

# One Size Does Not Fit All When Considering Food Safety Bills!

Small local farms and food processors are fundamentally different from huge, industrial food suppliers that ship food all over the country. Congress can and should address the problems with the industrial food supply without harming the local food systems that provide an alternative for concerned consumers!

The U.S. Senate is considering a bill, S. 510, to reform the food safety system. Although reform of the industrial food supply is clearly needed, this bill threatens to create more problems than it will solve. S. 510 would undermine the rapidly growing local foods movement by imposing unnecessary, burdensome regulations on small farms and food processors – everyone from your local CSA to the small bakers, jam makers, and people making fermented vegetables to sell at the local farmers market.

## **FDA Regulation of Local Food Processors Is Unnecessary and Burdensome**

Federal regulations may be needed for industrial processing that source raw ingredients from multiple locations (sometimes imported from other countries) and ship their products across the country. But federal regulation is overkill for small local processors. State and local public health laws are enough for local food sources.

## **HACCP Will Not Improve Food Safety and Will Harm Small Processors**

S. 510 applies a complex and burdensome Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system to even the smallest local food processors. The HACCP system, with its requirements to develop and maintain extensive records, has proven to be an overwhelming burden for a significant number of small regional meat processors across the country. In the meat industry, HACCP has *not* eliminated the spread of E-coli and other pathogens and *has* resulted in fewer independent inspections of the large slaughter plants where these pathogens originate. At the same time, small regional processors have been subject to sanctions due to paperwork violations that posed no health threat. Applying a HACCP system to small, local foods processors could drive them out of business, reducing consumers' options to buy fresh, local foods.

## **S. 510 Puts FDA On The Farm**

S. 510 calls for FDA regulation of how farms grow and harvest produce. Given the agency's track record, it is likely that the regulations will discriminate against small, organic, and diversified farms. The House version of the bill directs FDA to consider the impact of its rulemaking on small-scale and diversified farms, but there are no **enforceable** limits or protections for small diversified and organic farms from inappropriate and burdensome federal rules.

## **What The House Has Done**

On July 30, the U.S. House passed its version of a food safety bill, H.R. 279:

√ **The Good:** The House added a definition for “retail food establishments” that allows for some cottage level processing without invoking FDA regulation. Over 50% of the product must be sold at retail to qualify. The amendments also inserted some exemptions in the registration and record-keeping sections of the bill for farmers selling direct to consumers

√ **The Bad:** HR 2749 continues to direct FDA to set standards for how farmers grow and harvest some types of produce, such as leafy greens, even for the small farmers selling directly to consumers

√ **The Ugly:** HR 2749 puts local facilities processing local foods for local markets under the same regulatory regime, and paying the same fees, as the major industrialized agribusinesses, like Dole or Del Monte

The focus is now on the Senate. The major foodborne illness outbreaks and recalls have all been within the large, industrial food system. *Small, local food producers have not contributed to the highly publicized outbreaks.* Yet **both** the House and Senate bills subject the small, local food system to broad federal regulatory oversight. Increased regulations, record-keeping obligations, and the penalties and fees could destroy small businesses bringing food to local communities. Take action today to protect local food producers, promote food safety, and help your local economy!

## **Take Action**

Call your Senators and tell them to EXEMPT small and local food sources from the food safety bill, S. 510

For contact information, go to [www.congress.org](http://www.congress.org) or call the Capitol switchboard at 202-224-3121