USDA’s Proposed Leafy Greens Marketing Agreements

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Timeline

- Sept. 2006: E. coli outbreak tied to spinach from Salinas Valley
- Feb. 2007: Calif. Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement established
- Oct. 2007: Arizona Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement established
- Oct. 2007: USDA comment period on national marketing program for leafy greens
- June 2009: USDA receives proposal for National Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement
- Sept. 2009: NLGMA hearings begin in Monterey, CA

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What is a Marketing Agreement?

- Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act (1937)
  - Establish and maintain orderly marketing conditions for agricultural commodities in interstate commerce
  - Use orders and agreements to create minimum standards of quality and maturity (grading, inspection) to effectuate orderly marketing
  - Establish milk marketing orders
- Agreement (voluntary)
- Order (mandatory, subject to referendum)

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Proposed National Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement

- Arugula, Cabbage (red, green, savoy), Chard, Cilantro, Endive, Escarole, Kale, Lettuce (iceberg, leaf, butter, head, romaine), Parsley, Radicchio, Spinach, Spring Mix
- Signatories only buy from growers who follow metrics and pass audit
- Signatories to LGMA are “handlers”
- Handle: to receive, acquire, sell, process, ship, distribute, or import leafy greens. Does NOT include brokering, retail or foodservice sales.
- “Metrics” to include GAP, GHP, GMPs. Not developed yet.
- Assessment up to $0.05/24 ct. carton to pay administration, audits, marketing.

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Administration

- Administrative Committee
- Technical Review Board
- Market Review Board
- USDA Agricultural Marketing Service

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Who Wants the LGMA?

- United Fresh Produce Association
- Produce Marketing Association
- Georgia Fresh Vegetable Association
- Georgia Farm Bureau
- Texas Fresh Vegetable Association
- Arizona Farm Bureau
- Leafy Greens Council
- California Farm Bureau
- California Leafy Greens Products Handler Marketing Agreement
- Grower-Shipper Association of Central California
- Western Growers Association
- Imperial Valley Vegetable Growers Association

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Who Doesn’t Want It?
(partial list)

- National Organic Coalition
- Food & Water Watch
- Consumers Union
- Center for Food Safety
- Wild Farm Alliance
- Ohio Farm Bureau
- Ohio Produce Growers and Marketers Association
- Florida Organic Growers
- Oregon Tilth
- PASA
- Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association
- Many small, organic, direct market producers

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Objections

- Voluntary?
- Food Safety Not a Marketing Issue
  - AMS Not a Food Safety Agency
- Driving Further Industry Consolidation
- Structure of Agreement
- Impacts of CA Agreement
  - Environment
  - Cost
  - Private Metrics Not Reduced

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Status

- Hearings Completed: Monterey, CA; Jacksonville, FL; Columbus, OH; Denver, CO; Yuma, AZ

- Upcoming Hearings: Syracuse, NY (10/20) and Charlotte, NC (10/22)

- USDA Decision?

www.foodandwaterwatch.org
USDA: www.ams.usda.gov/moab
(“Proposed Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement”)

CA LGMA: www.caleafygreens.ca.gov

National Organic Coalition:
www.nationalorganiccoalition.org/testimony.html

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