

What Is Going On with Romaine Lettuce & *E.coli* O157:H7?



*Live Q&A Event
for Health &
Food Safety
Educators*

December 5, 2019

Today's Event Line-up

- **Dr. Jennifer McEntire**, Vice President of Food Safety & Technology, United Fresh Produce Association
- **Dr. Trevor V. Suslow**, Vice President of Food Safety, Produce Marketing Association
- Resources: Where to get more information

Welcome from PFSE



Shelley Feist
Executive Director

Partnership for Food Safety
Education

www.fightbac.org

Important Housekeeping



To ask a question, please use the question box on the right of the screen.



After the webinar, you will receive a brief survey. Please fill it out.
Help us improve!

Poll Question

How confident are you in your awareness around handling of lettuce to reduce risk from harmful bacteria?

1. I'm very confident in my awareness
2. I'm somewhat confident but want more info
3. I'm not confident at all / super confused

Guest Speakers



Dr. Jennifer McEntire

Vice President of Food Safety & Technology
United Fresh Produce Association

www.unitedfresh.org



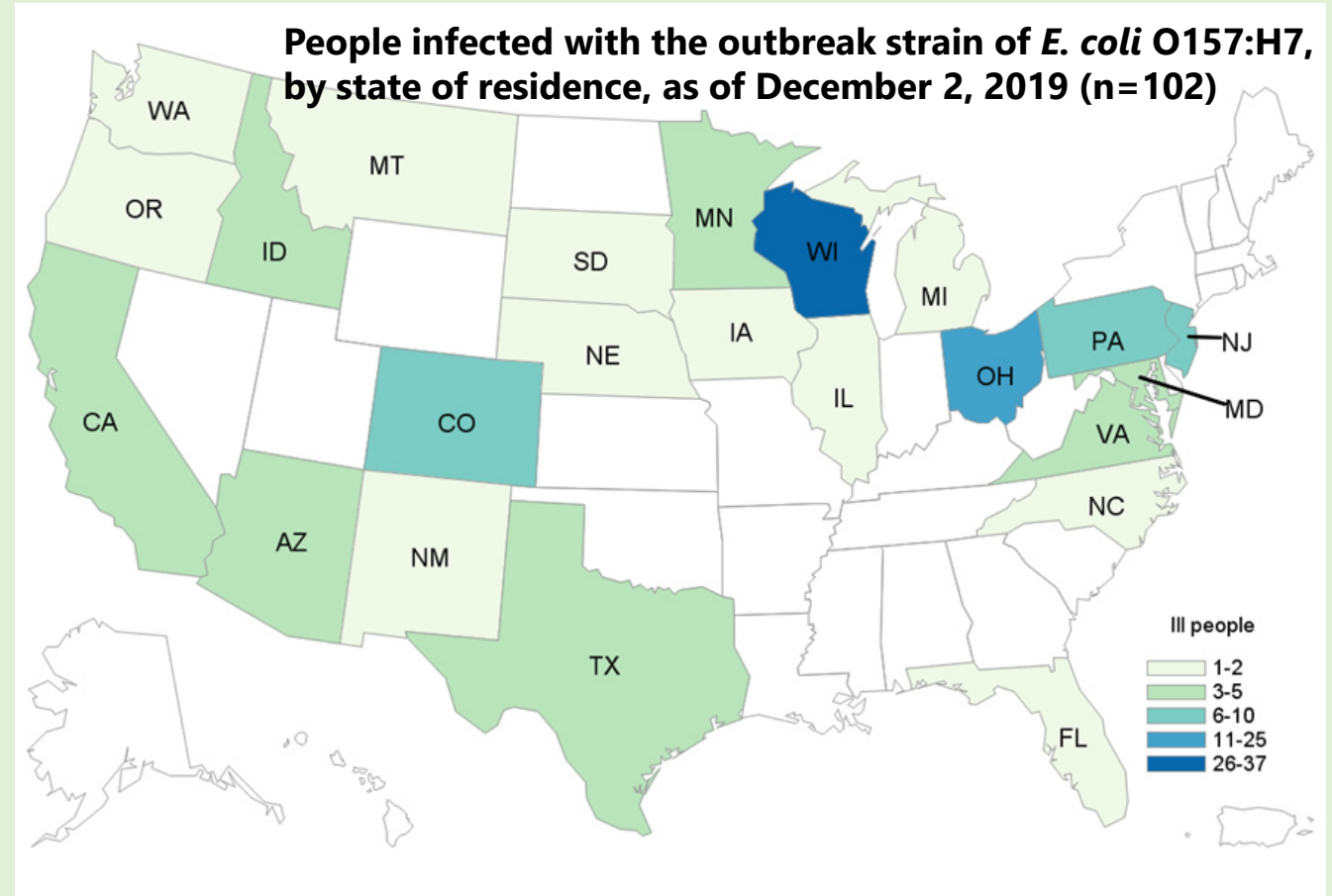
Dr. Trevor V. Suslow

Vice President of Food Safety
Produce Marketing Association

www.pma.com

Outbreak Snapshot

- 102 illnesses
- 23 states
- Illnesses began Sept. 24
- Last illness Nov. 18



About Romaine

DYK?

Americans eat about 12 lbs. romaine, or 115 servings, each year

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/257322/per-capita-consumption-of-fresh-lettuce-romaine-and-leaf-in-the-us>

Advisory is for romaine grown in **Salinas, CA (This is a broad region)**

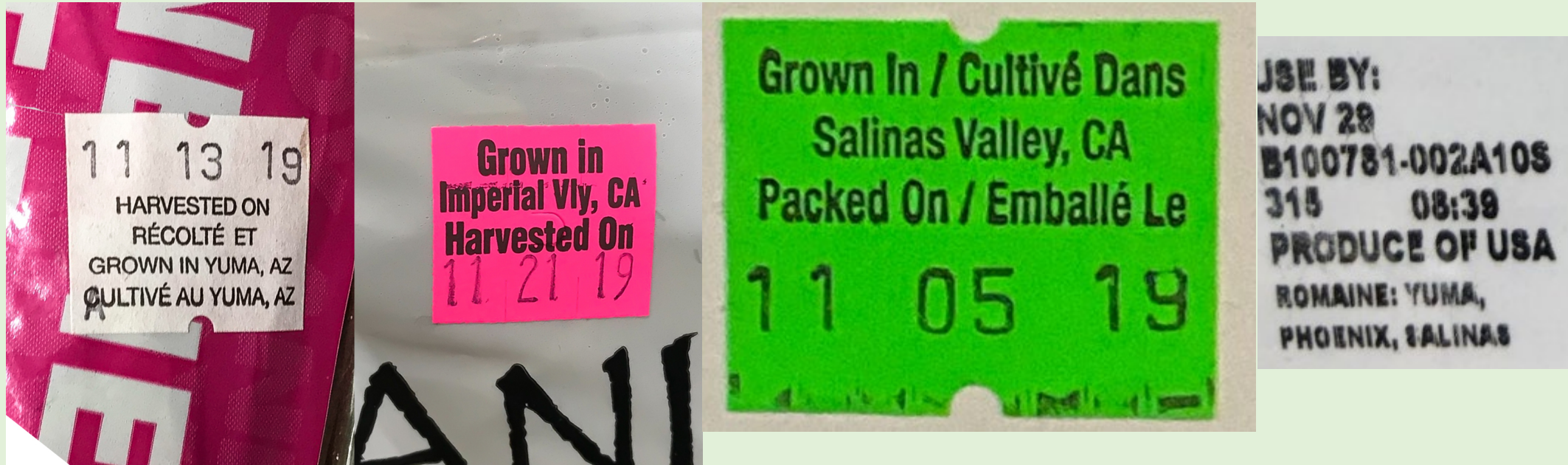


Romaine on the market now is **NOT** from Salinas Valley region

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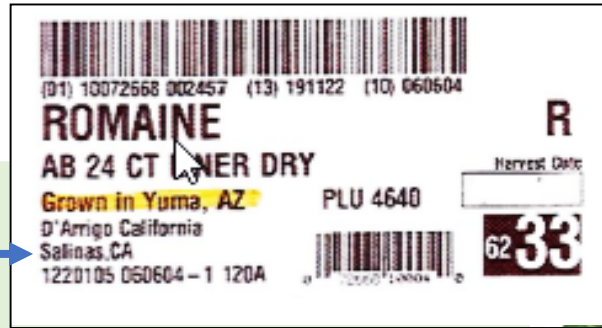
What Should You Look For?



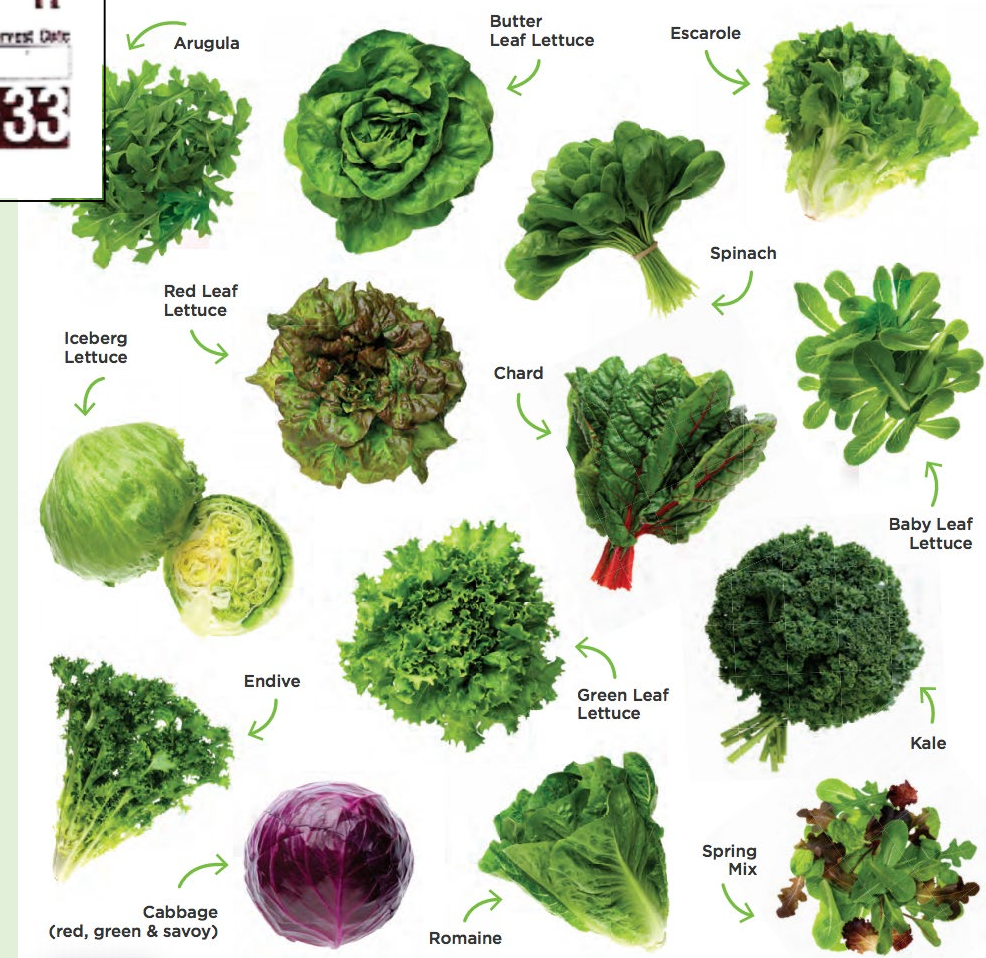
On bags of romaine, salad blends containing romaine, sandwiches and wraps with romaine, etc.

What Not To Do

Ignore this



- Don't be confused by company headquarters
- Don't avoid romaine from other areas
- Don't avoid other leafy greens
- Don't expect washing to ensure safety

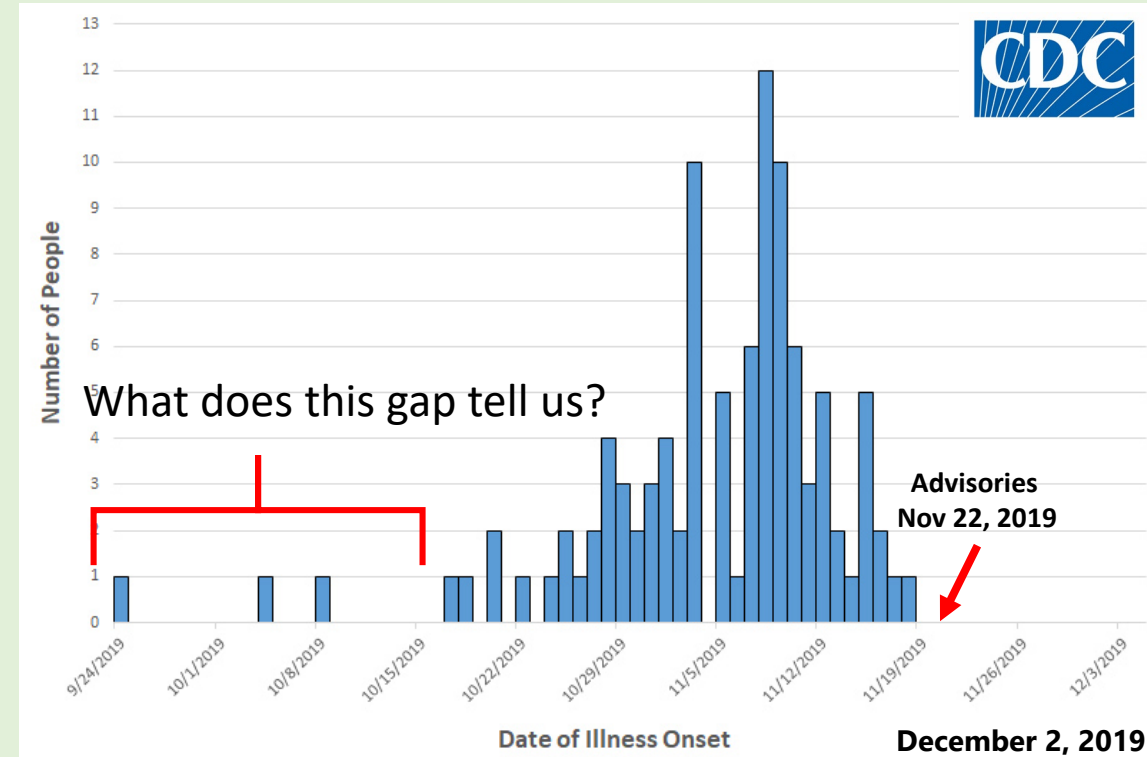


What Is Industry Doing?

- State and federal regulations
- Stringent customer requirements
- Water is tested & treated
- Extensive testing, certification and record keeping for soil amendments, including compost and fertilizers
- Pre-season and pre-harvest assessments required (animal intrusions, flooding, proximity to animal feeding operations, etc.)
- Increasing frequency and stringency of harvest equipment sanitation
- Improving traceback from the consumer back to the grower

So What Are We Missing?

- The seasonal window of these outbreaks is telling us something - but what?
- Factors known and suspected
 - Current programs, testing, and audits need science and practice-based adjustments
- Linking them together in a true industry-government-academic partnership for solutions has not happened ... but we are getting there



People infected with the outbreak strain of *E. coli* O157:H7, by date of illness onset

What Else Should Food Preparers & Consumers Know?

- Proper washing of bulk romaine and romaine hearts may be helpful
 - *But, again, does not guarantee safety*
- Rewashing of packaged precut romaine has no value
- Consumer-available fruit & veggie washes may remove adhering soil but very limited impact on pathogens if present
- Modern technologies are giving researchers and public health agencies powerful but previously missing tools to conduct root-cause analysis
 - If you think you're ill, seek medical attention!

If someone has symptoms —

Who to Contact

- Consumers who have symptoms should contact their health care provider to report their symptoms and receive care.
- To report a complaint or adverse event (illness or serious allergic reaction), you can:
 - Call an **FDA Consumer Complaint Coordinator** at (800) 877-8339
 - Complete an electronic or paper **Voluntary MedWatch [form online](#)**.
 - Visit www.fda.gov/fcic for consumer and industry assistance.

ProducePro www.fightbac.org

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As you enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables at home, follow these safe handling tips to help protect yourself and your family from food poisoning. It is important to be consistent in practicing safe food handling at home. For more information, go to www.fightbac.org.

<p>CHECK fresh produce for signs of cuts or bruising, where harmful bacteria can breed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check that the fresh fruits and vegetables you buy are not bruised or damaged. When choosing pre-cut fruits and vegetables like packaged salads and sliced melons, check that the product is refrigerated or on ice. 	<p>CLEAN hands, surfaces and utensils to prevent contamination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wash hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling fresh fruits and vegetables. Clean all surfaces and utensils with hot water and soap, including cutting boards and knives, before and after preparing fresh fruits and vegetables.
<p>RINSE fresh fruits and veggies just before eating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Just before use, rinse under running water only the fruits and vegetables you plan to eat, including those with skins or rinds that are not eaten. Firm-skinned fruits and vegetables should be rubbed by hand or scrubbed with a clean brush while rinsing under running tap water. Packaged fruits and vegetables labeled "ready-to-eat," "washed" or "triple washed" should not be washed. Dry fruits and vegetables with a clean cloth or paper towel. Do not use soap or bleach to wash fresh fruits or vegetables. These products are not intended for consumption. 	<p>SEPARATE produce from raw meat, seafood, poultry, eggs and household chemicals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In your shopping cart and in bags at checkout, separate fresh fruits and vegetables from household chemicals and raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs. In your refrigerator, keep fresh fruits and vegetables separate from raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs. When preparing food, keep fresh fruits and vegetables separate from raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs. Do not use the same cutting board or utensils without cleaning with hot water and soap before and after preparing fresh fruits and vegetables.
<p>CHILL cut fresh produce within two hours to prevent bacteria growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep your refrigerator at or below 40°F. Refrigerate all cut, peeled or cooked fresh fruits and vegetables within two hours of preparing. 	<p>THROW AWAY bruised, damaged or potentially cross-contaminated produce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Throw away any fresh fruit and vegetables that have not been refrigerated within two hours of cutting, peeling or cooking. Remove and throw away bruised or damaged portions of fruits and vegetables when preparing to cook them or before eating them raw. Throw away any fruit or vegetables that have touched raw meat, poultry, seafood or eggs. If in doubt, throw it out!

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Partnership for Food Safety Education

Science behind the messages document available

Rinse fresh fruits and veggies under running tap water

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Keep foods separate.

THE STORY OF YOUR DINNER
Partnership for Food Safety Education

Read and follow package cooking instructions.

THE STORY OF YOUR DINNER
Partnership for Food Safety Education



Questions for the experts?

Jennifer McEntire, UFPA
Trevor Suslow, PMA
Ashley Eisenbeiser, FMI

Resources & Links for Health Educators

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [Latest updates from the FDA on this topic](#)
- [Symptoms of *E. coli* infection](#)

Thank You 2019 Tier II PFSE Partners



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Thank You

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Refrigerated Foods Association
Smithfield
Sysco Corporation
The Center for Food Integrity
Tyson Foods, Inc.
United Fresh Produce Association
Walmart

Federal Government Liaisons

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
U.S. Food & Drug Administration, CFSAN
U.S. Department of Agriculture, FSIS FSES
U.S. Department of Agriculture, NIFA

Thank You, Speakers!



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Happy
Holidays!



Contact

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