

**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:

Wild Harvested Mushroom Record-Keeping and Traceability

Issue you would like the Conference to consider:

From 1960-2010, the CDC's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* documented at least twenty-four reports attributed to environmental health-related mushroom and plant poisoning (Henry Falk, 2011). More recently, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) reported that 1,748 cases of mushroom ingestion were reported for 2009-2010 where two people died and ten others suffered major health consequences including liver failure or kidney dialysis (Food Safety News, 2011). Following heavy rains from a hurricane and tropical storm that affected the US east coast this past fall, the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (Services, 2011) issued a warning regarding consumption of wild mushrooms and the Washington Post (Stephens, 2011) featured an article where two men went into liver failure after consuming wild mushrooms that were more abundant due to the wet weather. While the majority of these cases document recreational exposure as compared with food establishment exposure, these incidents of wild mushroom ingestion highlight the effects of foodborne intoxication and illness that follow. Along with this cautionary information, it is important to acknowledge that wild mushrooms can also be a healthy, edible source of nutritious food provided they are from a safe source. Unfortunately, the admitted "difficulty" that regulatory agencies have found when relying on the guidance provided by the FDA model Food Code (*hereafter model Food Code*) to define "approved wild mushroom identification expert" to assure safe sources has left regulators without sufficient avenues to address the issue of wild harvested mushrooms at retail and foodservice establishments (2009 FDA Food Code, Annex 3, Section 3-201.16). In fact, eleven states have gone on to ban the sale or service of wild harvested mushrooms at restaurants and farmers markets due to the lack of clearly identified safe sources from 'approved wild mushroom identification experts'.

This issue seeks to provide regulatory authorities with a mechanism for initiating prompt tracebacks or recalls if wild harvested mushrooms are implicated in a foodborne illness or outbreak following ingestion at a foodservice establishment or retail.

Sources:

Henry Falk, M. (2011). Environmental Health in MMWR-1961-2010. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* , 86-96.

Newsdesk. (2011, November 26). Wild Mushrooms Can Kill, California Health Officer Warns. *Food Safety News* .

Services, N. H. (2011, August 27). DHSS Issues Warning About Accidentally Eating Poison Mushrooms. Concord, New Hampshire.

Stephens, J. (2011, September 18). 2 Discover Tasty Mushrooms Can Be Dangerous. *Washington Post* . Washington, DC.

Public Health Significance:

In the event of a foodborne illness or outbreak related to wild harvested mushrooms, regulatory authorities that are responsible for assuring food safety must be able to conduct traceback investigations for implicated foods or initiate recalls as required. Additionally, food service operations and retail stores must have the ability to quickly segregate and remove implicated foods from sale or use.

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 modified by placing into Annex 3, Section 201.16 guidelines indicated below for wild harvested mushroom recordkeeping and tracebacks (new language in underline format).

In order to assure traceability, the responsibility of the approved mushroom identifier must be delineated. Therefore each batch of mushrooms obtained from a wild mushroom approved identifier must be accompanied by a tag or label and include the following information:

1. Approved identifier name;
2. Address & phone number;
3. Latin binomial name and locally used common name;
4. Harvest date;
5. Harvest location (town, county, township, etc);
6. Harvest weight;
7. Name of forager if not harvested by an approved identifier;

All foodservice establishments and retail or wholesale stores that receive wild harvested mushrooms should retain the wild harvested mushroom tag or label and make them available upon request by the regulatory authority. The wild harvested mushroom tags are to remain attached to the container in which the wild harvested mushrooms were received until the container is empty. The tags are to be retained for at least sixty (60) calendar days from the date the container is emptied as illness may take up to two (2) weeks to present, two (2) more weeks for diagnosis, and up to thirty (30) days for epidemiological investigation and traceback. Commingling of wild harvested mushroom lots is not recommended as it serves to confound traceback investigations and hinder efforts to remove implicated product from the food chain.

The Conference also recommends that the above language be incorporated into a single Wild Harvested Mushroom Guidance Document and posted on the CFP website so that state and local jurisdictions can use this information to develop and implement their own wild harvested mushroom program.

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