

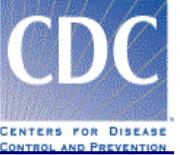


Establishing A National Voluntary Environmental Assessment Information System

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Background

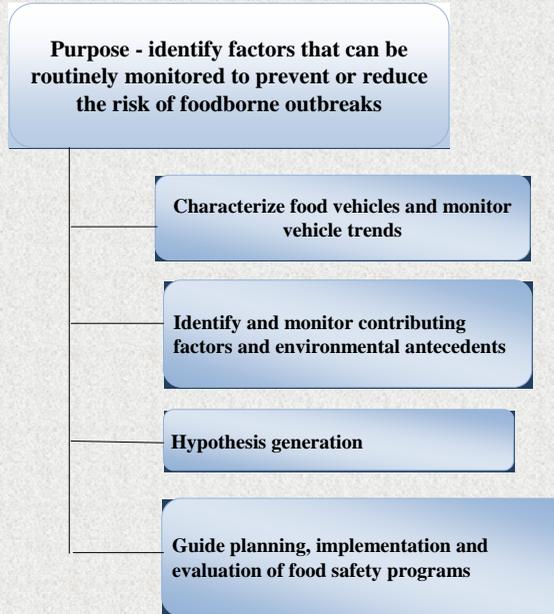
Much has been done by food safety program managers to improve their hazard surveillance activities, but they do not have the information necessary from foodborne outbreak investigations to continually improve hazard surveillance or to develop other food safety actions to prevent foodborne illness outbreaks. A national voluntary environmental assessment information system (NVEAIS) could provide food safety program managers with an information resource that could fill this gap.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Environmental Health Specialists Network (EHS-Net), through its experience in conducting environmental assessments in foodborne outbreaks and reporting the results to CDC as part of its Foodborne Outbreak Study, provides a model for such an information system.

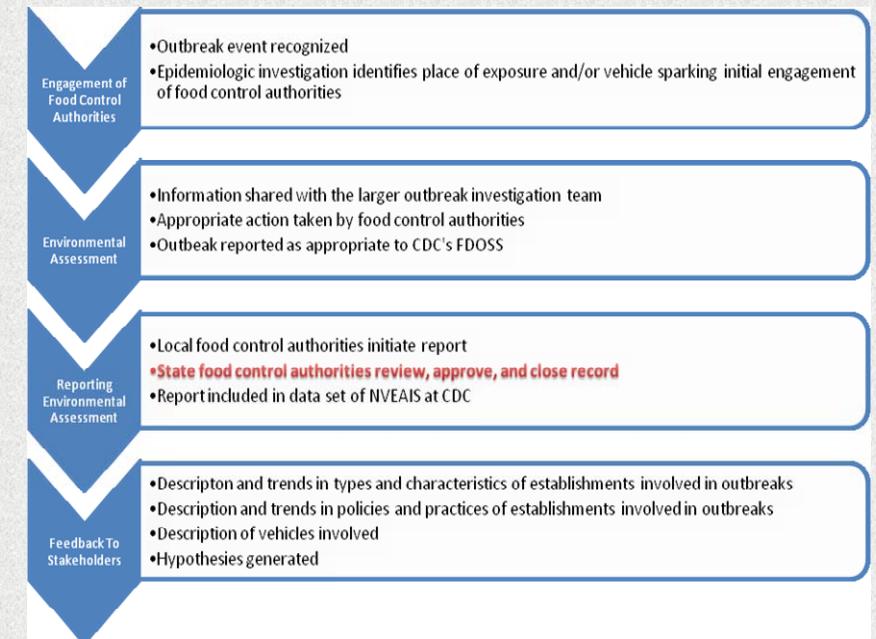
To begin a national dialogue on the establishment of a NVEAIS, a concept paper was developed in 2007 for review by technical experts based on CDC's EHS-Net experience. Feedback was sought from these technical experts on the appropriateness of establishing a national information system and the barriers to its launch via the Conference for Food Protection. The conference membership represents a diverse group of stakeholders with a role or interest in food safety at the retail level.

Reviewers of the concept paper encouraged the launch of a national dialogue regarding the proposed information system even though they identified a lack of resources to support the system and the interaction needed between food safety and communicable disease control managers as possible barriers to its implementation and use.

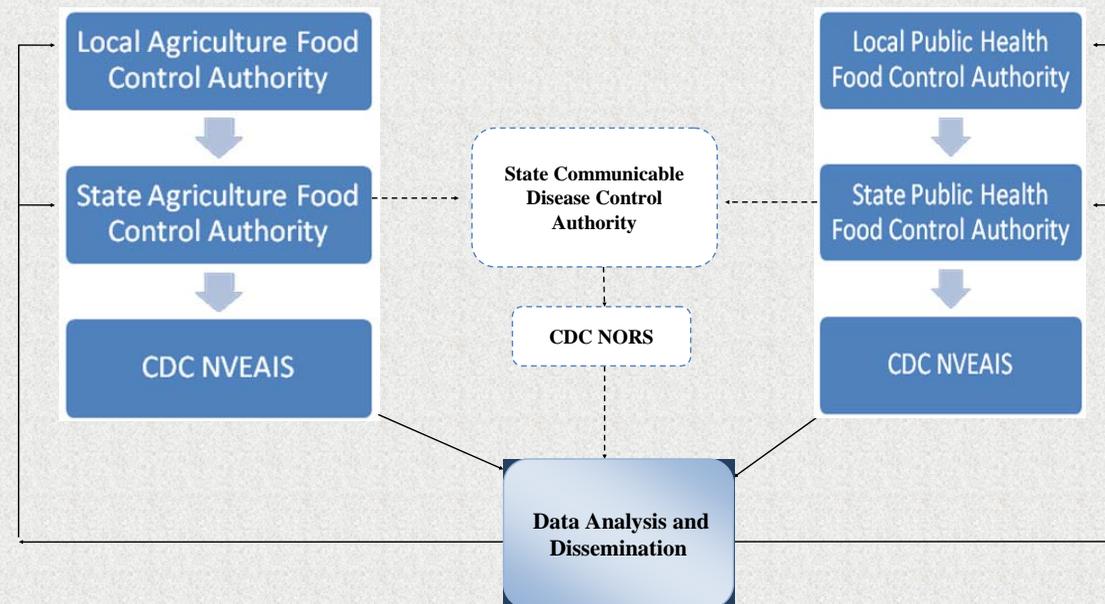
NVEAIS Purpose & Objectives



Foodborne Outbreak Information Flow



Integration with NORS



Current Status

An issue requesting the Conference for Food Protection review the proposed information system was accepted by the Conference in April 2008.

A committee is currently reviewing the issue to determine the role of the Conference in the system's establishment and use.

The committee will report its recommendations to the Conference Executive Board in April 2010.

Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge and thank the EHS-Net and the technical reviewers of the concept paper.