

IFT Food Defense

Managing the Communications Process

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Executive Vice President
International Food Information Council (IFIC)
April 4, 2005

International Food Information Council (IFIC) and IFIC Foundation

Mission: *To communicate science-based information on food safety and nutrition issues to health professionals, journalists, educators and government officials.*

Primarily supported by the broad-based food, beverage and agricultural industries.

IFIC Foundation *Food Insight*

- 45,000 circulation
- 7% international
- 6,000 media

FOOD

Current Topics in Food Safety & Nutrition

Insight™

IFIC Foundation
<http://ific.org>

July / August 2002

Kidnetic.com: Tap Into The Energy

Healthful Eating and Physical Activity Tips for Kids and Parents Just a Click Away

There's no question that today's hottest public health topic is the escalating number of overweight Americans, especially the rising rate of overweight children. One child in four is now classified as overweight or at risk for becoming overweight—more than double the rate of a generation ago.

The causes of this problem are complex, including a mix of genetic, social, cultural, environmental, and lifestyle factors, affecting eating and physical activity habits. While there are no simple solutions, the International Food Information Council (IFIC) Foundation and five other organizations—the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American College of Sports Medicine, the American Dietetic Association, the International Life Sciences Institute Center for Health Promotion, and the National Recreation and Park Association—partnered together to

address this issue as part of the ACTIVATE program. On June 26, 2002, the group launched Kidnetic.com, a research-based Web site designed to promote healthful eating and physical activity among kids and their parents.

Kidnetic.com combines food, fitness, fun, feelings, and family dynamics, packaged into an interactive and educational site meant to get kids up and moving instead of surfing the Internet for hours at a time.

Research Becomes Virtual Reality

In 1999, the IFIC Foundation recognized obesity as an emerging issue and initiated ongoing consumer research, including focus groups, ethnographic studies, and in-home interviews. The research targeted "tweens" (children between the ages of 9 and 12) and their parents, with the goals of better understanding attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors about health, and exploring the best avenues for communicating information about healthful eating and physical activity.

The research found that kids and parents both relate obesity to food more than to physical activity. In addition, kids relate weight to

performance and appearance, but not to health. Kids are not sure what "being fit" means and don't sustain interest in concepts like "nutrition," "physical activity" or "healthy eating." To kids, "healthy" brings to mind somewhat negative images of being required to eat fruits and vegetables or being deprived of their favorite foods. Being healthy equals "rules."

In addition, kids want "small victories" to sustain their interest and build self-esteem and ideas for physical activity beyond organized sports. They want ongoing parental guidance and emotional support.



Research with parents found they do not see overweight as a health issue for their kids—they believe their child will outgrow the problem. They also fear that bringing attention to the problem will cause eating disorders. Parents feel they lack the information and skills to address the issue with their kids. If they were to receive information, they wanted it to be "credible," "quick," and "easy to use."

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“Where do consumers get their food safety and nutrition information?”

The Media

Do French Fries Cause Cancer?

Time, May 6, 2002

The new danger in the grocery aisle

Ladies Home Journal, November 2002

Which Fish Are Safe for Kids?

WARNING: Some healthy main dishes may contain dangerous mercury

Prevention, January 2002

What's Branded on Your Beef?

Time, October 14, 2002

“Listeria threat forces cheese recall”

Times Herald Record, June 23, 2002



Parents magazine emergency guide

Food Poisoning

Parents, June 2002

Toxin found in breast milk

The Indianapolis Star – 2/27/05

Calls for more data on harmful furan in foods

Food Navigator, 14/01/2005

Value of Nutrition Sources— “Very Valuable”

Doctors	92%
Dietitians/Nutritionists	90%
Nurses	85%
TV News	79%
Radio News	65%
Internet	61%

ADA Trends Survey, 2000

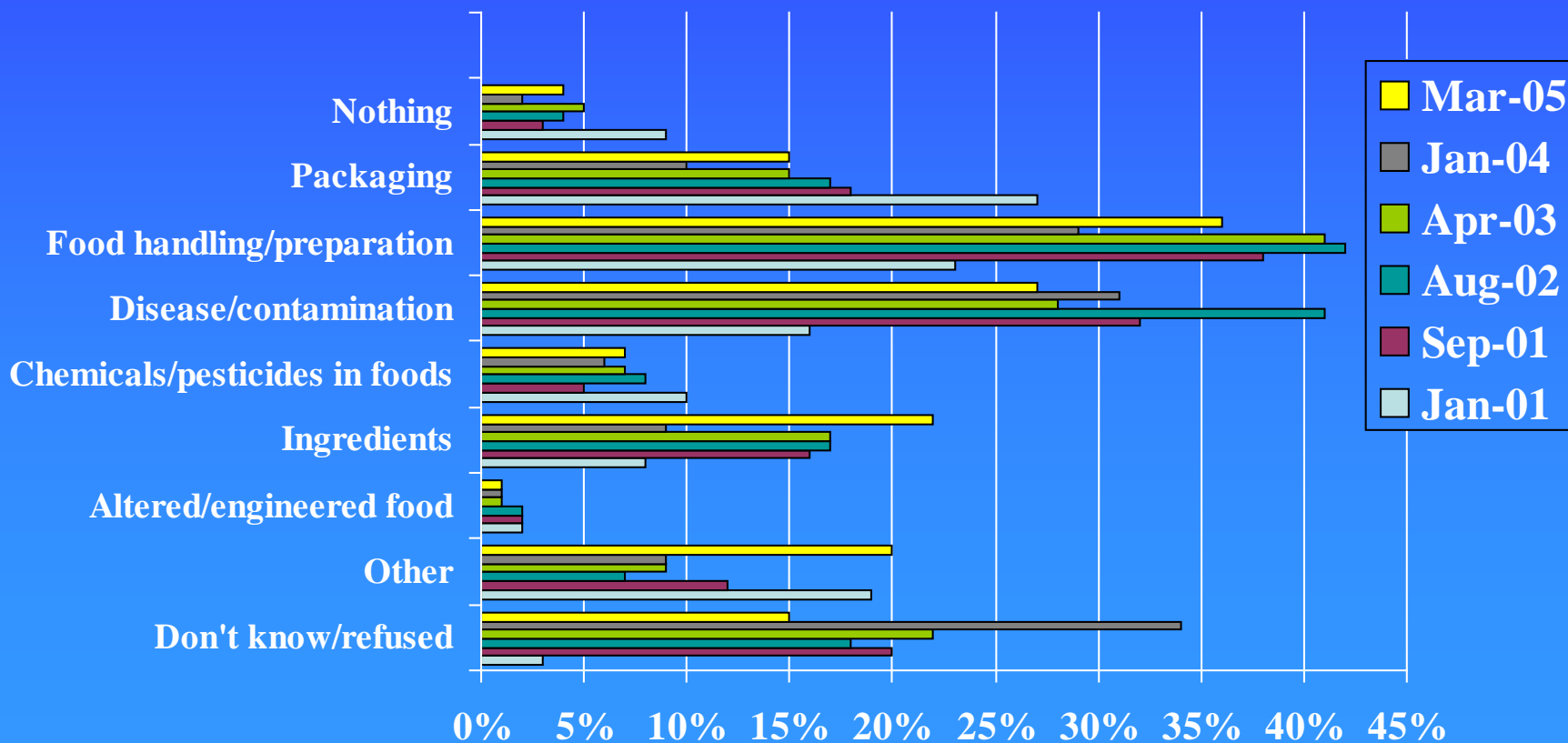
IFIC Quantitative Surveys

“U.S. Consumer Attitudes Toward Food Biotechnology”

- **Wirthlin Group Quorum Surveys**
 - March 1997
 - February 1999
 - October 1999
 - May 2000
 - January 2001
- **Cogent Research**
 - September 2001
 - August 2002
 - April 2003
 - January 2004
 - March 2005
- **Each based on 1,000 Telephone Interviews of U.S. Adults**
- **Nationally Projectable**

What, if anything, are you most concerned about when it comes to food safety?

(Multiple responses allowed, n = 1000)



* Preliminary Data

IFIC 200

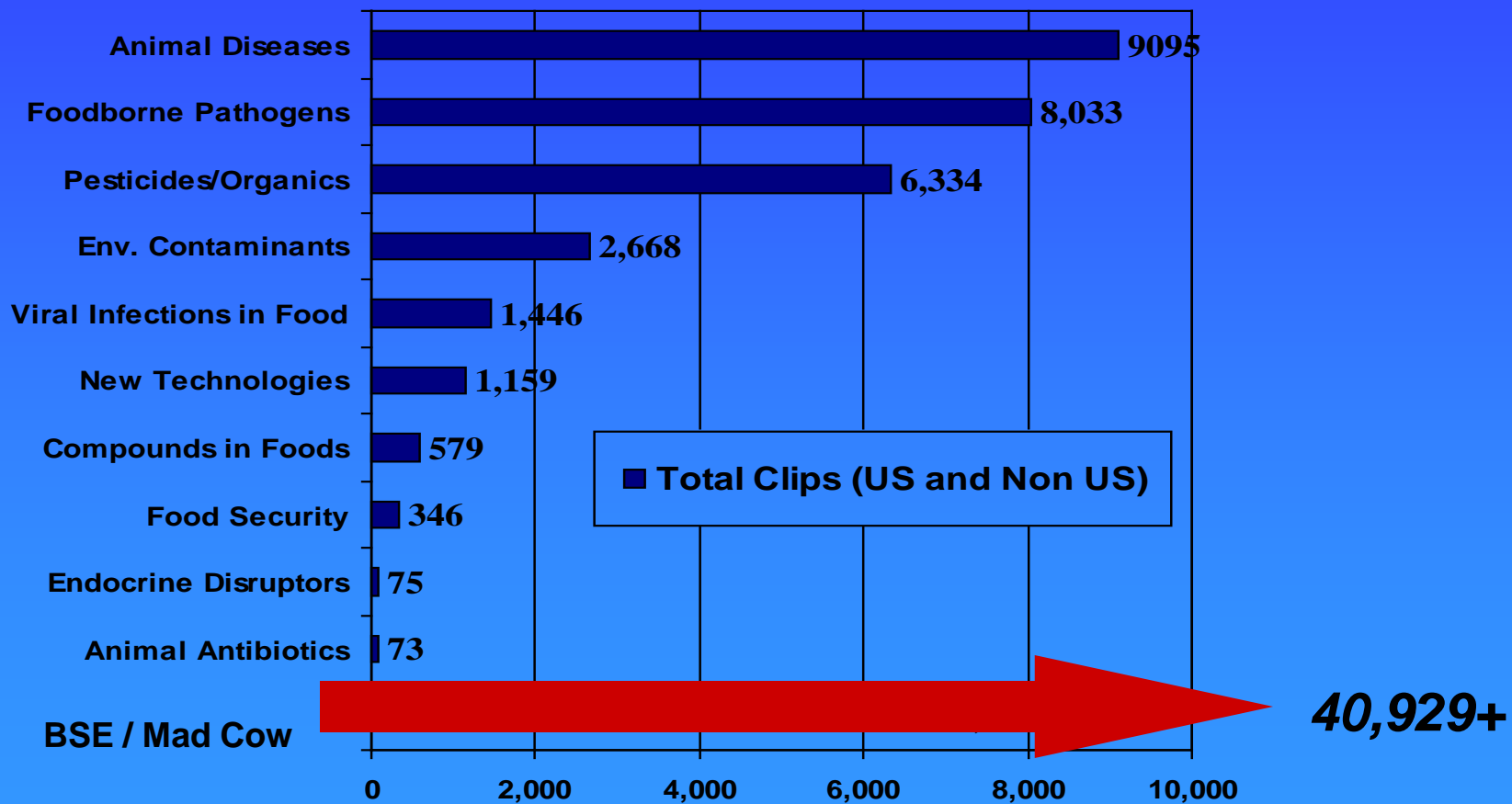


Food Safety Media Coverage

January 1, 2004 through December 31, 2004

Global Coverage, U.S. & International

(Combined)



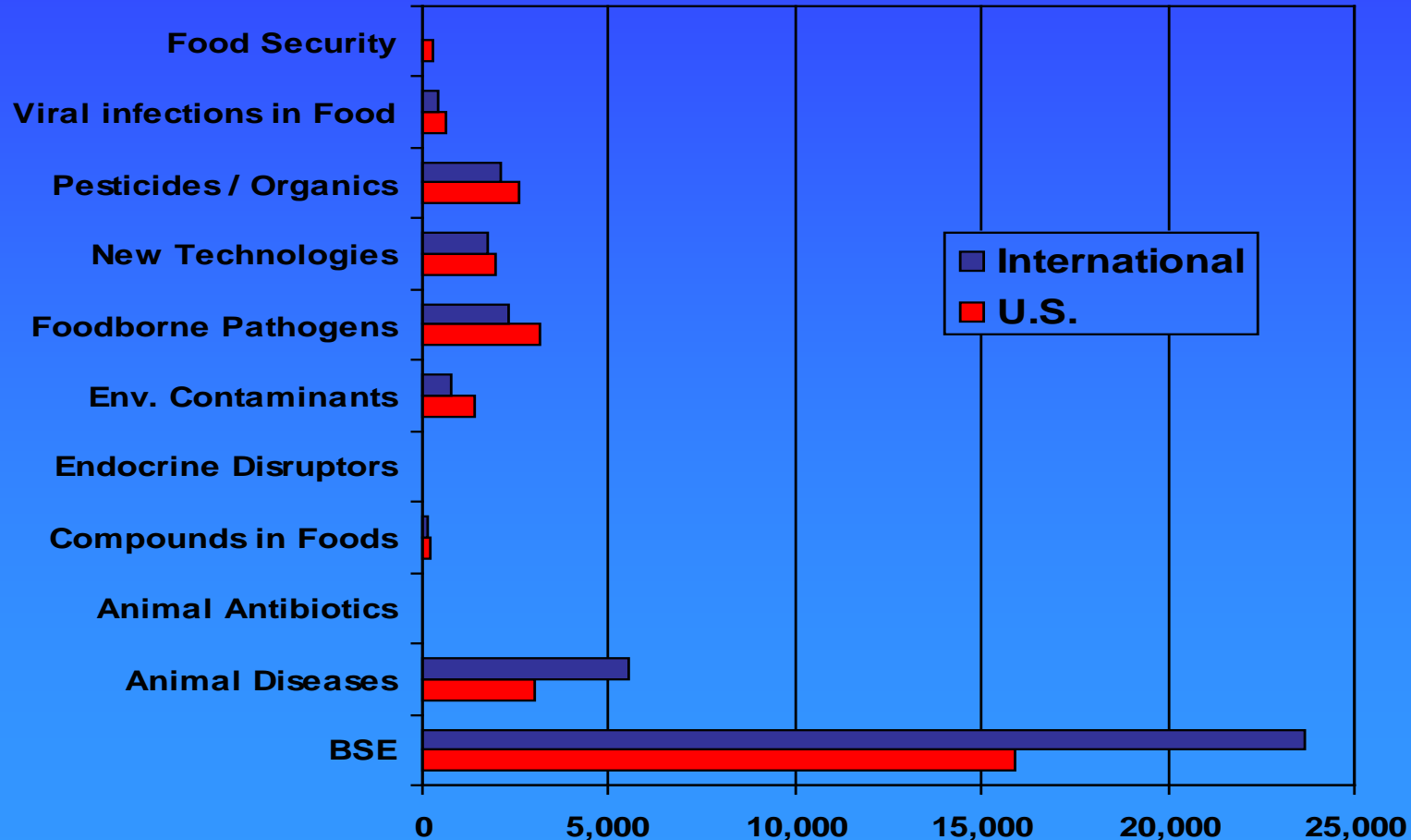
**Lexis-Nexis Search of U.S. and International Newspapers & Newswires*

Food Safety Media Coverage

January 1, 2004 through December 31, 2004

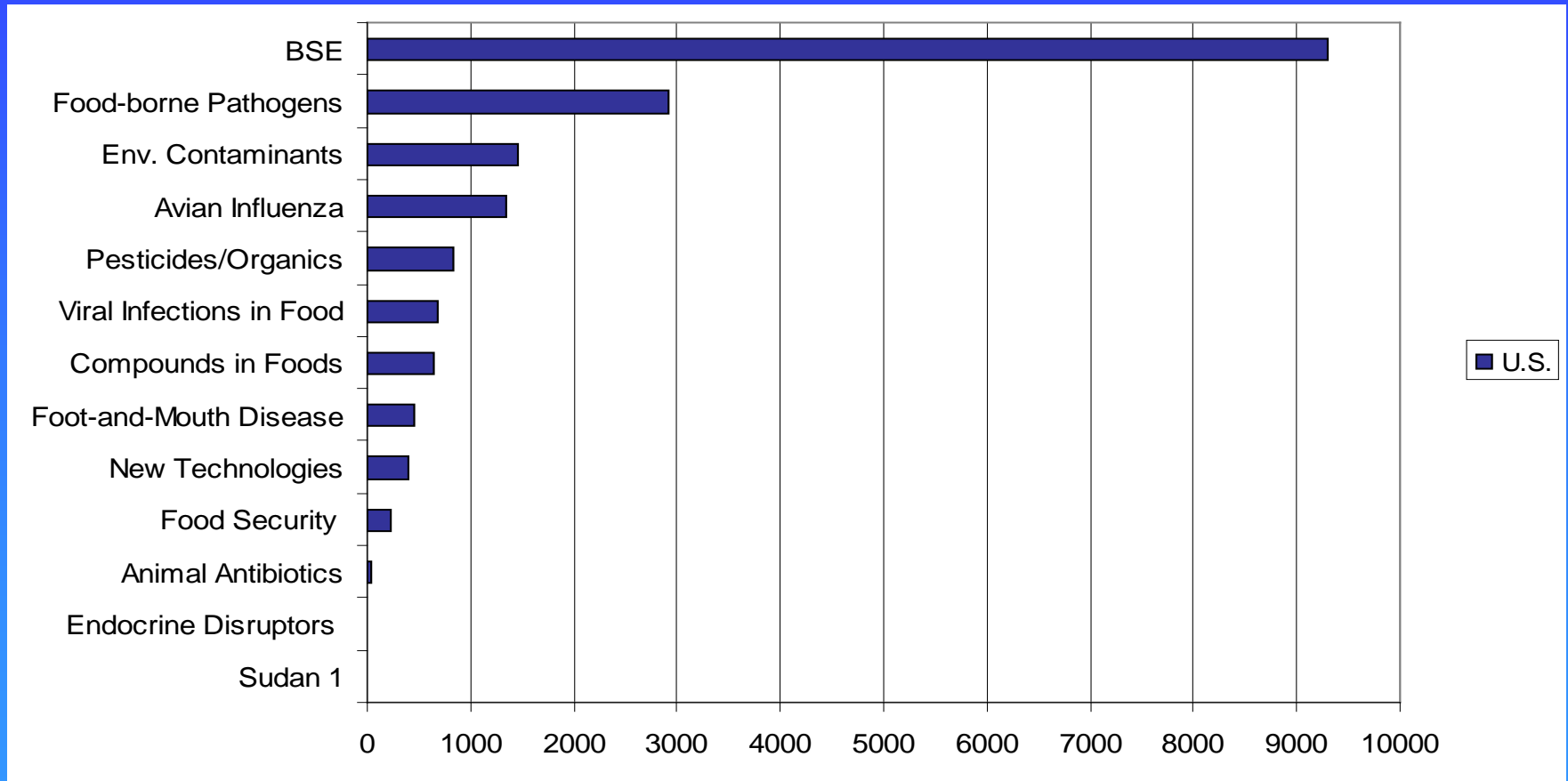
Global Coverage, U.S. vs. International

(Comparison)



**Lexis-Nexis Search of U.S. and International Newspapers & Newswires*

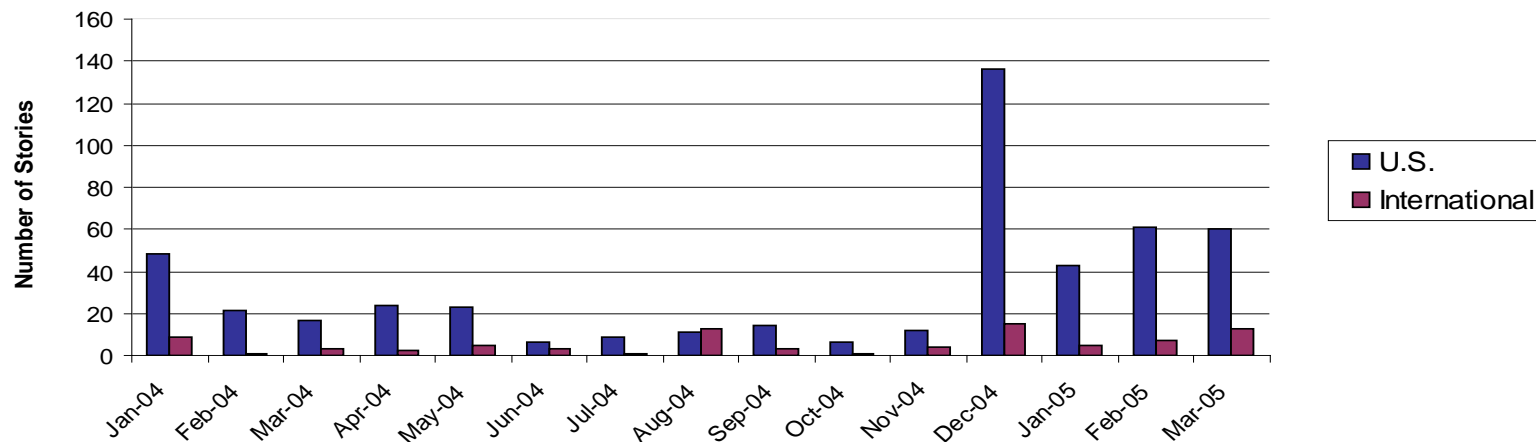
Food Safety Media Coverage March 1, 2004 through March 24, 2005 *Global Coverage, U.S.*



**Lexis-Nexis Search of U.S. and International
Newspapers & Newswires*

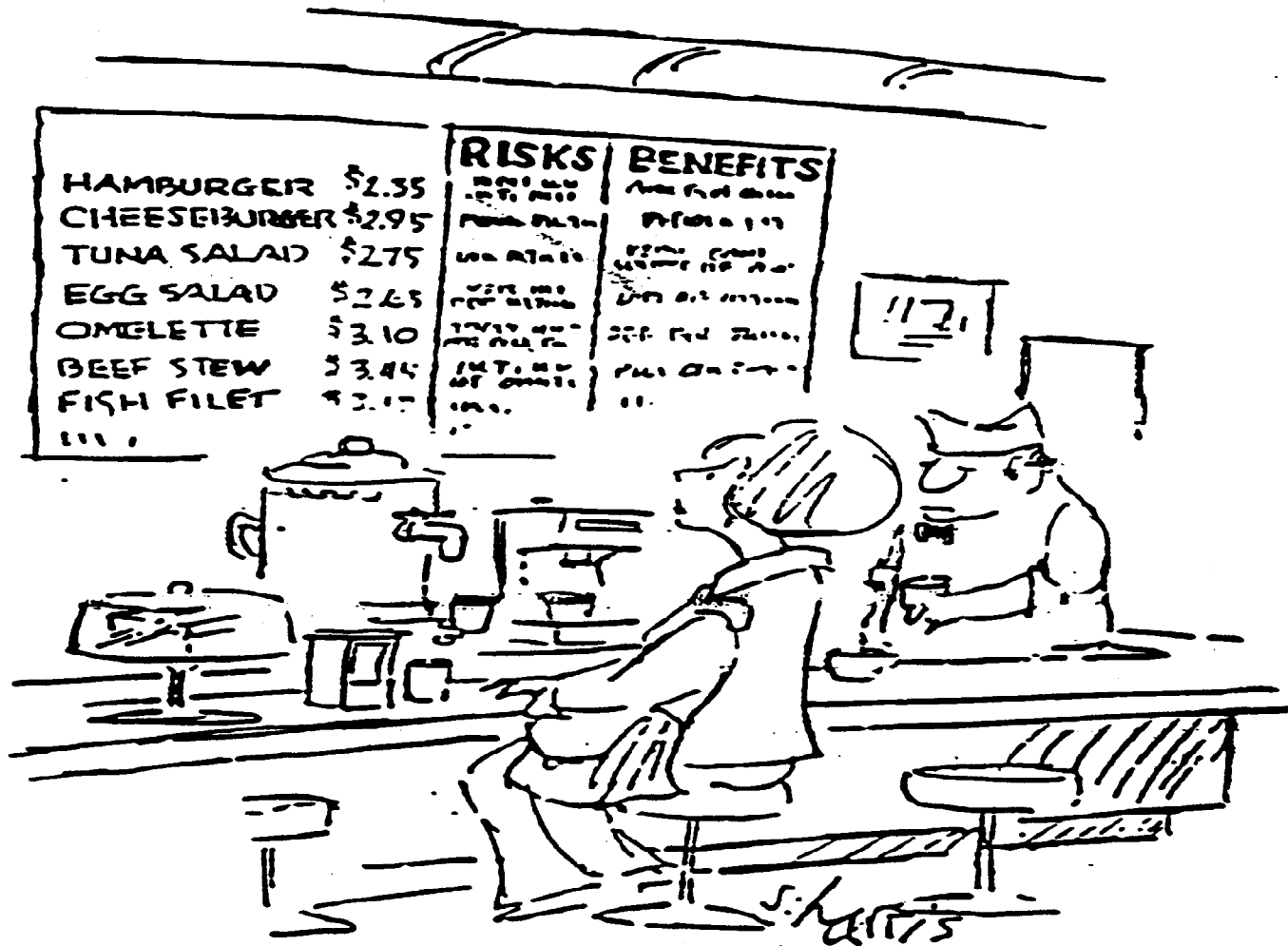
IFIC 2004

**International Food Information Council
Global Media Coverage of Food Security
January 1, 2004 through March 31, 2005**



**Lexis-Nexis Search of U.S. and International
Newspapers & Newswires*

Search Term: food and (agroterrorism or bioterrorism and "food safety" or terrorism) and not Bioterrorism Act



Risk Communication

- Attitudes about food-related risks
- Risk communication for food issues
 - When
 - Why
- Challenges and barriers related to risk communication
- Effective techniques to put risk into perspective

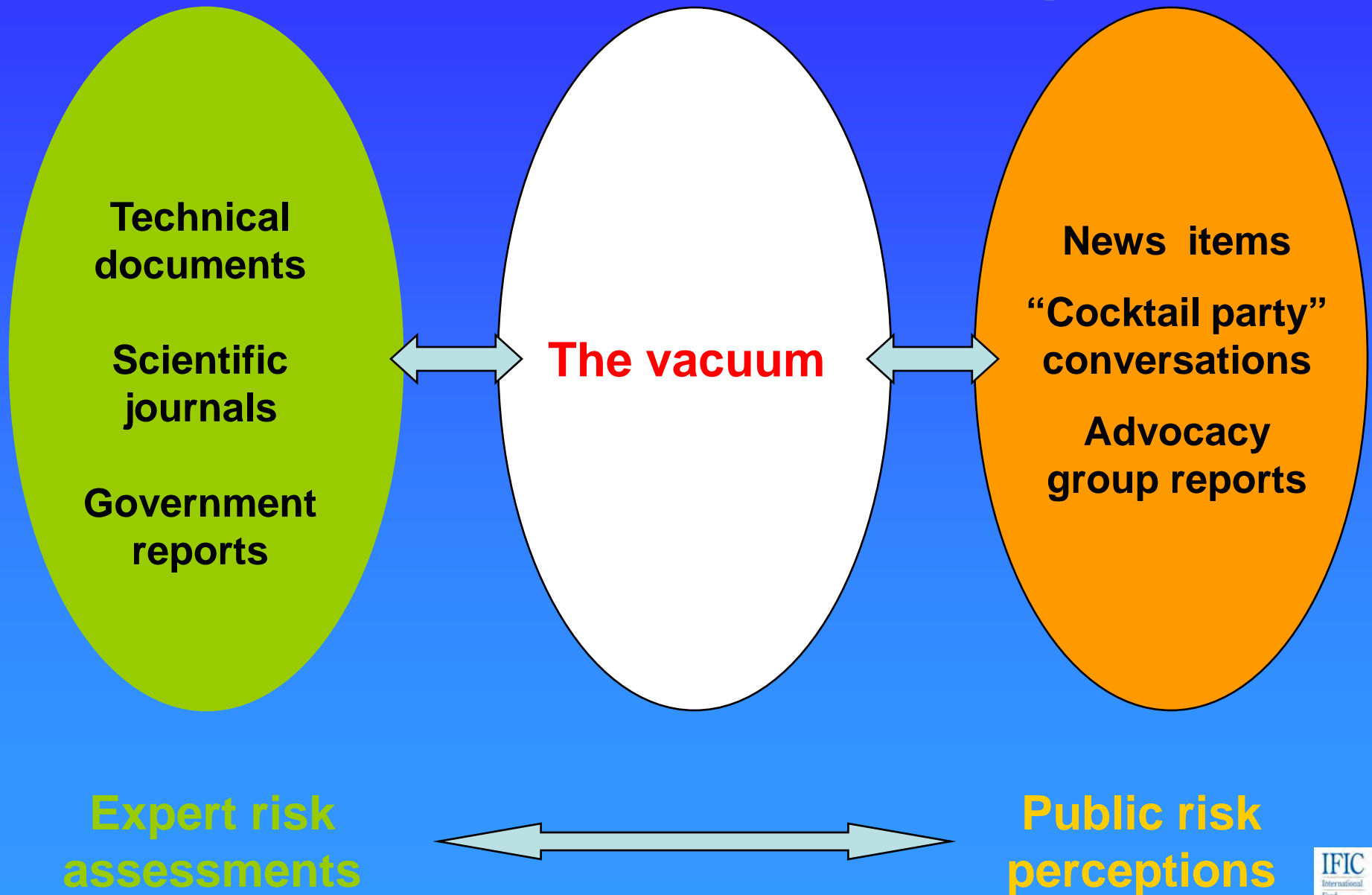
Video Scenario 1

**THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY
IS DIVIDED.
SOME SAY THIS STUFF IS
DANGEROUS, SOME SAY
IT ISN'T.**

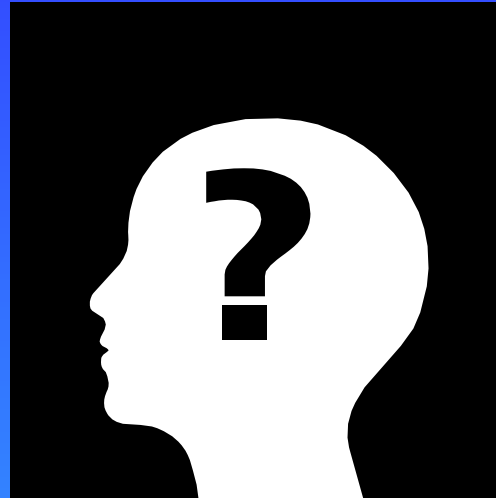


Richard

The Risk Information Gap



Risk Communication for Food Issues



WHEN?

WHY?

WHEN?

- Risk: “Possibility of suffering harm or loss”.
- Involves hazards and values.
- Sensitive or controversial situations of high concern coupled with low trust.
 - *Something of value could be lost:*
 - health
 - control
 - equity

WHY?

- People in high concern/low trust situations have difficulty processing information.
- Variables unrelated to straight facts take on substantial meaning and importance.
- Applying principles of risk communication help to overcome these barriers.

Factors Associated with Increased Public Concern

- Catastrophic potential
- Unfamiliar
- Decision processes not understood
- Lack of personal control
- Involuntary exposure
- Delayed effects
- Children at risk
- Risk to future generations
- Lack of trust in relevant institutions
- Much media attention
- Previous history
- Unclear benefits
- Potentially irreversible effects
- Origins caused by human actions (vs. act of nature)

- Covello, in NRC, 1989.

The Risk of Poor Risk Communication

“There is no single overriding problem and thus no simple way of making risk communication easy...

But even though good risk communication cannot always be expected to improve a situation, poor risk communication will nearly always make it worse.”

National Research Council, 1989.

Challenges and Barriers

- People are different:
 - Some understand and want technical information; others do not.
 - Some want extensive personal control over potential risks; Others prefer not to be bothered as long as “someone” is taking care of it.
- Often messages that are precise and accurate are too complex for most to understand.
- Simpler messages may be accused of being inaccurate, incomplete, or manipulative.

Overcoming Barriers

Perception is Reality

Factors that Interfere with Messages Being Heard

- Failure to address underlying concerns
- Credibility of the source
 - Real or perceived advocacy inconsistent with the facts
 - Reputation of bias or misrepresentation
 - Self-serving framing of messages
- Inconsistent and contradictory messages across credible sources

Overcoming Barriers

Credibility and Trust

- Know the audience: Respect their concerns
- Understand and use the ladder of credibility for the issue at hand
 - Align with sources higher than you
 - Don't attack sources higher than you
- Use plain, clear language
- Be acutely aware of non-verbal cues

The Importance of Context

Responding to Negative Food Safety News

- Provide larger context amidst breaking news
 - Compare prior knowledge of the issue
 - Consider implied risk with previous epidemiology
- Give big picture risk perspective without dismissing results of a single study
- Let recognized experts do the driving

Positive Communication Factors

Message

- Timely
- Regular updates
- Clear and concise
- Sensitive to values and fears
- Organized
- Uses metaphors
- Explicit conclusions

Communicator

- Responds to emotions
- Admits uncertainty
- Personal stake
- Clear and concise
- Perceived as “expert”
- Charismatic
- Objective

- Hart, 1998

Effective Messaging

- Develop three key messages around each issue:
 - Brief
 - Clear (no jargon)
 - Positive
- Outline 2-3 proof points for each message
 - Third party validation
 - Statistics
 - Scientific study
- Use repetition to overcome “noise”
- Include relevant or practical actions

National Center for Food Protection and Defense/IFIC Partnership

- Member of Risk Communication Team
- December 2004 Communication/Scenario Workshop
- Rapid response capabilities
- Connectivity to IFIC's:
 - Food Safety and Security Communications Forum
 - Animal Agriculture Communicators Group (w/USDA/APHIS)
 - Vast opinion leader network

Proposed NCFPD/IFIC Program Manager

- Position based at IFIC
- Front line coordinator/communication liaison between NCFPD Risk Communications Core Team IFIC Food Safety and Security programs
- 3-year funding split: NCFPD Grant/IFIC Supporters
- Starting Summer 2005
- Minimum investment → ensures rapid/effective response

In Summary . . .

- While consumer confidence in the food supply is relatively high, history demonstrates the industry's vulnerability.
- Food-related issues frequently fall into the “high concern/low trust” category.
- Understanding the barriers to “hearing” can be critical to the effectiveness of communication strategies.

IFIC Foundation Web site

www.ific.org

YOUR NUTRITION AND FOOD SAFETY RESOURCE

Journalists | Health/Nutrition/Agricultural Professionals | Government Officials | Educators | Consumers | Students



INTERNATIONAL
FOOD
INFORMATION
COUNCIL
FOUNDATION

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Newsroom

Food Insight Newsletter

Publications

Consumer and Opinion Leader Research

Información en Español

FREE UPDATES!

Join Our Email List

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[About the List](#)

LOOK IT UP:

Glossary of Food-Related Terms

FAST FACT

Caffeine is no more a diuretic than water.

[Read More](#) about this fact.

MORE IFIC FOUNDATION LINKS

Kidnetic.com

New Nutrition Conversation



Search Options | Site Map



In the Spotlight



Duis optimun sapien est fruit fincludit
Poseen entre et odio. Utrec dorat erat placerat ultrices. Nulla non nibner in tero torto et ante. Posu mme at oido. Ut nec erat noon nuent metus libero. Fusce molestie, dui utlarice egeate la taeet, metus livero sgittis ewert, id solattad. Dui interes egate, metus libero sagittoso la sitt.

Nutrition & Food Safety Information

Nutrition Information

Adult Nutrition & Health
Functional Foods
Child & Adolescent
Nutrition and Health
Dietary Fats & Fat Replacers
Sugars & Low Calorie Sweeteners
Food Ingredients
Nutrition & Oral Health
Obesity & Weight Management

FEATURED Sugars & Low Calorie Sweeteners

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Food Safety Information

Agriculture & Food Products
Food Allergies & Asthma
Food Biotechnology
Food Safety & New Technology
International Food Issues & Resources

FEATURED Food Biotechnology

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Improving Public Understanding of Science

**Journal of the National Cancer
Institute
February 4, 1998**

**Journal of the American
Medical Association
February 11, 1998**

