacted, would make it possible to make industry rules mandatory for leafy green vegetables nationwide. The food safety approach in Senator Feinstein's amendment was inappropriate for thousands of traditional leafy green farmers. CAFF contacted Senator Feinstein's office and alerted allies across the country to speak out against this amendment. As of this week, Senator Feinstein's office will not be offering the amendment. This is a big victory for local leafy greens! For more information, please see CAFF's [press release](#) and [letter](#) to Senator Dianne Feinstein.

CAFF is elated with our Farm Bill victory, but our local food system faces another potential threat. The USDA is accepting [comments on the Federal Register](#) on whether it should enact or invoke a federal Marketing Agreement for leafy greens. A Marketing Agreement is voluntary but there is still the possibility that the USDA could invoke a mandatory national Marketing Order that could result in rules that would devastate traditional leafy green farmers nationwide. The public

comment period closes on December 3.

CAFF is opposed to this inappropriate proposed approach to food safety where a board of handlers would dictate farming practices. The experience of the Leafy Green Marketing Agreement (LGMA) that implemented the industry rules in California this year has already demonstrated to us the problems with this approach.

- There is no distinction made between fresh-cut product and traditional whole greens. Data provided by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and analyzed by CAFF show that since 1999, 98.5 percent of E. coli 0157:H7 illnesses from leafy greens in California have been traced to "fresh-cut" (processed, bagged) salad.
- The LGMA is controlled by the largest grower-shippers and processors. Small distributors and farmers have no representation.
- The industry rules created for the large farms of the fresh-cut processing industry are deemed appropriate for all producers of leafy greens, even though they are impractical for small-scale, diverse and many organic farmers.
- One result of the LGMA rules is that now various buyers (such as chain grocery stores and fast food chains) are competing with one another to see who can have the most extreme rules. Their auditors are demanding that farmers remove hedgerows, trees, riparian vegetation, grasses, and other habitat, and that they erect fences against deer and pigs, kill rodents and frogs with poison, and other extreme measures, most of which have no scientific basis. For more information on this, please see the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County's [A Growers Survey](#).

Furthermore, approaching the E. coli 0157:H7 problem on a crop by crop basis makes no sense. Many farms produce dozens of crops. How is a family farm to cope with the rules and paperwork for each of them? The government would be creating a tremendous burden for farmers using this approach. The stress alone could lead many farmers to stop growing leafy greens.

CAFF and the farmers we represent acknowledge that all farms face potential food safety problems. We are working with local produce distributors, the University of California, and other government agencies to create a more rational, less costly, environmentally friendly approach to food safety that small farmers could implement.

CAFF is fighting hard for traditional leafy green farmers, but we can't do this

alone. We need your help. If you want to help protect the local food system, please do the following:

- [Click here](#) to sign this letter against using this flawed model to regulate food safety to the USDA.
- If you have not signed a letter to protect leafy greens in California, please [click here](#) to do so now.

Your signature matters more now than ever before! Please circulate this to others you think may be concerned about the local food system!

For more information, please go to <http://www.caff.org/foodsafety/> or e-mail kira@caff.org.