

Applying Risk Communication Principles to Today's Food Issues



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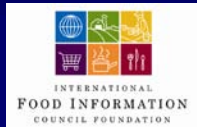
2010 JIFSAN Advisory Council Spring Symposium on
Risk Communication – Communicating Science to the Public
March 24, 2010

International Food Information Council (IFIC) / IFIC Foundation

Mission:



To effectively communicate science-based information on food safety and nutrition issues to health professionals, journalists, educators and government officials.



To effectively communicate science-based information on health, nutrition, and food safety for the public good.

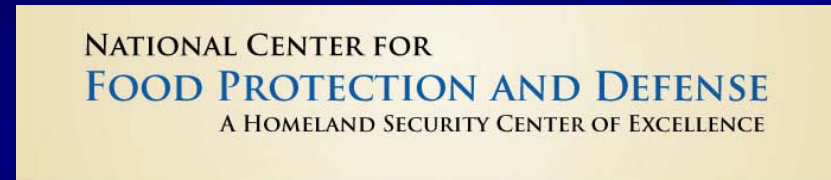
- Primarily supported by the broad-based food, beverage, and agricultural industries.

IFIC / IFIC Foundation Partners

- American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Academy of Physician Assistants
- American Association of Diabetes Educators
- The American Dietetic Association
- American Veterinary Medical Assn.
- Association of Women's Health, Obstetric, & Neonatal Nurses
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Center for Food Integrity
- Consumer Federation of America
- Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST)
- The Culinary Institute of America
- The Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network
- Food Marketing Institute
- Harvard School of Public Health
- Institute of Food Technologists
- Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
- National Association of Pediatric Nurse Associates and Practitioners
- National Center for Food Protection & Defense
- National Institutes of Health
- National Policy and Resource Center on Nutrition and Aging, Florida Int'l University
- President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports
- School Nutrition Association
- Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation
- U.S. Agency for International Development
- U.S.D.A.
- U.S. Department of State
- U.S. EPA
- U.S. FDA

Risk Communication Resources

- National Center for Food Protection and Defense (NCFPD)
 - Collaborator, Risk Communication Core Team
 - Risk communication 'train-the-trainer' modules
- American Dietetic Association (ADA)
 - CPE module on risk communication for Registered Dietitians
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - 2010 USDA / NSF Food Safety Education Conference today in Atlanta



www.foodinsight.org

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Food Insight website. At the top, the logo reads "FOOD INSIGHT" with the tagline "YOUR NUTRITION AND FOOD SAFETY RESOURCE". Below the logo is a navigation menu with links for "Home", "About Us", "For Professionals", and "For Consumers". The main content area features a large banner titled "It's All About Balance" with a photo of a family. A "twitter" widget is overlaid on the page, displaying the FoodInsightOrg profile. Below the banner, there are sections for "Hot Topics" and "Browse All Resources".

This screenshot shows a Google Reader feed for "HighlightedContent". The feed displays two articles: "Your Personal Path to Health: Steps to" and "Healthy Eating During Pregnancy". Each article includes a star icon, a title, a short introductory paragraph, and social sharing options like "Add star", "Like", "Share", and "Email".

The screenshot shows the Facebook page for "Food Insight". The page header includes the Facebook logo and navigation links for "Home", "Profile", "Friends", and "Inbox". The main content area features the Food Insight logo and the text "INTERNATIONAL FOOD INFORMATION COUNCIL FOUNDATION". There are buttons for "Add to My Page's Favorites" and "Suggest to Friends".

This screenshot shows the YouTube channel page for "FoodInsight TV". The page features the YouTube logo and the channel name "FoodInsight TV" with the subtitle "FoodInsightTV's Channel". There are prominent "Subscribe" and "Upload" buttons. The background of the page shows a blurred image of a person.

Follow us on Twitter and Facebook

■ Ificmedia

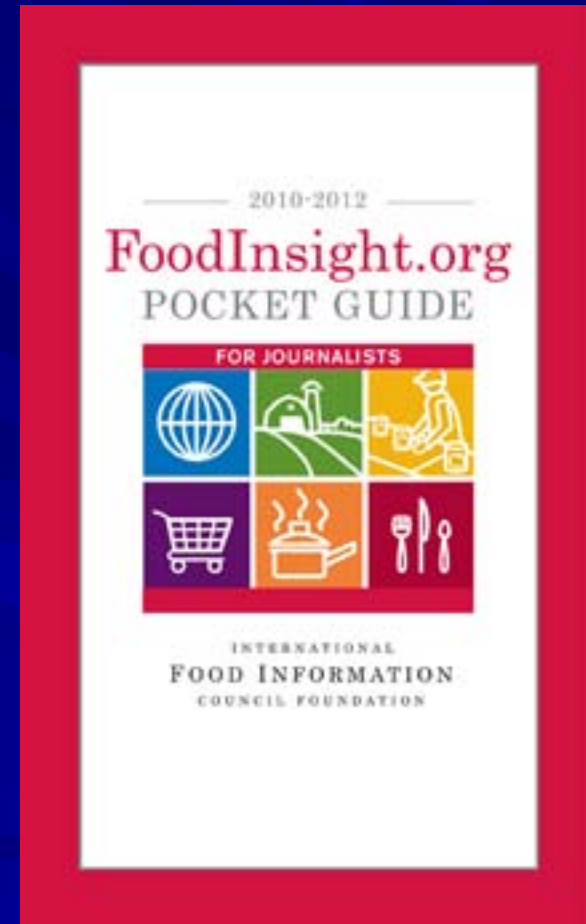
■ foodinsight

■ foodinsightorg



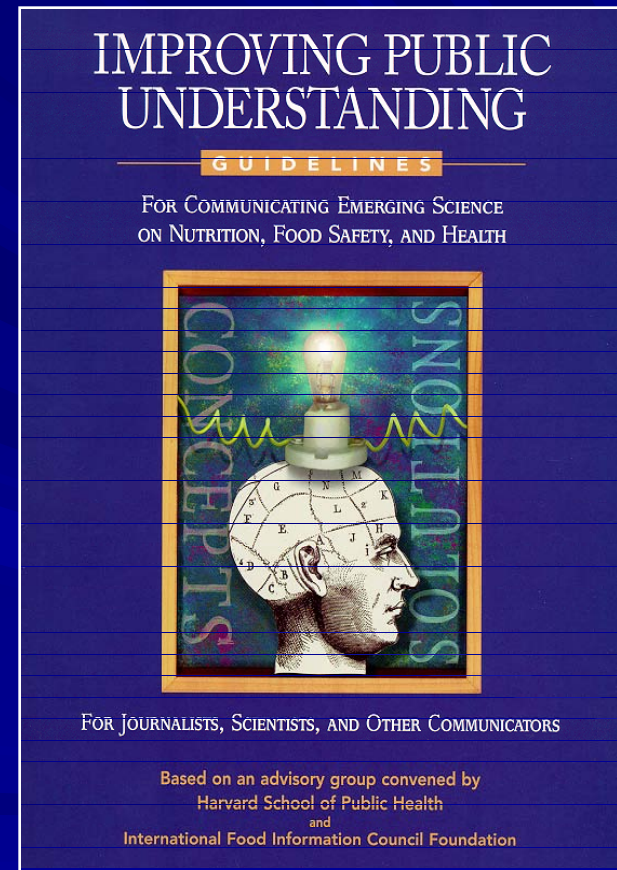
Food Insight Media Guide on Food Safety & Nutrition

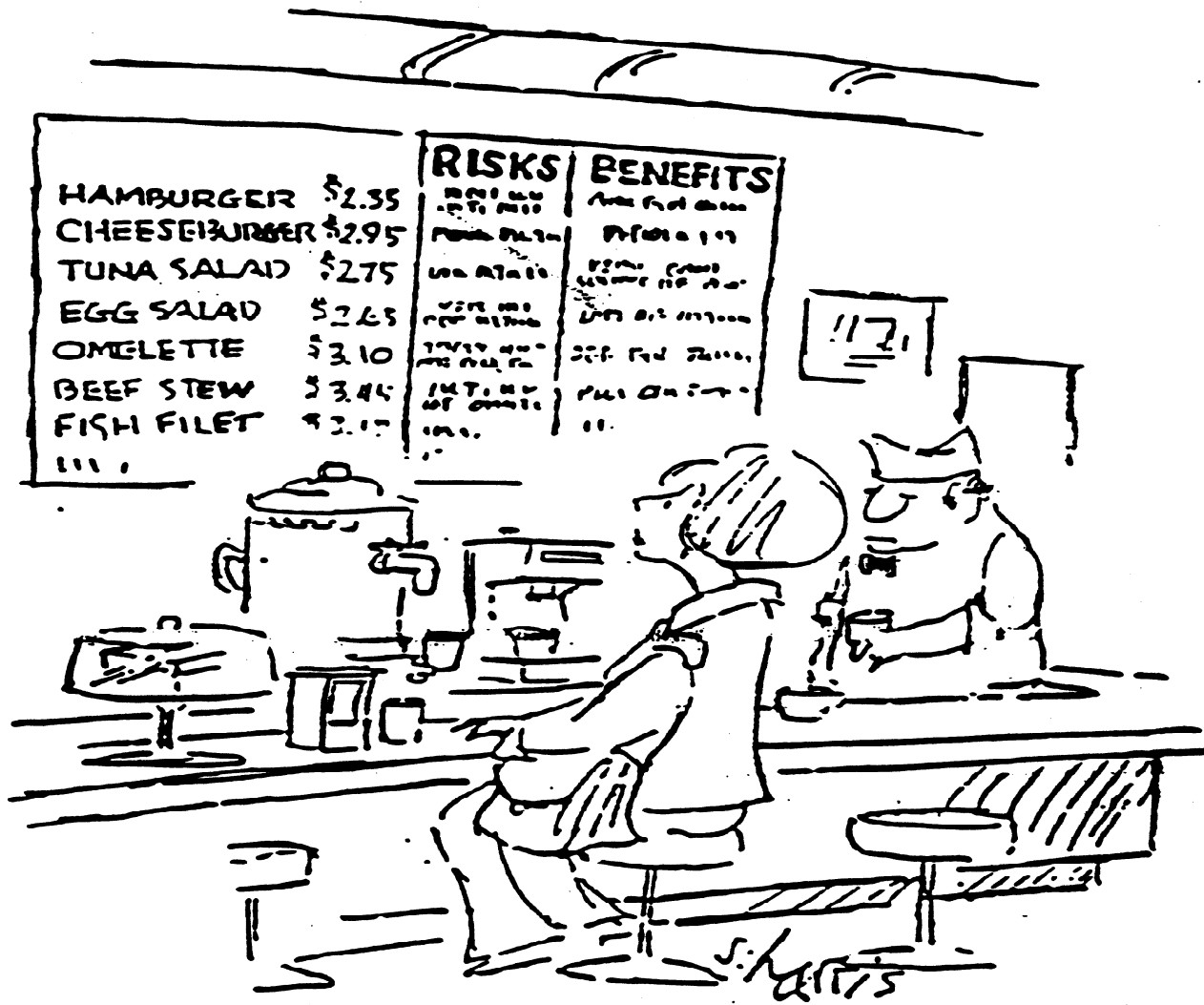
- Resource guide for journalists
- Over 300 experts
 - Food safety
 - Risk communication
 - Nutrition



How to Evaluate Emerging Science

- Harvard / IFIC Guidelines
 - To improve public understanding
 - To better communicate emerging research
- Harvard School of Public Health
- IFIC Foundation





HAMBURGER	\$2.35
CHEESEBURGER	\$2.95
TUNA SALAD	\$2.75
EGG SALAD	\$2.65
OMELETTE	\$3.10
BEEF STEW	\$3.45
FISH FILET	\$3.15

RISKS	BENEFITS
...	...
...	...
...	...
...	...
...	...
...	...
...	...

Risk Communication is . . .

“An open, two-way exchange of information and opinion about risk leading to better understanding and better risk management decisions.”

Source: USDA, 1992

Risk Communication Outcomes

- Decrease illness, injury & deaths
- Build support for response plan
- Assist in executing response plan
- Prevent misallocation & wasting of resources
- Keep decision-makers well informed
- Counter or correct rumors
- Foster informed decision-making concerning risk

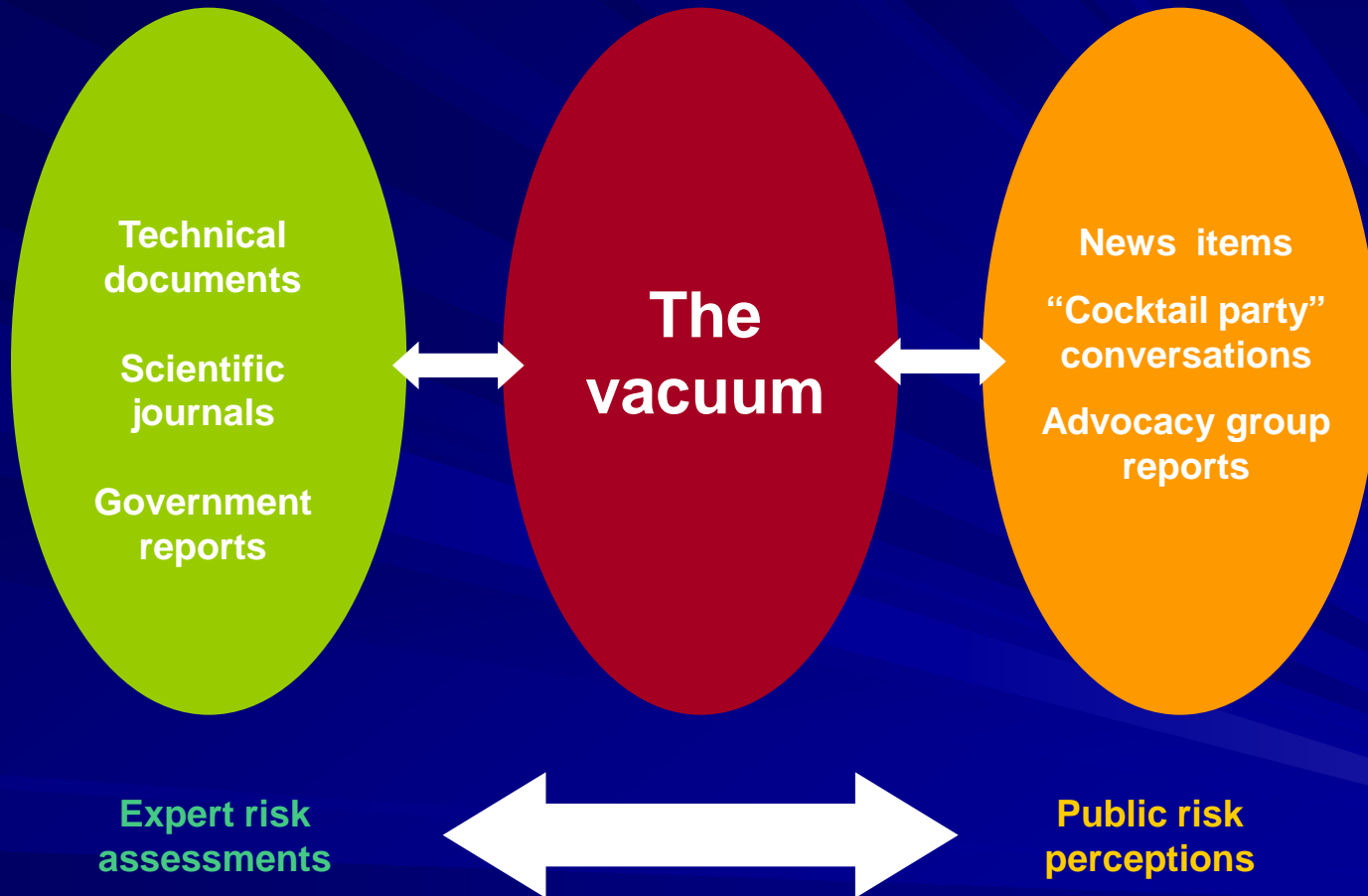
Risk Communication is NOT . . .

- Spin
- Damage control
- Crisis management
- How to write a press release
- How to give a media interview
- Always intended to make people “feel better” or reduce their fear

Food Risk Communication

- Attitudes about food-related risks
- Risk communication for food issues
 - When
 - Why
- Challenges and barriers related to risk communication
- Effective techniques to put risk into perspective

Risk Communication Gap



Overcoming Barriers

Perception is Reality

Challenges and Barriers

- People are different:
 - Some understand and want technical information; others do not
 - Some want extensive personal control over potential risks; Others prefer not to be bothered as long as “someone” is taking care of it
- Often messages that are precise and accurate are too complex for most to understand
- Simpler messages may be accused of being inaccurate, incomplete or manipulative

Factors that Interfere with “Messages” Being Heard

- Failure to address underlying concerns
- Credibility of the source
 - Real or perceived advocacy inconsistent with the facts
 - Reputation of bias or misrepresentation
 - Self-serving framing of messages
- Inconsistent and contradictory messages across credible sources

Peter Sandman



“The risks that upset people are completely different than the risks that kill people.”

Risk Communication in Practice

■ Example

– Bisphenol A (BPA)

- Chemical used to enhance the safety, quality and value of food through packaging
 - Polycarbonate plastic coatings
 - Epoxy resin coatings

■ What does the science say about its safety?

- Occupational vs. dietary exposure

■ What do regulatory bodies say about its safety?

- No concern
- Some concern
- concern

■ What do consumers believe about BPA?

- Confused

Risk Communication in Practice

- National Toxicology Program (2008)
 - ‘some concern’ . . .
- CA Prop 65 (2009)
 - “Of the data that was received and review by the scientific review panel, none offered clear evidence of risk to human health.” (cancer / birth defects)
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration (2010)
 - Shares NTP perspective
 - Recognizes uncertainties
 - Supporting steps to reduce exposure

Risk Communication in Practice

■ State activity regarding BPA



■ Minnesota

- “ban the sale of new products containing BPA”



■ Connecticut

- “prohibits BPA in infant formula and baby food jars, as well as reusable food and beverage containers”



■ Wisconsin passed “ban” in early March 2010

- “banned in all cups sold in Wisconsin for young children”



■ Washington and several others . . .

- “bans on food and drink containers that contain bisphenol A and are intended for use by children 3 and younger”

Recent Media Activity

"U.S. Concerned About The Risks From A Plastic"

1/16/10

The New York Times



"Men's exposure to bisphenol A tied to sexual ills; Health"

11/11/09

San Francisco Chronicle

"Scientists issue group warning on plastic chemical's hazards"

8/3/07

Los Angeles Times

"BPA: It's getting heated"

9/17/08

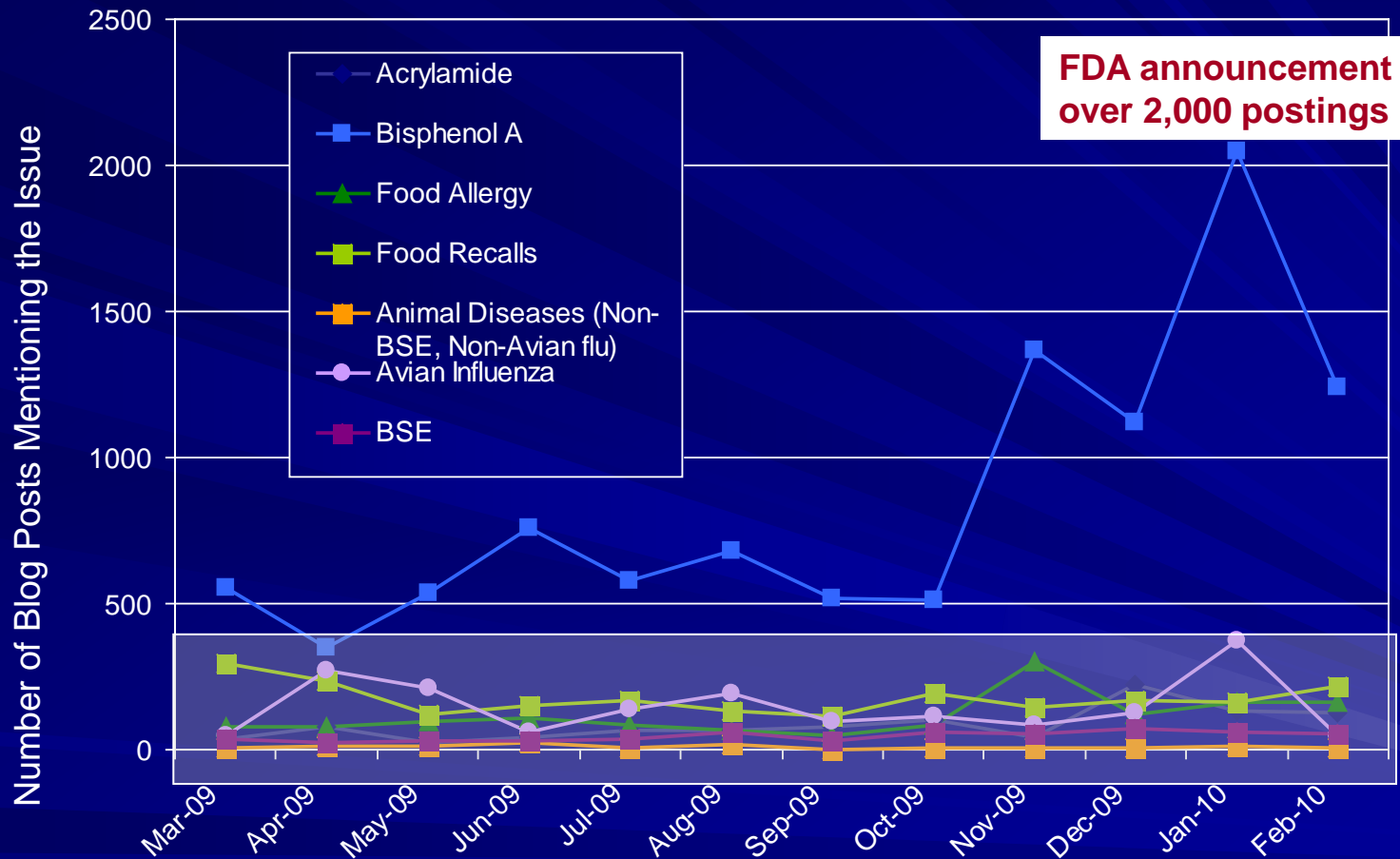


"FDA cites 'some concern' about BPA"

1/16/10

Chicago Tribune

BPA in the Blogosphere



Based on a Radian 6 search of Blogs, Videos and Forums related to Food Safety issues.

How Are Consumers Feeling?



Risk Communication Best Practices

Best Practices in Risk Communication

National Center for Food Protection and Defense

www.fpd.umn.edu



Risk Communication Best Practices

- Use the 10 Best Practices!
 - Plan
 - Establish networks and partnerships
 - Accept uncertainty while avoiding the tendency to over-reassure ourselves and others
 - Form partnerships with the public. They are stakeholders!
 - Listen to the public's needs and concerns
 - Collaborate and coordinate with credible sources
 - Meet the needs of the media and be accessible
 - Communicate with compassion and empathy
 - Provide message of self-efficacy
 - Give the public something to do
 - Continuously update and improve the plan

Risk Communication Best Practices

■ Plan

- Identify risk areas
- Reduce risk
- Plan an initial response
- Update regularly
 - Capitalize on new information
 - Constantly develop productive and proactive partnerships

■ Establish networks and partnerships

- Think about risk communication all the time
- Make risk communication part of all policy discussions
 - *Engage all those potentially affected in identifying the hazards, assessing the risks and implementing risk management*

Risk Communication Best Practices

- Accept uncertainty while avoiding the tendency to over-reassure ourselves and others
 - These characteristics help to build credibility with the public and the media
 - Be clear about any uncertainty or ambiguity in the risk or crisis situation
- Form partnerships with the public. They are stakeholders!
 - Build positive relationships with key publics BEFORE a crisis occurs
 - *Customers*
 - *Employees*
 - *Government agencies*
 - The public has a legitimate stake
 - *Ideally, the public serves as a resource*
 - Public panic is less likely with partners

Risk Communication Best Practices

- Listen to the public's needs and concerns
 - Take the public's concerns into account
 - Build a reservoir of goodwill with the public
 - Establish ongoing relationships
 - Respond to the public's beliefs whether or not they are accurate
- Collaborate and coordinate with credible sources
 - Establish strategic relationships BEFORE an incident or crisis
 - Establish a pre-crisis communication network
 - *Continually seek to validate sources*
 - *Choose subject area experts*
 - *Develop relationships with stakeholders at all levels*

Risk Communication Best Practices

- Meet the needs of the media and be accessible
 - The media are the primary conduit to the public
 - Crisis spokespersons should be identified and receive media training in advance of a crisis
 - Ideally, communication with the media is a two-way exchange
- Communicate with compassion and empathy
 - Designate a spokesperson with these characteristics
 - These characteristics enhance credibility and perceived legitimacy of the message
 - These characteristics do not preclude professionalism

Risk Communication Best Practices

- Provide message of self-efficacy
 - Give the public something to do
 - Where appropriate, relay clear, practical, actionable steps that empower individuals and serve to restore some sense of situation control
- Continuously review and update your plan
 - Consider changing attitudes, environment and communication technology

Summary

- While consumer confidence in the food supply is relatively high, history demonstrates the industry's vulnerability
- Food-related issues frequently fall into the “high concern/low trust” category
- Understanding the barriers can be critical to the effectiveness of communication strategies
- Any application of the best practices should be based on the context of the situation

Questions?

Thank you,

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