

Outbreaks	Government	Farm to Fork
<p><b>Texas STEC (E coli)</b> A foodborne bacterial illness linked to shigatoxin has killed one child and made at least five other people sick in one Texas county. Public health officials are yet to determine a cause, but hemorrhagic strains of E. coli such as O157:H7, produce shigatoxin. Health officials are still trying to figure out the exact source of the bacteria (<i>but ground beef is the usual suspect RC</i>). Officials commented that it was unusual to have six cases within a few days and in a relatively small geographical area, (<i>pointing to a common source exposure RC</i>).</p> <p><b>Arizona Salmonella</b> Arizona health officials confirmed 19 cases of salmonella stemming from a community event. Officials believe that a beef tri-tip served at the Hospice of Yuma roping roundup, barbecue and western dance at the Yuma County Fairgrounds was the source of the salmonella. Some leftover meat from the event donated to Crossroads Mission, also resulted in illnesses.</p> <p><b>Alabama E coli</b> Health officials believe that a church "Wild Game Supper" exposed as many as 300 persons to E coli. At least eight people contracted E. coli and 10-15 had symptoms. Environmental health personnel investigating the outbreak found that church members brought prepared food to the supper and the church smoked barbecued Boston butts on site. Officials believe the illnesses resulted from improperly cooked food, or from someone contaminating the food during preparation.</p>	<p><b>FDA Poorly Funded</b> U.S. Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Andrew von Eschenbach responding to criticism of FDA failures, says the agency needs more money than the Bush administration has proposed, and it requires a revamped organization to better oversee drug safety and other issues. The FDA's leader, in an unusual public departure from Bush administration policy, requested more than the 2.95% increase in overall agency appropriations proposed in the president's 2009 budget. An outside advisory panel recommended the agency needs about 150% added to its appropriated base budget, phased in over five years, to cope with challenges such as inspecting a rising tide of imports.</p> <p><b>Hillary Clinton's Food Safety Platform</b> The Clinton campaign outlined the following plans for food safety:  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Immediately conduct a thorough audit of our nation's food safety systems to locate weaknesses and gaps.</li> <li>2. Increase USDA food safety funding by more than 50%.</li> <li>3. Move toward a single Food Safety Administration responsible for all food products, with strong authorities to protect consumers.</li> <li>4. Give safety agencies mandatory recall authority and create a national tracing system.</li> <li>5. Find, prosecute, and punish food production facilities that abuse animals and allow unsafe food to enter our food supply.</li> <li>6. Ban the slaughter of downed animals.</li> </ol> </p>	<p><b>Largest Recall in History Ordered</b> USDA announced that Westland/Hallmark Meat Company, based in Chino, California issued the largest beef recall in history, 143 million pounds. This comes after the Humane Society of the United States distributed an undercover video showing workers kicking sick cows and using forklifts to force them to walk. Consumers have eaten most of the meat and some entered school lunch programs. The safety of the meat is in question, because cows that cannot walk, called downer cows, pose an added risk of diseases including mad cow disease. The federal government has banned downer cows from the food supply. Officials said there was little health risk from the recalled meat because the animals had already passed pre-slaughter inspection. The officials noted that while mad cow disease was extremely rare, the nervous system tissue likely to harbor the disease would not have entered the human food chain.</p> <p><b>One Hepatitis A Case Costs County \$500,000</b> The Erie County New York Health Department vaccinated/immunized more than 8300 people after one supermarket employee was diagnosed with Hepatitis A. Erie county reports no new cases. The question whether the market has a responsibility for costs remains unanswered. The county declared a state of emergency in an effort to recoup funds from the state.</p>