

Tomato Safety Research Needs Workshop - DRAFT
February 21-22, 2007
Wiley Building, College Park, Maryland

Background:

Recent outbreaks of Salmonellosis associated with the consumption of fresh tomatoes have created an urgent need for an improved understanding of how tomatoes become contaminated with Salmonella and other pathogenic bacteria and of how these bacteria survive (and grow?) in or on the tomatoes. This understanding is critical for developing appropriate and effective prevention, testing, and mitigation strategies. A stakeholder forum on tomato safety, organized by Dr. Martha Roberts (Special Assistant to the Director, Florida Agricultural Experiment Station), was held in late November, 2006. Almost 90 individuals representing state and federal regulatory agencies, academia, industry (representing over 85% of the U.S. fresh tomato industry) and associations participated in this UF/IFAS and Florida Tomato Committee-sponsored effort. One action item identified by the forum for immediate follow-up was to hold a workshop to "identify research needs and priorities" to meet the goal of ensuring tomato safety. Therefore, this workshop will bring together leading academic researchers and other experts to identify critical data gaps and research needs, and to map out a process for meeting these needs.

Objectives:

1. To prioritize the research needed to solve the problem of Salmonella and other pathogens in tomatoes, after:
 - Describing current efforts and expertise
 - Identifying additional research needs
2. To propose a platform for on-going research coordination and communication

Tentative Agenda:

Feb 21, Afternoon	Welcome and introduction Background and description of research needs Overview of current research portfolio Discussion– what else is being done? Charge to breakout working groups Breakout working groups
Feb. 22, Morning	Recap and question session Continue breakout working groups
Afternoon	Reports from breakout working groups Consolidation and prioritization of research needs Development of proposed platform for coordination and communication

Outcomes:

The final outcomes of the meeting will be the prioritized list of research needs and the proposed platform for coordination and communication, which will be described in a report to be disseminated to the participants and posted on the JIFSAN web site.