

**Conference for Food Protection
2012 Issue Form**

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Council Recommendation:	Accepted as Submitted _____	Accepted as Amended _____	No Action _____
Delegate Action:	Accepted _____	Rejected _____	

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Title:

CIFOR Foodborne Illness Outbreak Response Guidelines for Industry

Issue you would like the Conference to consider:

Currently there is no national tool or guidance available directed to the retail industry to assist in preparation for, or in response to a foodborne illness outbreak.

The multi-stakeholder Council to Improve Foodborne Outbreak Response (CIFOR) was established to develop model programs and processes to facilitate the investigation and control of foodborne illness outbreaks. This model was not intended to replace existing procedural manuals found at the local, state and federal agencies but rather to improve the coordination and performance at all levels of government involved in foodborne illness outbreaks. However, the initial voluntary guidelines lacked a defined role for industry during foodborne illness outbreaks.

Recently, the CIFOR Industry Workgroup, composed of representatives from FDA, CDC, state and local health departments, industry and trade associations, completed the Foodborne Illness Response Guidelines for the Food Industry (CIFOR Guidelines for Industry) which was developed as voluntary guidance for managers of food establishments (Industry) to help outline, clarify, and explain Industry's recommended role in a foodborne illness outbreak investigation. The Guidelines provide industry with step-by-step guidance that includes preparation, detection, investigation, control, and follow-up. The Guidelines also provide key information to assist Industry in understanding what to expect when first notified of potential illnesses and provides tools to help guide industry through the investigation process.

Familiarity with the CIFOR Guidelines and Tools will aid regulators, health officials, and industry in responding to an outbreak situation. The CIFOR Guidelines and tools should be included in both the FDA Food Code and Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards for the regulatory community and also made widely available to food service and retail operators.

Public Health Significance:

The CIFOR protocol for investigating foodborne illnesses provides guidance and direction for the regulatory and regulated communities. During a foodborne illness outbreak, time is of the essence in order to identify the offending food product and to remove it from the

market place. To facilitate and ensure correct information is obtained in a timely fashion, a consistent approach to investigating foodborne illness outbreaks is crucial.

By using these *CIFOR Guidelines* and Tools, Industry can take an active and educated role in the outbreak response and investigation, reducing the impact to the public and their business. A fully coordinated investigation can then proceed more quickly and accurately, yielding more dependable results that are in the interest of public health while limiting impact to the involved industry.

The benefits of having a uniform approach include:

1. The *CIFOR Guidelines* are a Best Practices document.
2. Investigation training is simplified by having everyone training to the same requirements and investigation protocols.
3. Industry can be better prepared to supply critical information supporting an investigation and provide better control measures when a multijurisdictional outbreak occurs.
4. As stated in the *CIFOR Guidelines* Preface'...it (*CIFOR Guidelines*) is not intended to replace existing procedure manuals. Agencies and individuals should use the *Guidelines* to compare existing procedures, fill gaps in and update site-specific procedures, create procedures where they do not exist, and train program staff.
5. Even though every outbreak has its own path to completion, a systematic approach, as provided by CIFOR, will help ensure that a thorough and timely investigation is completed.
6. CIFOR addresses the complexity of multijurisdictional investigations and seeks to improve communication and coordination at all levels of government and industry.
7. There has been developmental buy-in to the *CIFOR Guidelines* by all the affected stakeholders (CDC, FDA, state and local health agencies as well as industry).

Recommended Solution: The Conference recommends...:

that a letter be sent to the FDA requesting the 2009 Food Code (as modified by the Supplement issued in 2011) be amended as follows:

1. Addition of the final, approved (currently in draft form per CDC) *CIFOR Guidelines* and Tools to the Food Code, Annex 2 (References), Part 3 (Supporting Documents); and
2. Inclusion of the final, approved *CIFOR Guidelines* and tools as a reference into the FDA Program Standard Number 5, *Foodborne Illness Investigation and Response*. This would be in addition to Standard 5's reference to the International Association of Food Protection's *Procedure to Investigate a Foodborne Illness*.
3. Exploration of other channels of distribution for the *CIFOR Guidelines*.

CIFOR documents will be available here: <http://www.cifor.us/>.

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