ERS Produce Food Safety Research

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Research Objectives

• Estimate the impact of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) on the U.S. produce industry

• To do that we need data on current practices—a pre-FSMA baseline
  – The first and last national and representative survey on produce food safety was done by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) in 1998
Partnering with NASS

• Two surveys
  – Grower survey
  – Post-harvest survey
• Ensures no individual response or operation can be identified.
• Focus on food safety practices with a small number of questions about costs.
• These are national surveys and will cover all produce commodities and all farm sizes
Grower Survey

• Part of the NASS Chemical Use Surveys
  – Fruit Chem Use goes out in September 2015 and we will have data in June 2016
  – Veg Chem Use goes out in September 2016 and we will have data in June 2017

• Surveys will go out to 10,900 growers over 2 years

• Surveys are personally enumerated by NASS staff which will give us a better response rate
Post-harvest Survey

- NASS does not regularly survey post-harvest operations so this will be a stand-alone survey
- Mix of enumeration types—mail, electronic, phone, and some personal enumeration
- The survey will go out in September 2015 to 2,200 firms and we will get data in June 2016.
• Better data makes better policy
• Documents the level of food safety practices already in place and progress made since 1998
• Provides a benchmark of practices prior to implementation of FSMA for comparison
• Provides input to guide research and/or training efforts.
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