

USDA-ARS-BARC Food Safety Conference and NIFA Project Team Meeting Summary October 4, 2012

Our first BARC food safety conference and NIFA project stakeholder advisor and team member meeting was held on October 4, 2012, in conjunction with United Fresh Produce Association (UFPA)'s public policy conference. Project team members and advisors, UFPA meeting attendees, BARC Director, ARS Technology Transfer Coordinator, ARS Research Leaders and information staff, and the USDA-NIFA Specialty Crops Initiative Program Manager, attended the meeting and tour. PD Luo opened the meeting and thanked the advisors and industry collaborators for their time, advice, and financial and in-kind contributions to the work.

Researchers presented findings pertaining to three major objectives, i.e., wash process optimization, novel technology for pathogen reduction, and temperature control for food safety. This was followed by spirited discussions among the attendees. One focal point was how to integrate our research findings into establishing an industry-wide critical control limit for HACCP during produce wash. The attendees commended the researchers on the cold-chain and ultrasound studies, and recommended a patent application for development of a dosing scheme for the feedforward control of chlorine.

Attendees also visited BARC's farm-to-fork research facility, including our fresh-cut produce wash pilot plant and our research supermarket display case facility. The meeting ended at 5 pm, and the attendees retreated to Sunny's house for an evening reception.

Below are summary comments and feedback received from the attendees:

- NIFA program leader stressed the critical importance of close collaboration and interactions between stakeholder advisors and research team members. FDA staff praised the meeting organization, presentations, and the overall progress of this NIFA project highlighting the importance of produce wash food safety and cold-chain studies with strong encouragement to share data with FDA.
- Overwhelmingly positive post-meeting feedback received from the meeting attendees included comments such as the information gained was like "getting a drink of water from a fire hydrant".
- A number of stakeholders contacted Sunny post-meeting to expand collaborations with the team:
- A major industry association representative suggested holding this type of meeting again.