

# Produce Traceability: An Industry Perspective

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*Food to live by.*

# Earthbound Farm's Program in 2006

- **Recall plan, team and mock recalls in place**
- **Incident Management Plan and team in place**
- **Goal of reconciled recall — *2 hours or less***
  - **Typically done faster**
- **Warehouse management system in place for both raw and finished product**
  - **System was verified with paper documents to ensure accuracy**



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# Why Did it Seem as Though Traceability Was Lacking in 2006?

- **Several reports stemming from the outbreak and recall called for “better traceability”**
- **Early “warning” from government may have contributed to confusion about traceability**
- **Because spinach was a common ingredient and because we were asked to recall any and all containing spinach it appeared extremely unruly**
- **But...**
  - **Several brands implicated early on**
  - **Even once the brand (Dole) was identified, several code dates were investigated, many of which ultimately were not linked**
  - **This forced the investigation to spread much wider than was ultimately necessary, and it appeared that there was difficulty identifying the source fields**

# Traceability Today

- Is there traceability today?....Yes!
- BT Act requires one step forward, one step back
- Warehouse management systems aid in process
  - Usually verified through paper trail
- Multi-ingredient products usually trace back to multiple suppliers

# Effects of the Produce Traceability Initiative

- **If marketed properly, PTI may give the consumer confidence in our ability to recall. But is it enough?**
  - Multi ingredient products don't trace back to one farm
  - PTI addresses case level traceability but consumers don't usually buy cases
- **Even when we reach item level traceability will we be able to link illness with product**
  - Perishability of produce vs. timeliness of information
  - Illness onset vs. consumption date
  - Reporting of illness vs. product still on market
- **As is often the case, the solution is complex and PTI is one tool in the bag.**