

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service
Southwest Region
Protected Resources Division
Testimony Regarding the Proposed National Marketing Agreement
for Leafy Green Vegetables
Presented by
William Stevens, Natural Resource Management Specialist
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NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service is responsible for the conservation, protection, and recovery of listed species. Our interest in providing comments on the proposed National Marketing Agreement stems from the fact that anadromous fish and their habitat are affected by agricultural activities. Long before the current food safety issue was in existence, salmon and steelhead populations have been facing many challenges, from loss of habitat due to dams and loss of water due to diversions. We can't let food safety practices further degrade the ecosystem upon which these populations depend.

We support a National Marketing Agreement that truly provides for the co-management of realistic food safety goals and adequate environmental protection. We support a Marketing Agreement that is based on scientific principles utilizing the best scientific and commercial data available that truly contributes to food safety. And we support a Marketing Agreement that incorporates and implements State and Federal resource protection guidelines.

A National Marketing Agreement must put an end to the knee jerk reactions where fish or wildlife habitat is destroyed under the misguided direction that natural habitat equals unsafe food. A Marketing Agreement must avoid any conflicts with State and Federal resource protection regulation. And it must avoid the "supermetrics" issue we have experienced here in California.

We recommend the State of California and Federal and State fish and wildlife agencies be well represented on the various committees being suggested at the national and regional levels as the Marketing Agreement is developed. We expect this will ensure co-management of public trust resources and food safety goals and we expect a Marketing Agreement can be implemented without precluding the conservation, protection, and recovery of listed species such as salmon and steelhead.

In conclusion:

The National Marketing Agreement must be based on scientific principles utilizing the best scientific data.

The National Marketing Agreement must not contradict State or Federal law, nor direct landowners or others towards practices that are harmful to the ecosystem.

EX 21

The USDA must consult with appropriate fish and wildlife agencies in the development of a National Marketing Agreement.

Food safety concerns have put the agriculture industry in a difficult situation. A National Marketing Agreement that is well crafted should allow for safe food and a protected ecosystem.

William Stevens
National Marine Fisheries Service
777 Sonoma Avenue, Room 325
Santa Rosa, California 95404-6528
(707) 575-6066
William.Stevens@noaa.gov