



FDA: Improving Food Safety in a Complex World

Over the past few months a significant number of people have been sickened by Salmonella and there has been a lot of frustration and confusion surrounding the source and the cause of the contamination.

My Take on this is that this is one of the most complex cases of salmonella contamination in recent history and we—and the fresh produce industry—need to make improvements in how we operate if you and your family are going to continue to enjoy eating fresh fruits and vegetables from around the globe 365 days a year.

This recent outbreak is a wake up call. The complex global supply chain involved in bringing fresh produce to your table involves many parts and pieces. The FDA did its job well during this investigation that included nearly 450 inspections or investigations together with our state and international partners, and FDA lab analysis of over 450 samples. Because

coordination with state, federal, and international partners is essential, we hosted or participated in more than 40 teleconferences with the states, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and our Mexican public health counterparts.

But we need a systemic review to assure that we take steps to prevent contamination like this from happening in the first place and when it does to trace the problem back rapidly. To that end, the FDA is convening a public meeting this fall with all those involved in the complex—and global—food supply chain. I am also charging the FDA Science Board, a group of independent experts, to carefully examine and recommend con-

crete steps to enhance and improve food safety even more.

The FDA of the 21st century continues to transform so that you and your family can remain confident when you order a meal—or make a trip to the market—that the foods you get are wholesome and safe.

I invite you to check back here next week to listen to Dr. Murray Lumpkin, FDA's Deputy Commissioner for International and Special Programs, as he gives his take on protecting and promoting the health of our next generation. [FDA](#)

Andy

Andrew C. von Eschenbach, M.D.
Commissioner of Food and Drugs

FDA Press Release

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About Andy's Take

Through this communications column on the FDA Web site, Commissioner of Food and Drugs Andrew C. von Eschenbach, M.D., will discuss weekly FDA issues of interest to the American consumer and occasionally preview upcoming FDA issues and events.



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