



AFFI Listeria Strategy and NRTE Foods

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Mission

- AFFI is the member-driven national trade association that advances the interest of all segments of the frozen food and beverage industry.



Goal #1

Advance Food Safety

AFFI *Listeria* Goals

- 1) Minimize incidence of *Listeria monocytogenes* in frozen foods.
- 2) Secure a practical, science-based regulatory approach that:
 - Protects public health
 - Reduces regulatory jeopardy
 - Affords companies time to invest and implement best practices



AFFI's Approach

- 1) Conduct scientific research to understand *listeria* in frozen food facilities.
- 2) Develop and share best food safety practices that will provide the frozen food industry with specific food safety protocols.
- 3) Determine effective labeling strategies and supporting education to best inform consumers about the importance of following cooking instructions for safety and quality.



Can this help preserve NRTE food category?

Outcome: Use best science to inform government policy on Listeria and improve manufacturing controls

Science

Outcome: Practical regulatory paradigm that reduces business jeopardy and protects public health

Policy

Outcome: Lower risk of Listeria in frozen foods through the highest standards for food safety in frozen food manufacturing practices

Best Manufacturing Practices

Consumer & Customer Education

Outcome: Lower risk of listeriosis incidence by improving user behavior



Scientific Research – *Public Health Consequences of Foodborne Listeriosis*

- AFFI's Frozen Food Foundation is working with Dr. Craig Hedberg of the University of Minnesota to determine the consumer exposure to *Lm* from all food sources to understand the true public health consequences of foodborne listeriosis.

Consumer Research



Explore

Examine consumers' frozen food behavior and understand the underlying causes of unsafe food preparation practices.



Test

Determine which label and/or language is most likely to encourage consumers to read cooking instructions on frozen food packaging (specifically on vegetables, pizza, single-serve or multi-serve entrée).



Assess

Identify key messages for educating vulnerable subpopulations about the importance of following packaged cooking instructions for optimal quality and safety.

Key Takeaways

- 1) Consumers' poor frozen food use behaviors stem from deeply held misperceptions about the readiness of certain frozen foods for consumption without further preparation. However, survey findings show that behavior change is possible through a combination of package labeling and targeted consumer education.
- 2) Based on the results of the research, manufacturers have some flexibility related to package labeling, specifically the package placement (i.e. front, back or both). The label with the arrow is slightly preferred by consumers and is effective in shifting consumers' behavior.



- 3) To be effective, education must focus on frozen food consumption readiness (i.e. frozen foods are only partially cooked and finish cooking in your oven) and the foodborne illness dangers of specific, common frozen food misbehaviors (e.g. picking toppings off pizza before cooking, putting raw frozen vegetables in dips, etc.).