

Appendix D. Development of an Evaluation Framework of the Retail Food Safety Consortium and its Initial Activities

I. Background on the Retail Food Safety Consortium

Consortium Need. This project will help unite many small efforts in academia, regulatory, and industry that lack inter-group collaboration in the area of retail and foodservice food safety. It will help collaborate across boundaries, such as between extension-academia and sanitarians, between industry and academia, and between public and private sectors. With collaboration and cooperation the Consortium can help make the food supply safer at the retail level and to fill the gaps in the safety of the retail portion of the complete farm-to-fork food chain.

Stakeholders. Who are the users of this evaluation?

USDA-CSREES (funding agency)	Consortium Advisory Board
Agriculture Experiment Stations & individual Land-grant Universities	Association Partners (IAFP, IFT, CFP, NEHA, AFDO)
Federal Gov. Partners (FDA CFSAN, CDC)	Industry Partners and Trade Groups
State and Local Health Departments	Retail-Foodservice Operators (an affected stakeholder group)
Media	Individual Members (Food Safety Professionals)
Other groups may be identified as the project evolves and will be added to this list.	

Stakeholder needs. Stakeholders were initially questioned as to their needs and interest in a Retail Food Safety Consortium. All of the listed participants and stakeholders agreed to participate. The actual needs of each stakeholder were not determined at that time. That data will be part of this evaluation.

The Evaluation Team. The Retail Food Safety Consortium advisory committee, chaired by Brian A. Nummer (Co-PI; Utah State University) will be the primary evaluators. The Consortium is supported by five land-grant Universities participating in this project. Each land-grant university representative has evaluation duties for their objectives and outcomes. Finally, professional evaluators at Utah State University will oversee the quality and validity of project evaluations.

Why evaluate the Consortium? Evaluation of the Consortium will help to monitor progress toward the Consortium’s goals, to determine whether program components are producing the desired progress on outcomes, to justify participation value to stakeholders, to justify the need for further funding and support, to find opportunities for continuous quality improvement, and to ensure that effective programs are maintained and resources are not wasted.

II. Consortium Objectives

- 1) Enhance collaborations between stakeholders in Retail Food Safety,
- 2) Identify and scientifically validate positive retail food safety practices,
- 3) Collect, develop, review, and disseminate integrated retail food safety resources and
- 4) Assist stakeholders to identify and prioritize needs in retail food safety.

III. Description of Consortium Activities

Consortium activities are listed in the “Objectives” table in the project Narrative.

IV. Evaluation

Formative Evaluation. Formative evaluation is done for the purpose of continuous program improvement. Although sometimes the term "formative" is used interchangeably with "process," this is not correct. A formative evaluation typically involves collecting a combination of information about program activities, outputs, barriers to implementation, client satisfaction, and outcomes. What distinguishes a formative evaluation is that it implies that the information is used for ongoing continuous program improvement.

Participation (Qualitative). It will be beneficial to know how many people attended an event, participated in Consortium activities, contributed resources or time, or participated in any other manner in the Consortium’s activities. Another evaluation would simply be the question of participant satisfaction.

Document Review. This includes general documents that would be useful to explore the evaluation questions posed. Such documents would include documents from stakeholders. This type of review is important as these written documents trace the progress of the program and can corroborate information on the perceptions and knowledge of program staff. An example of document review would be the reports Consortium liaisons write back to their members and any documents related to Consortium feedback members provide their liaisons.

Literature Review. This includes published and unpublished academic and scientific papers that must be assembled for weighing of evidence about a particular question. The literature review would be essential to complete an evaluation of the MPIP because it addresses fundamental issues related to the program's impacts on human health as well as issues related to the design and delivery of the program.

Expert Panel. This would include data from a panel of scientific experts (in most cases this will be the Consortium Advisory group). Some activities may have separate advisory groups (e.g. Retail Food Safety website). This expertise is a perspective that cannot be obtained from any other source and can be used when data for quantitative risk assessment is limited.

Development of a Risk Model. At times, it is extremely difficult to find the appropriate data to answer a question, either due to its limited nature or its non-existence. In such cases, inferences could be made through the development of a risk model that would assist in answering the questions in a theoretical manner. Dr. Don Schaffer (Co-PI, Rutgers University) has extensive expertise in Food Safety modeling. He will provide guidance in evaluations that need this methodology.

“Expert” interviews / resources. At times a one-on-one consultation or written document will be used from a person who has expertise in food safety related to the project goals.

Stakeholders Surveys / resources. Agencies, organizations, groups or individuals who have a direct or indirect interest in the Consortium or its evaluation will be used. A more complete list

of stakeholders is found elsewhere in this proposal. Typically a survey tool will be used to gather data. Resources will also be collected from stakeholders for review and analysis.

Focus Group. A focus group is an interview with a small number of people selected for their knowledge or perspective on a topic of interest that is convened to discuss the topic with the assistance of a moderator. For example, the annual roundtable discussions planned are essentially focus groups. Focus groups or roundtables will not necessarily reach a consensus. Observational techniques will be used to collect some forms of outcome data. For example, at the first Consortium roundtable in 2006, participants made recorded statements of behavior change, such as, "I have learned something new today".

Summative Evaluation. Summative evaluation is done for the purpose of learning whether the program "works." Summative evaluations, sometimes also called "impact" evaluations, are focused on demonstrated program outcomes and impacts only (although monitoring is often done in tandem with summative evaluation).

Some Possible Consortium Evaluation Questions
To what extent is the Consortium relevant? To what extent are objectives and approach of Consortium relevant? What evidence is there that Food borne illness can be reduced through the activities of the Consortium? Who do you represent and why are you interested in this program? What is important about this program to you? What would you like this program to accomplish? How much progress would you expect this program to have made at this time? To what extent is the Consortium design appropriate? Were the Consortium outputs science-based and validated? To what extent is the dissemination appropriate? What did we learn? What will we do differently? What are the conclusions and recommendations? Can the program be sustained? Do the stakeholders want to continue participation? Who benefits from the Consortium? Who actually participates in the Consortium? At what level of involvement? Who else gains from the Consortium? What do they gain? Who may be negatively affected? How? Is the Consortium duplicating other efforts? What other similar programs exist? How are aspects of these programs alike, dissimilar, or complementary? Does the Consortium have a particular expertise or niche? To what extent has the Consortium increased the capacity of educators (sanitarians, etc.) To what extent and how does the Consortium promote the proactive control (prevent, eliminate or reduce) of hazards through the implementation of resources provided by the Consortium?

V. Impacts

The short term impact desired is to form better collaborative relationships with stakeholders in retail food safety so that in the long term food produced and processed at the retail level will be safe and wholesome.

VI. Challenges and Potential Solutions

Consortium challenges and potential solutions are listed in the Project Narrative.

VII. Evaluation Reporting

- As needed
 - On Consortium portal website
 - For dissemination on stakeholder websites
 - Professional journal articles
- Annually to
 - Consortium Advisory Board Meeting (AES Advisory Committee)
 - USDA CSREES – CRIS Database & PI Meetings (2)
 - Directly to each stakeholder
 - At Stakeholder annual meetings (posters, presentations, etc.)
- Project Termination
 - USDA CRIS – termination report

VIII. (Evaluation) References / Resources

Frechtling-Westat, J. F. 2002. The 2002 User Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation. National Science Foundation. Available at: <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2002/nsf02057>. Accessed 10 Dec 2006.

C.D.C. 2005. Introduction to program evaluation for public health programs: A self-study guide. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/eval/evalguide.pdf>. Accessed 10 Dec 2006.