



Border Security Briefing Summary

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Recent changes in staffing along the border have resulted in federal agencies not having sufficient numbers of well-trained staff to address food and agriculture security issues.

New Mexico has solid, trusted alliances in the research and policy arena on both sides of the border, which will facilitate effective, on-the-ground results for agriculture and food biointegrity and national security. Students and faculty with this new training will ensure a supply of qualified personnel to meet future workforce needs.

The ease of access to an apparent abundance of food at an affordable cost has made it easier for people to forget their fundamental dependence on agriculture. Without a safe domestic food supply, the nation's economy would be severely impacted. We must be careful not to position ourselves for reliance on imported food products from countries lacking in quality and safety standards established in the United States.

Themes

- 1. Over the last 10 years the number of imported foods items has tripled and agencies can't perform enough inspections to be effective (WSJ article June 14, 2007)**
 - US industry has found it practicable economically to import and sell goods from overseas. For foods for example, this means that we can enjoy a wide variety of foods, such as fruits and vegetables, year round.
 - FDA Figures starting in 1991 show that each year they have been responsible for more imported goods from about 2 million import lines in 1991 to more than 15 million lines in 2006. (slide)
 - The current rules and inspection processes were designed when more items were grown and produced inside the US. Federal agencies have had a hard time adjusting to the enormous scale of importation. It is estimated that about 1 % of the items entering the US are physically inspected. (WSJ article of 6/14/07)
 - Currently agencies are better at reacting once a problem has been identified rather than being predictive in order to stop shipments before they enter the US that might pose a problem

2. **Shift inspections to a risk-management inspection approach. The idea is to enable the inspectors to focus on the highest risk imports and “target-away” from safe and secure products. The judgment that needs to be made is how to identify the “safe from the unsafe and know why!”**
 - Use more data about the supply chain (production, packaging, and transportation) to narrow the focus to identify shipments posing the biggest potential hazards to decide which shipments to target for inspection (slide).
 - Use a science-based methodology to know why some imports are likely to be safe and unsafe. Those posing the highest risk are likely to be the ones coming from organizations using poor supply chain security practices for production to transportation.
 - For economic reasons, the reputable industry has developed supply chain security measures to ultimately protect their reputation, profits, and brand name against the perils of worldwide supply chain distribution network.
 - Shift the inspection focus on prevention. Target the imports from companies and countries with poor safety and security records and target away from the industries with proven records.

3. **Supply chain security can become a market-driven process.**
 - Industry can become an ally in the fight against intentional and non-intentional food borne threats. They literally “own” the supply chain. They can make changes quickly.
 - When federal agencies begin to use a risk-management approach and target some shipments less than others, industry will quickly comprehend that it is to their economic advantage to invest in security.
 - Overall their shipments will enter the US sooner than their competitors giving them a market advantage
 - If the federal government will develop a risk-management approach they likely will find that industry will become cooperative

4. **Backup the inspection process with faster screening technologies and innovative approaches to be predictive**
 - Develop checks and balances in the risk-management approach so that the federal agencies can always adjust the methodology as global conditions and industries undergo change
 - Use faster lab methods for physical inspection with a goal on implementing technologies for inspections to take place in the field reducing the inspection delays
 - Introduce open source intelligence gathering to the risk-management methodology to get a broad picture of the supply chain milieu including environmental conditions which might be conducive to introducing plant and animal diseases, industrial and natural disasters that might affect the supply chain, and political and terrorism risks through areas where products are produced, packaged, and transported.

