



Resource Conservation District of Monterey County

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October 25, 2006

Subject: Reconciling Food Safety & Environmental Protection: A Literature Review

Dear Partner:

Enclosed, please find the document titled: "*Reconciling Food Safety and Environmental Protection: A Literature Review.*" As you are aware, food safety concerns have led to the development of guidelines for the fresh produce industry, including pre-harvest guidelines to reduce risks of in-field crop contamination. In some cases these pre-harvest guidelines directly conflict with efforts to promote environmental quality, such as clean water. The Resource Conservation District of Monterey County has developed this document in an effort to identify existing scientific literature and knowledge gaps that may aid in resolving current conflicts between pre-harvest food safety guidelines and practices for environmental protection.

The review explores scientific literature concerning sources and vectors of pre-harvest contamination of crops, as well as how practices to promote environmental quality may affect food safety. Scientific studies largely agree that exposure of crops to livestock waste and the use of improperly composted manure are the most likely sources of *E.coli* 0157:H7 on cropland. Although practices for environmental quality may involve non-crop vegetation, water bodies, and the wildlife associated with these features, the use of these practices may not increase the risks of crop contamination. Findings from this review reveal that certain environmental practices can actually reduce the presence of water-borne pathogens. Studies also indicate that the types of wildlife attracted by environmental practices have a very low potential of carrying pathogens associated with food-borne illness. Lastly, the review highlights gaps in the scientific literature that may need to be investigated further to better understand the relationship between food safety and practices to protect environmental quality.

We appreciate the contribution of our many partners, and the dedication of the agricultural industry, regulatory community, natural resource managers and scientific researchers working toward the dual mission of providing safe food and protecting natural resources.

Sincerely,

EMILY E. HANSON
Executive Director

Encl.