
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOCUS GROUP REPORT ON CREATIVE CONCEPT TESTING FOR FOOD SAFETY MASS MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Submitted to:

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January 3, 2006

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

ORC Macro and its partner APCO Worldwide is currently working with the Food Safety Education Staff of the United States Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA/FSIS/FSES) to implement a food safety mass media campaign plan. The campaign plan is designed to reflect changes in audience awareness and understanding of food safety issues, use social marketing concepts, and update the Agency's key safe food-handling messages. The objective of this project is to provide a design framework for a multiyear mass media campaign that will increase the public's awareness and adoption of safe food-handling behaviors. The plan identifies specific messages and approaches for each year of implementation, as well as campaign components, integrated marketing strategies, and an evaluation mechanism for measuring effect.

As part of the effort to finalize the advertisement creative for the food safety campaign, ORC Macro conducted two research focus groups with consumers in November of 2005. Participants in these focus groups consisted of people who prepared meals for others in their family (caregivers), and therefore represented the target audience for the food safety campaign. Both published and unpublished consumer data, as well as social marketing and communications theories, indicate that perception of risk is an important factor in an individual's decision to change a pattern or behavior. Caregivers were selected for this research as a primary target audience because they have the incentive often needed to pay attention to safe food preparation messages and to change or adopt these behaviors. The selection of the target audience is further detailed in the Methodology section of this report.

The goal of the focus groups was to research caregivers' perceptions and attitudes toward the creative elements of a mass media campaign to increase awareness and understanding of food safety and adoption of safe food-handling practices. Groups for this research had four to six participants each. Participants in each group were very engaged and provided useful feedback on the discussion topics.

The results from this research will be used to finalize the creative elements for the mass media campaign. Creative elements tested included concepts for two print ads (one addressing all four of the food safety behaviors of Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill and the other focused on the single food safety behavior of Separate), two radio ads (one on all behaviors and one behavior-specific), and a storyboard for a 30-second TV spot.

This executive summary provides a brief overview of the findings and conclusions from our research. Further detail of the findings, conclusions, and common themes can be found in the text of the report.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Participants liked the concepts presented, and only minor adjustments will be needed.

Participants liked the ads they were shown. They described the ads as “simple,” “clean,” and “eye-catching.” They also liked the use of primary colors and indicated that the statements were clear. Participants liked many of the pictures used in these ads and felt they added to the overall look of the ad and the ease of understanding the messages of the ad. Specific to the “Clean. Separate. Cook. Chill.” ads, participants liked the horizontal layout. They liked the Be Food Safe logo, but some felt that USDA should be spelled out. Participants generally liked the text at the bottom of the page, which talked about protecting your family. Because the participants enthusiastically endorsed the overall look and feel of the campaign, our recommendations serve to fine tune the creative elements of the mass media campaign.

The sizing, cropping, and content for the pictures is important to put behaviors in context.

Many comments were made regarding how the pictures are cropped or items are seen in each of the ads. The cropping particularly affected the ad with the horizontal pictures because less of the behavior was shown and this reduced the effect of the ad. It is recommended that some shots for use in the horizontal strip format be redone to increase the amount of contextual detail in the shots (by changing the angle). Enlarging the horizontal strips would also make the photos bigger. Also, consider reshooting and superimposing a larger thermometer with a clearer 40 degree setting in the refrigerator shot.

The wording of messages and consequences should make both the risk and solutions clear.

Participants suggested adding language such as “it only takes a second” to try to convince people of the importance of using a food thermometer when cooking meats. Participants also suggested specifically stating in the ad that the purpose of cooking meat thoroughly is to kill potentially harmful bacteria. Participants seemed to agree that their method for how they currently cook meat (without using a thermometer) includes some guesswork. The ad could address this by stating how thermometers eliminate the guesswork. To address these issues, the ads should—

- Heighten the sense of risk in the Cook sections by adding the word “bacteria” and/or mentioning that one can get sick as a consequence of eating food that is not safely prepared. Also consider putting the line “you can’t tell it’s done by how it looks” back in—which is in the broadcast ads, but not the print.
- Use the term “spreading” or “spread(s)” where the word “bacteria” appears as appropriate.
- When referring to thermometer use, try to emphasize the fact that “it only takes a second” to be sure the temperature is right and bacteria is gone, and that it eliminates the “guesswork.”
- Emphasize the words “cross-contamination” and make that concept clearer.

The copy text for the radio ad should be more concise, similar to the TV ad.

Participants also thought the messages being conveyed over the radio should be short and to the point. They indicated that parts of the draft radio spot seemed too wordy. They felt the messages should be kept short (e.g., “use two cutting boards instead of one” instead of “keep raw meat and poultry away from other foods”). It is recommended that we reduce the announcer copy substantially; because there are currently too many messages, and that we keep the copy to one key point per behavior. The language should also be more colloquial, natural and less stilted, official-sounding.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

USDA has successfully branded educational messages and campaigns on food safety. Research indicates that prior campaigns have increased awareness of the four basic food safety messages: *Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill*. However, the same research also indicates that there is a gap between consumer knowledge and use of the correct safe food-handling practices. The multiyear mass media campaign plan for the USDA/FSIS/FSES has built upon the awareness generated by previous food safety education efforts and developed a plan on the basis of social marketing principles designed to move audiences from the contemplation of practicing safe food-handling techniques, to performing and/or maintaining these practices.

By definition, a campaign using social marketing principles targets a specific and relevant audience. The ORC Macro team and USDA established parameters of a target audience on the basis of two primary factors: 1) current level of safe food-handling knowledge, and 2) role as a food preparer. Research indicates that attitudes toward food and nutrition issues are difficult to change. Those audiences that already demonstrate some level of knowledge are easier to move to the desired behavior change. On the basis of these data, the team determined that the campaign should target those consumers who have already been reached with the previous food safety messages. Because risk perceptions must be extremely high for individuals to consider a behavior change, especially when involving an activity or other outcome they enjoy, those who take responsibility for the care of others (caregivers) were determined the primary target audience.

To establish more specific knowledge about the caregiver target audience, ORC Macro conducted a previous round of focus groups to help extend our knowledge on the basis of prior audience research. The intent of this round of focus groups was to test participant responses to the creative elements that have been developed for the mass media campaign for insight into the effectiveness and clarity of the messages, layout, and graphic elements.

For this research, ORC Macro conducted two focus groups among caregivers in Calverton, Maryland. The previous focus group testing informed the strategy for selection of the participants, including development of the screening guide. Each group consisted of four to six participants and lasted approximately an hour and a half. The groups were designed to view and discuss the various creative elements of the mass media campaign. The findings from this research will be used to fine tune the creative pieces that will go into the mass media campaign plan.

Background

Conducting focus groups is a qualitative research method, helpful in gaining feedback, individual perceptions, and ideas that cannot be obtained through quantitative research. For this study, ORC Macro conducted a set of focus groups to better understand caregivers' perceptions of messages, layout, and graphics for various creative treatments. The goals of the study were to determine what, if any, changes might need to be made to enhance the message, layout, or graphics for the creative elements.

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For the purposes of our research, a caregiver was defined as someone who prepares at least three meals a week for children under the age of 10 or adults over the age of 60 in the household. ORC Macro recruited caregivers who were representative of the population by gender and race/ethnicity in the city selected. However, information from focus groups is never intended to be projectable to the general population. Data are intended to be representative of the participants only.

Participants

ORC Macro conducted two focus groups in Calverton. The following table displays the location, dates, and times of each group.

Focus Group Participants

Location	Date	Times	Participants
Calverton, MD	11/1/2005	Group 1: 6:00 to 7:30 Group 2: 8:00 to 9:30	Group 1: caregivers Group 2: caregivers

ORC Macro used an independent firm to recruit participants and developed a screener to aid in the participant selection process. All participants met the following eligibility requirements:

- Individuals were excluded from consideration if they had participated in another focus group in the past year
- Individuals were excluded from consideration if they had any food service or grocery industry workers living in their household
- Individuals were excluded from consideration if they were a State or Federal Government employee, or if such employees resided in their household
- Individuals were excluded from consideration if they were a university employee such as a researcher working for a cooperative extension
- ORC Macro did not specifically select participants on the basis of their race or ethnicity; however, recruiters were instructed to ensure that the final set of participants in each group was approximately representative of the characteristics of each geographic location
- Individuals had to demonstrate some current knowledge of safe food preparation and safe food-handling behaviors by rating a minimum score of “2 points” on the screening questionnaire

ORC Macro has attached the Participant Screener as Appendix A.

Moderator

ORC Macro provided a professionally trained moderator, Mr. Matt Suljak, and a notetaker for each group. The moderator participated in the conceptualization of this project and the development of the Moderator’s Guide. All staff on this project debriefed often to discuss any findings and to identify themes. At the conclusion of the focus groups, the entire project team met to review the findings and conduct a more systematic analysis, using the notes and the observations of the moderator and notetaker.

Moderator's Guide

The moderator's guide was developed by ORC Macro and approved by USDA to ensure that the completed guide met all of the research criteria for the creative testing phase of the research. The guides were structured as follows:

Introduction

- This segment enabled the moderator to introduce himself/herself and gave the participants an opportunity to introduce themselves. This segment also included an “ice-breaker” question for the participants.

Discussion Topics

- Each focus group was divided into several discussion segments:
 - Key Messages and Print Ads**—Participants were shown an all-behavior (Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill) print ad that had a horizontal layout of images and messages, and they were asked to comment on the understandability, photos, text, and whether it would affect behavior change. Participants were later shown a single behavior (Separate) print ad that had a horizontal layout of images and messages and were asked to provide comments.
 - Layout**—Participants were then show other ads with the same content but different layouts and asked about their preferences.
 - USDA/Partnership Logos**—Participants were asked what, if any, effect the USDA logo had on their perception of each of the ads. Participants were then shown an ad with both the USDA logo and a partner's logo and asked about its effect.
 - Copy Direction**—Participants were asked to comment specifically on the phrase “keep bacteria from spreading” and whether alternative terms would be more motivating.
 - Web site call to action**—Participants were asked to comment on the presentation of the USDA Web site information in the ads and whether it would prompt them to visit the site.
 - TV and Radio Spots**—Participants were read advertisement copy for a 60-second radio spot and read advertisement copy and shown a storyboard for a 30-second TV spot. They were then asked to comment on the messages, understandability, and to suggest improvements.

False Close

- This segment allowed the moderator to leave the room and confer with the focus group observers to determine if there were any additional questions that should be asked before adjourning the group.

Documentation

Each focus group was videotaped and audiotaped. Audiotapes will be provided to USDA.

FINDINGS

Focus group testing often leads to a clearer determination about what direction creative concepts should take. With this project, participants gave clear indications of wording, format, concepts, or ideas that did—and did not—“work” for them. This, coupled with a discussion with the project team and USDA, helped to determine the issues that were most important to address.

The objective of this report is to discuss in some detail, using direct quotes from participants and thoughts from the project team, the reactions of the focus groups to each major topic presented to them. These reactions are then summarized into conclusions and recommendations that emerged.

Overall Creative Concept Appeal

Participants liked the ads they were shown. They described the ads as “simple,” “clean,” and “eye-catching.” They also liked the use of primary colors and indicated that the statements were clear. Participants liked many of the pictures used in these ads and felt they added to the overall look of the ad and the ease of understanding the messages of the ad. Specific to the “Clean. Separate. Cook. Chill.” ads, participants liked the horizontal layout. Participants liked the Be Food Safe logo, but some felt that USDA should be spelled out somewhere for those who might not know the acronym. Participants generally liked the text at the bottom of the page, which talked about protecting your family, although some mentioned they also cook for friends.

Key Messages and Print Ads

Participants were asked to discuss six conceptual ads during the focus groups. The first three ads targeted the four main food safety behaviors—**Clean. Separate. Cook. Chill.** There were three variations of this ad, each presenting the same text in various layouts. There was a fourth ad that was similar to one of the other ads, the only difference being the addition of the Partnership for Food Safety Education logo in the lower right hand corner.

The next set of ads focused on one specific food safety behavior—**Separate.** Again there were three variations of this ad, with the variations matching the layouts of the all-behavior ad. Each ad conveyed the same text but used a different layout.

All-Behavior Messages

Participants seemed to understand the message of the ads, but some did not think that it pertained to them—especially Clean, Separate, and Cook. The Chill-related messages of chilling leftovers within 2 hours and keeping the fridge at 40 degrees was not as well known.

“Chill takeout foods and leftovers within 2 hours, and I’ll be honest with you that’s something I’m very negative about doing.” – **8:00 PM**

Cook Message

Many comments focused on using a thermometer for cooking. Participants in both groups seemed to have several years of experience cooking, and they stated that they knew from experience when certain foods were cooked well enough. Often, this was determined by cutting open meat to check its color, poking chicken with a fork to see if the “juices run clear,” or simply timing the meat on the basis of its size or weight. For this reason, several participants stated that this message would be more relevant for a younger crowd, newlyweds, or those who are new to cooking.

“I don’t use a thermometer. You can tell if a pork roast is done when you cut down in it.” – **6:00 PM**

“An inexperienced cook would want to use a thermometer. A beginner cook, because they don’t know how to test. And I do use a thermometer in some meats at home.” – **6:00 PM**

Participants suggested adding language such as “it only takes a second” to try to convince people of the importance of using a food thermometer when cooking meats. Participant also suggested specifically stating in the ad that the purpose of cooking meat thoroughly is to kill potentially harmful bacteria. They seemed to agree that their method for how they currently cook meat (without using a thermometer) includes some guesswork. The ad could address this by stating how thermometers eliminate the guesswork.

“What about adding something, like it only takes a second.” – **6:00 PM**

“Cooking to the appropriate temperature kills bacteria.” – **6:00 PM**

“Emphasizing in this one say that it only takes a minute to pop in a meat thermometer.” – **8:00 PM**

Risk Messages

Although participants understood the messages that were being conveyed in the ads, many wanted to know the reasoning behind why they should follow these behaviors. In the ads, simply telling people to Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill, was not motivating enough. Many participants wanted to know the consequences of not following these model behaviors and seemed less likely to change their behaviors without knowing the consequences. For the message relative to using a food thermometer, understanding that bacteria might still be present unless cooked to a specific temperature appeared motivating.

“I don’t know the reason behind number two. Why is it that you separate the meat and poultry from the other foods?” – **8:00 PM**

“You have to tell me what the consequences are. Don’t tell me to use it, you tell me why it’s important for me to use it.” – **8:00 PM**

Because these risk messages are the principal messages that the ads are trying to convey, and because many readers will not read all the way to the bottom of the ads, they should be the first thing the

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reader sees. In particular, the top of the ad should convey the message that you need to protect your family from bacteria.

“Maybe put this Be Food Safe up top and then the cross-contamination right below it. It’s one of the first things you should read.” – **6:00 PM**

“Or even put Be Food Safe at the top.” – **8:00 PM**

“The Clean, Separate, Cook, Chill can help you protect your family and keep bacteria from spreading. That is the main thing and really it should be a big heading across the top.” – **8:00 PM**

Pictures

Participants liked many of the pictures used in these ads and felt that they added to the overall look of the ad and the ease of understanding the messages of the ad. Many participants provided suggestions for improving some of the photos. Comments were made regarding how the pictures are cropped or items are seen in each of the ads. The cropping particularly affected the ad with the horizontal pictures because less of the behavior was shown and this reduced the effect of the ad.

“They demonstrate the concept very well. Like on the Separate you can see two separate cutting boards with raw meats and vegetables very clearly separated.” – **6:00 PM**

“They’re good pictures. I think it’s very well done.” – **6:00 PM**

“The pictures are larger. So, to have them blown up and be larger also is helpful.” – **6:00 PM**

Participants noted how some of the pictures are missing critical parts of the image or that certain items should be made more prominent.

- In the photo that is associated with Clean, be sure that the photo clearly shows the canister of orange soap in the background. Also, some participants thought that this person was a chef because of the white sleeves, not an average American.

“On that one it shows the soap. On the other one it does not. You need to get a picture of the soap in it.” – **6:00 PM**

“This one needs to have the soap where you can see it.” – **6:00 PM**

- In the photo that is associated with Separate, the cutting board with vegetables should be more prominent. Also, bring the knife to the front of the vegetables to show that the user has two *separate* knives. One participant mentioned that the cutting board in the background looked like it might be wooden and should be replaced with a plastic cutting board.

“On this second cutting board, maybe put the knife in front so you see a separate knife.” – **6:00 PM**

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- In the photo that is associated with Cook, replace the chicken with something that consumers would more readily associate with a meat thermometer, such as a roast or a turkey.

“I think a whole chicken in that spot would be much better. Also, you would then be demonstrating where to put the thermometer because you don’t want to put it up at the neck part or at a real skinny part.” – **6:00 PM**

- In the photo that is associated with Chill, make the temperature on the thermometer easier to read so that consumers can see the refrigerator is at or below 40 degrees.

“The thermometer, make it a little bit bigger so people can see the temperature for 40 degrees.” – **6:00 PM**

The Separate-specific ads received several comments regarding the photos as well.

- The photo with the cutting board received the same comments as mentioned above.
- In the second photo with hands washing the cutting board in the sink, participants noticed that it was a different color from the cutting boards in the previous photo. They stated that this photo should portray one of the cutting boards being used previously where the person is preparing meats and vegetables.

“I would also encourage you all to bring the same cutting board down here in this second picture. They see him using it with the meat, not washing it. It is two different cutting boards.” – **8:00 PM**

- Participants did not understand why the third photo showed items in a shopping cart. This seemed out of context with the other photos, which are all kitchen oriented. They indicated that a more appropriate photo should be chosen here.

“I mean when you’re in a grocery store do you try...I try and keep them separated, but a lot of people don’t.” – **6:00 PM**

“I don’t understand the grocery cart. It doesn’t make sense.” – **8:00 PM**

- In the final photo, participants did not like how the top of the ground beef and the bottom of the turkey pan were cropped off. They indicated that it was important to show these items in their entirety, this was resolved in the Separate ads that include square photos. Participant also did not understand the need to have the red and orange peppers in the fridge, and added that the vegetables were located directly under ground beef that could potentially leak, thereby cross contaminating foods.

“The peppers are beautiful in the picture, but you might at least try and look at a picture with both the turkey and the hamburger clearly visible in their containers on the same shelf.” – **6:00 PM**

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Layout

Participants liked the layout of ads they were shown. They described the ads as “simple,” “clean,” and “eye-catching.” They also liked the use of primary colors and indicated that the statements were clear.

“The layout is clean and simple. It makes the concept look simple. The main concepts are clearly stated in each block.” – **6:00 PM**

Moderator: What’s simple about it?

“Well, its primary colors. Everything’s highlighted in primary colors” – **6:00 PM**

Specific to the “Clean. Separate. Cook. Chill.” ads, participants liked the horizontal layout. When shown the square layouts, they seemed to prefer those, tending to indicate that the pictures were larger, which solved many of the cropping issues that are discussed below. The layout that included the colored squares was preferred because it was easier to read. Some preferred moving the four food-behavior messages in the colored boxes toward the outside and including the “Be Food Safe from USDA” logo in the middle. This allowed for larger pictures and they liked the colors.

“The message for this whole set of posters is Be Food Safe, so that message is right in the middle and I find that eye-catching.” – **6:00 PM**

“I think the squares need to be colored. As in the other ones where they are colored, versus the white background.” – **6:00 PM**

“I like the middle one better. [Be Food Safe in middle] Because that’s the whole message you’re trying to get.” – **8:00 PM**

“I like the first one. [Horizontal Layout] It’s more visually appealing.” – **8:00 PM**

USDA/Partnership Logos

Participants like the Be Food Safe logo. Some felt that USDA should be spelled out somewhere for those who might not know the acronym. People did not mind the addition of The Partnership for Food Safety Education logo, but they did not feel that it necessarily strengthened the ad because it was not well known.

Copy Direction

Participants preferred the term bacteria to either bacteria and viruses or viruses used alone. They stated that people associate bacteria with food and viruses with colds or other illnesses, so adding viruses would be confusing. Both groups preferred the phrase “keep bacteria from spreading” to “multiplying” or “growing.” Again there was some discussion of adding language to be more specific about the consequences to your family of not protecting them from bacteria. To strengthen this part of message, they suggested listing the harmful effects of eating food contaminated with bacteria

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“I think it’s important because most people are cooking for their families and they want to protect them.” – **6:00 PM**

“I would suggest changing the order of those two phrases to be, can help you keep bacteria from spreading and protect your family. Because the phrase protect your family is last and you’ll remember the purpose of doing this.” – **6:00 PM**

“You get the visualization of spreading when you say that word.” – **6:00 PM**

“Because that’s what you think about when you think about food. Bacteria. You don’t think of virus. Virus you think of the flu, cold, you think of a sickness.” – **6:00 PM**

“I want people to say you know to prevent illness. I don’t see that. Protect your family from what? From getting sick, from getting ill, from getting you know, hospitalization.” – **8:00 PM**

“I think spreading is more appropriate. I just think bacteria spreads.” – **8:00 PM**

[In reference to using virus instead of bacteria] “Stick with the bacteria because I think people for years have been able to associate food with bacteria.” – **8:00 PM**

[In reference to Separate ad] “Four things is a lot to try and absorb at the same time. OK, if I have one or two, I think I have a better chance of really picking up a message and actually having it stick with me, versus having four.” – **8:00 PM**

One participant had trouble interpreting the language associated with Chill. In short she was reading the word “takeout” as a verb rather than an adjective. To resolve this, participants suggested changing “takeout food” to “carryout food.”

Participants liked the ads that had the largest font. They also preferred text when it was within the colored boxes. They seemed to have particular trouble reading the text in the ad that had the white text directly over the photos.

Web Site

Participants noticed the Web site address at the bottom of each of the ads, but they had mixed opinions regarding whether or not they would actually go to the Web site.

Participants indicated that the information presented was clear and did not require further explanation. Participants mentioned that the ads could direct people to go to the Web site by stating that the site would provide more specific information (e.g., what temperature certain foods should be cooked to) or more clearly describe the potential consequences of eating undercooked meats (e.g., illness). Others suggested that they might go to the Web site if it was stated that there was “more food safety preparation ideas and techniques.”

“I’ll tell you what I would like to see. Why don’t you add to that sentence—potential consequences. To learn more about food safety and potential consequences.” – **8:00 PM**

“For additional safety tips.” – **8:00 PM**

“Or food preparation ideas, maybe.” – **8:00 PM**

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TV and Radio Spots

Draft television and radio spots were then tested among each group. Because these were still in the drafting phase, actual examples of the ads could not be played for the group. Instead, the moderator described how the ads would sound and look (for the TV ad) and read the ads aloud for the participants to hear. The participants were asked to imagine they were hearing and/or seeing the ads being broadcast on radio or television, respectively.

:60 Radio Spot

Participants agreed that a radio ad of this nature would have to be very upbeat. They stated that it should have a catchy jingle that sticks in listeners' minds.

Although some participant suggested that a radio spot such as this would have to be accessible to various audiences, others noted that several versions of this radio ad would have to be created. One participant began singing the ad to the beat of an Aretha Franklin song and another suggested that the ad be a rap song that might reach a younger audience.

Participants also thought the messages being conveyed over the radio should be short and to the point. They indicated that parts of the draft radio spot seemed too wordy. They felt the messages should be kept short (e.g., “use two cutting boards instead of one” instead of “keep raw meat and poultry away from other foods”). This is different from the print ads where participants wanted more of an explanation for each of the food safety behaviors.

“Depending on the beat of the music, I think it’s something that you know it could become a part of you, if you hear it over and over.” – **8:00 PM**

“I think on some of the announcer, you know you gotta make, you really gotta make it a very short thing, one idea versus two.” – **8:00 PM**

:30 TV Spot

Almost immediately, participants noticed that the first image portrayed a young girl sitting on the counter in the kitchen. They noted that this was certainly not an image they would want to see in a television commercial emphasizing food safety behaviors.

Participants seemed to understand the message being conveyed in the television commercial. They indicated that the television spot contained more concise and direct language than the radio ad and that the language in the TV spot was less stilted. Participants suggested that the ad says what it is supposed to say and that if it is only a 30 second ad then nothing should be added.

“I like the announcer’s words better than the radio commercial. They’re less stilted, there more natural.” – **6:00 PM**

It was also suggested to use the same people throughout the ad.

“Words are better than the radio. They are more concise and direct. You ought to use the same models on each of the pictures.” – **8:00 PM**

ORC MACRO/APCO RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

In this section, ORC Macro/APCO developed a set of recommended modifications that will be made based on the findings of the two focus groups and from further discussion between the project team and the USDA client. Because the participants enthusiastically endorsed the overall look and feel of the campaign, these recommendations serve to fine tune the creative elements of the mass media campaign.

The following modifications will be made to all print ads:

- USDA selected the horizontal approach with the slightly larger horizontal spaces (less white space between).
- A copyright will be added at the bottom to spell out United States Department of Agriculture.
- Keep space available for partner logo to be added when used in a cobranding scenario. A style guide will be developed to go with the partner toolkit to spell out how to add the partner logo to the print ad. The non-cobranding print ads will use the entire space.
- Change wording at bottom to read, “To find out more about food safety, visit foodsafety.gov.”
- Change the closing copy on each to read “The four easy lessons of Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill can help prevent harmful bacteria from making your family sick”.

The following modifications will be made to the all-behavior ad:

- For the Chill section, a revised photo is needed to clearly show leftovers in the refrigerator, a better digital thermometer will be used in the shot, and the new photo will employ a more clearly African-American hand model, possibly showing the model placing the leftovers in the fridge rather than holding the thermometer. The copy will be changed to read “40° F.”
- Change the copy in the Cook section to read, “Use a food thermometer—you can’t tell food is cooked safely by how it looks.”
- We will keep the shot of the chicken breasts and thermometer in the Cook section.

The following modifications will be made to the behavior specific ads:

- Ads will be lessened from four to three photos/directions per behavior.
- For Separate we will delete the section with the “washing the cutting board” photo and use the remaining three shots and copy. The narrative in the shopping cart section will more clearly explain how Separate applies to the cart.
- Shot lists will be produced for the above shot revisions and the remaining three single behavior ads (Chill, Cook, and Clean).

TV and Radio Spots—Creative Revisions/Considerations

- Add a copyright to the bottom of last shot in the TV ad and structure for the addition of a partner logo when used in a cobranding scenario.
- Revise and reduce the four-behavior radio text copy and submit a new version that mentions one major point for each behavior.

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT SCREENER

Participant Screener for USDA Consumer Mini-Groups November 2005

Recruiting Goals

- Two groups, both at ORC Macro's headquarters in Calverton, MD.

In each location the criteria are the following:

- One group will consist of 2 males and 2 females. The other group will consist of 2 males and 3 females.
- Each group will have a mix of race/ethnicity reflective of the population in the area.
- Each group will have a mix of caregivers of children under age 10 and/or adults over age 60.
- All participants must be able to read, understand, and speak English.
- Recruit for two hours with the expectation that the groups will last an hour and a half.
- Participants will receive a stipend for their time (\$60 in Calverton, MD).

Table 1: Focus Group Specifications

Location	Date	Times	Participants
Calverton, MD	11/1/2005	Group 1: 6:00 to 7:30 Group 2: 8:00 to 9:30	Group 1: Adult Caregiver Group 2: Adult Caregiver

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT SCREENER

Participant Screener for Mini-Groups

Hello Mr./Ms. _____, my name is _____ and I'm calling about a research study that we are doing in your area. We are recruiting for an upcoming focus group we will be conducting among caregivers of children under the age of 10 and adults over the age of 60.

Would you mind answering a few questions?

Screening Questions

Q1. Are there any food service or grocery industry workers in your household?

- Yes -> [Thank the person for his/her time]
- No -> continue

Q2. Are you a state or federal government employee?

- Yes -> [Thank the person for his/her time]
- No -> continue

Q3. Are you a university employee such as a researcher or working for a cooperative extension?

- Yes -> [Thank the person for his/her time]
- No -> continue

Q4. Do you prepare at least three meals a week for any children under the age of 10 or adults over the age of 60 in the household?

- No → eliminate [thank respondent politely]
- Yes → continue

[Note: A food preparer is someone who regularly prepares meals or cooks food for other individuals. If a respondent is the food preparer for children under the age of 10 and/or adults over the age of 60, then the respondent can be invited to participate.]

Q5. **Clean**

How often do you wash your hands after cracking open an egg?

- Never → continue (0 pts)
- Sometimes → continue (1 pt)
- Most of the time → continue (1 pt)
- Always → continue (1 pt)

Q6. Separate

How often do you use a different cutting board for raw meats and other foods for the same meal or wash the cutting board between cutting raw meats and other foods?

- Never → continue (0 pts)
- Sometimes → continue (1 pt)
- Most of the time → continue (1 pt)
- Always → continue (1 pt)

Q7. Cook

Do you own a food thermometer?

- Yes → continue (1 pt)
- No → continue (0 pts)

Q8. Chill

How often do you defrost meat/poultry at room temperature?

- Never → continue (1 pt)
- Sometimes → continue (1 pt)
- Most of the time → continue (0 pts)
- Always → continue (0 pts)

Total Points:

- 2 or more points → continue
- 0 or 1 points → eliminate

Q9. In the past year, have you participated in any focus groups or other market research studies? [**Participation in telephone surveys is allowable**]

- Yes -> [Thank the person for his/her time]
- No -> continue

We would like to invite you to participate in a focus group in which you will be asked to discuss your attitudes toward a variety of test messages and advertisement images. The focus group is being conducted on behalf of the United States Department of Agriculture, or USDA, not by a commercial business. The purpose is not to sell you anything, but to learn more about how you react to certain messages and images.

The discussion will last approximately 90 minutes, and will include between 4 to 5 adults. Your participation and everything you say during the discussion will remain confidential. In appreciation for your time, you will receive (Calverton, MD - \$60.00) in cash. We will provide

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT SCREENER

[6pm group – sandwiches and beverages; 8pm group – light snacks and beverages] for you before the focus group begins.

The focus group will be held on [refer to table for the date and time]. It will be held in Calverton, MD.

Q10. Do you think that you will be able to participate?

- Yes -> continue
- No -> [Thank the person for his/her time]

I'm glad that you will be able to join us!

Demographic Questions

Q11. We would like to make sure that the participants in the focus group are racially and ethnically representative. What is your ethnic background?

- White, not Hispanic or Latino Origin
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Other [Specify] _____
- Refused

I would like to send you a confirmation letter and directions to the facility. In order to do so, could you please tell me your mailing address (or fax number) and a phone number where you can be reached:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Date of focus group: _____ Time: _____

We are only inviting a few people, so it is very important that you notify us as soon as possible if for some reason you are unable to attend. Please call [recruiter] at [telephone number] if this should happen. We look forward to seeing you on [date] at [time].

USDA Multi-Year Mass Media Campaign Plan

Focus Group Moderator's Guide

NOVEMBER 1, 2005

I. Welcome/Introduction

Welcome and thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this focus group. My name is _____, and my role is to guide the discussion tonight. Right away, I want to let everyone know that I'm not an expert in the topic we'll be covering. I want to hear your honest opinions about the topics we discuss tonight. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions I'm going to ask, please just relax and enjoy the discussion.

Before we get started, there are just a few things I'd like to point out. As you may have noticed, there is a one-way mirror in this room. Behind the mirror are staff from my company, ORC Macro, who are observing and taking notes. Also observing is staff from our client for this project.

If for any reason you wish to leave the discussion, you may. You will still receive your incentive for your willingness to participate.

Ground Rules

- A. You have been asked here to offer your views and opinions; participation from everyone is important.
- B. Audio and video taping the session.
- C. Speak one at a time.
- D. No side conversations.
- E. It is OK to disagree with each other, because there are no right or wrong answers to these questions. If you dislike something or disagree with something that is said, I want to hear about it.
- F. Use first names only when speaking.
- G. All answers are confidential, so feel free to speak your mind.

Ice Breaker

Let's begin by finding out a little bit about each of you. Please tell everyone your first name, and also tell us what type of meal you have the most fun preparing.

II. Topic 1 - General Food Safety Discussion

I'd like to start by having everyone think about how they generally prepare foods for dinner.

- What is your favorite meal to prepare?
- How do you generally learn about how to prepare your meals safely?

We're here this evening because my client wants to reach caregivers—people like you who prepare food for others—with important messages about how to more effectively practice safe food-handling behaviors. So tonight, I'd like to get your feedback on some ads that have been developed to help get these messages to.

III. Topic 2 - Key Messages, and Print Ads

a. CLEAN. SEPARATE. COOK. CHILL.

Take a look at this ad. I'll give you a few minutes to review the ad before we continue our discussion.

[Show first layout—start with ad that has horizontal layout of images and messages][Second focus group – start with different layout]

General

What do you think about this ad?

Understandability

How clear is the message of the ad?

What is the ad conveying to you?

How do the photos help you understand this message?

In your own words, how would you describe the general concept of this ad?

Would you read the text?

[Allow participants to describe ad. If not mentioned, ask specifically if the ad is interesting?? New??]

Behavior change

Do you see yourself doing anything differently based on this ad?

What specifically might you do after seeing this ad and why?

Is there information that you would like to have included this ad?

What part of this ad affects you most? Least? Why?

How might you improve the ad?

Now I'd like to show you other ads that have the same content, but different layouts

[show remaining ads]

Layout

Which layout do you prefer? Why?

How do the different layouts affect your perception of the ad?

Which one is easier to read?

Is it better to have the “be food safe from USDA” at the bottom or in the center?

What might you change in these ads to make them more appealing?

Logo

[go back to original ad]

Now I want to briefly discuss the logo at the bottom of the ad. How does this logo affect your view of this ad?

[Now show the ad with two logos.]

This one has the Partnership for Food Safety Education logo as well.

How does adding this second logo together affect your perception of the ad?

b. BE FOOD SAFE. SEPARATE.

These next ads are messages that specifically target one food safety behavior. In this case, they focus on separating foods.

[Show first layout—start with ad that has horizontal layout of images and messages.]

General

What do you think about this ad?

How are the colors?

Understandability

How clear is the message of the ad? Do you understand what it is saying?

What is it conveying to you? Are the messages clear?

How do the photos help you understand this message?

In your own words, how would you describe the general concept of these ads?

[Allow participants to describe ad. If not mentioned, ask specifically if the ad is interesting?? New??]

Behavior change

Do you see yourself doing anything differently based on this ad?

What specifically might you do after seeing this ad and why?

Is there information that you would like to have included this ad?

What part of this ad affects you most? Least? Why?

How might you improve the ad?

Language

What do you think of the phrase “help you protect your family and keep bacteria from spreading?”

Would the idea of protecting your family from bacteria cause you to pay more attention to this ad?

We've used the phrase “keep bacteria from spreading.” Would it be more motivating if we used the term “growing” or “multiplying?”

Now I'd like to show you other ads that have the same content.

[Show remaining ads]

Layout

Which layout do you prefer?

How does this affect your perception of the ad?

Which one is easier to read?

Is it better to have the “be food safe from USDA” at the bottom or in the center?

What might you change in these ads to make them more appealing?

IV. Topic 3 – TV and Radio Spots

a. Radio spot

Now I would like to have you read advertisement copy for what might be a 60 second spot that you would hear over the radio. For this spot, there will be a musical chorus and an announcer who will be heard in turn. Once I read the copy aloud, we'll discuss it so please try and pay close attention. If needed, I can repeat the copy after we have discussed it for a while.

[Read copy for radio spot.]

What do you think about this advertisement radio spot?

How clear is the message it is conveying?

Do you understand what it is saying?

What part of this message affects you most? Why?

What is the most important information you gathered after hearing this ad copy?

Is there anything that you feel should be included in this ad?

How might you improve this message?

b. TV Spot

[Show Storyboard for TV ad.]

Now I would like to show you what we call a storyboard. This is a photo display of what you might see in a 30 second TV spot. Once you all have an opportunity to review the TV spot, we'll discuss it so please try and pay close attention. Again, this spot has a chorus and narrator in turn.

[Moderator briefly describe each frame in the storyboard, then allow participants to view the storyboard in silence for a few moments.]

If needed, I can revisit the spot after we have discussed it for a while.

What do you think about this storyboard for a TV spot?

How clear is the message it is conveying?

Do you understand what it is saying?

What part of this message affects you most? Why?

What is the most important information you gathered after looking at the storyboard for this ad?

Is there anything that you feel should be included in this ad?

How might you improve this message?

VI. Topic 4 – Four Food Safety Behaviors

What are the four food safety behaviors that these ads are trying to communicate to you?

Which of the behaviors are easier to remember?

Which are harder?

Why are some behaviors harder to remember?

False close

Thank you very much for coming tonight, and for sharing your ideas with us—we really appreciate your time.

Logo & Print Ads



APPENDIX C: CREATIVE TREATMENTS



Clean.

Wash hands, utensils and cutting boards after contact with raw meat and poultry.

Separate.

Keep raw meat and poultry apart from foods that won't be cooked.



Cook.

Use a food thermometer to be sure meat and poultry are cooked safely.

Chill.

Chill leftovers and takeout foods within two hours and keep the fridge at 40 degrees or below.

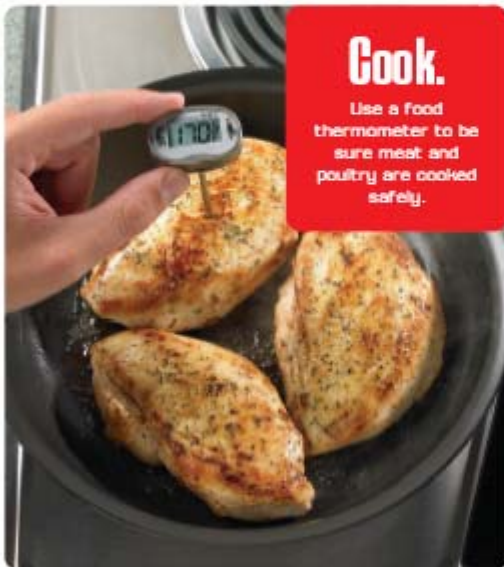


Food handling safety risks at home are more common than most people think. The four easy lessons of "Clean, Separate, Cook, Chill" can help you protect your family and keep bacteria from spreading.

Be Food Safe - from USDA! For more information about food safety, visit befoodsafegov.



APPENDIX C: CREATIVE TREATMENTS



Food handling safety risks at home are more common than most people think. The four easy lessons of "Clean, Separate, Cook, Chill" can help you protect your family and keep bacteria from spreading.

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be food safe from USDA

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Be food safe. Separate.



Use one cutting board for raw meat and poultry and another for salads and ready-to-eat food.

Wash cutting boards, knives and utensils in hot soapy water after contact with raw meat and poultry.



Keep raw meat and poultry and their juices away from other food that won't be cooked.

Store raw meat and poultry in a container or on a plate so juices can't drip on other foods.



Cross-contamination is how bacteria spreads. Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood and their juices away from ready-to-eat food. The four easy lessons of "Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill" can help you protect your family and keep bacteria from spreading.

Visit befoodsafegov for more information.



Be food safe... separate.



Use one cutting board for raw meat and poultry and another for salads and ready-to-eat food.



Wash cutting boards, knives and utensils in hot soapy water after contact with raw meat and poultry.



Store raw meat and poultry in a container or on a plate so juices can't drip on other foods.



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Visit befoodsafegov for more information.



APPENDIX C: CREATIVE TREATMENTS



Cross-contamination is how bacteria spreads. Keep raw meat, poultry and seafood and their juices away from ready-to-eat food. The four easy lessons of "Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill" can help you protect your family and keep bacteria from spreading.

Visit www.befoodsafe.gov for more information.



Radio Spot

USDA
"Be Food Safe"
:60 Radio

(UPBEAT MUSIC UNDER)

CHORUS: Clean! Separate! Cook! Chill!

ANNCR: You know how to prepare meals your family enjoys. But do you know how to keep food safe? The four easy lessons of "Clean, Separate, Cook, Chill" will help you protect your family and Be Food Safe!

CHORUS: Clean!

ANNCR: If hands or utensils touch raw meat and poultry they may transfer bacteria to other food. Keep clean!

CHORUS: Separate!

ANNCR: Use different cutting boards for meat, poultry and veggies, and keep raw meat and poultry away from other food.

CHORUS: Cook!

ANNCR: You can't tell a hamburger is done by how it looks! A food thermometer will help you be sure food is cooked safely.

CHORUS: Chill!

ANNCR: Chill leftovers within two hours, and keep the fridge at 40 degrees or below to keep bacteria from growing.

Food safety risks at home are common. The USDA is your partner in being food safe.

CHORUS: Clean! Separate! Cook! Chill!

ANNCR: Be Food Safe – from USDA! For more information visit befoodsafe.gov.

(MUSIC OUT)

APPENDIX C: CREATIVE TREATMENTS

TV Storyboard

:30 Television
 Title: "Be Food Safe"



(UPBEAT MUSIC UNDER)
 CHORUS: Clean! Separate! Cook! Chill!



ANNCR: You care about how you prepare food. Four easy steps keep food safe: Clean, separate, cook, chill!



CHORUS: Clean!
 ANNCR: Keep hands, utensils and cutting boards clean.



CHORUS: Separate!
 ANNCR: Keep raw meat and poultry away from other food.



CHORUS: Cook!
 ANNCR: Use a food thermometer to be sure food is cooked safely.



CHORUS: Chill!
 ANNCR: A 40 degree fridge keeps bacteria from growing.



CHORUS: Clean! Separate! Cook! Chill!



Be Food Safe — from USDA.
 (MUSIC OUT)