

EUROFRESH FARMS

Crisis Management: National Salmonella Outbreak

SITUATION: In June 2008, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), collaborating with public health officials in several states, the Indian Health Service and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), issued a statement to the public they were investigating an ongoing multi-state outbreak of human Salmonella infections that were linked to eating raw tomatoes.

Eurofresh Farms, one of the largest greenhouse growers of tomatoes in North America, had never experienced a Foodborne disease in the company's 16-year history, and was concerned that the Salmonella outbreak would negatively impact customer confidence in purchasing their tomatoes, resulting in lost sales.



EUROFRESH FARMS

Crisis Management: National Salmonella Outbreak

SOLUTION: Caliber worked with Eurofresh Farms' executives to respond to the Salmonella scare in a proactive, responsible manner, by educating the media, customers and the public about Eurofresh Farms' environmentally safe greenhouse growing practices.

A few days later, the CDC announced that grape tomatoes, cherry tomatoes and tomatoes sold on the vine were considered safe to eat. Caliber and Eurofresh issued a second announcement that all of Eurofresh's tomatoes are sold on the vine, other than their grape tomato variety, "Bella Bites."

In addition, Caliber recommended Eurofresh executives make themselves available to any local or national media to ensure the public was accurately informed about this issue and Eurofresh's safe growing practices.

RESULTS: Local and national media immediately took notice of Eurofresh Farms' willingness to take a leadership position on this important topic. As a result, Eurofresh Farms' received positive publicity about their tomatoes and contamination safeguards. In addition, Tucson-based restaurateurs, Metro Restaurants, Fox Restaurant Concepts and El Charro Café, provided statements in the media that they were only serving Eurofresh tomatoes in their dishes. Objectives were met during this campaign and Eurofresh Farms saw increased tomato sales from previous months during June 2008.

