



C A L I F O R N I A

LGMA

COMMITTED TO SAFE LEAFY GREENS

Advancing Food Safety

2024 Food Safety Update



Advancing Food Safety

- LGMA Background
- New initiatives:
 - Smarter Audits
 - Romaine Test & Learn
- Q&A



Science-based standards for leafy greens food safety with government oversight and a system for continuous improvement.



Government Oversight



- Established in 2007 after a tragic outbreak of *E. coli* 0157:H7 was linked to fresh spinach from California.
- The California LGMA is a part of the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA).
- LGMA audits are conducted by CDFA auditors.
- USDA also provides oversight to the LGMA audit program.



Continuous Improvement

- Each LGMA member has approximately three full scope audits and one unannounced audit annually.
- After the audit, any citations are required to be corrected.
- A serious citation, or many small citations can lead to decertification.
- The LGMA provides member training to further improve compliance with the standards.



Industry Commitment



- The California LGMA and the leafy greens farming community are responsive, collaborative and proactive.
- California LGMA members produce over 70% of the Nation's lettuce and leafy greens – collectively they produce over 55 billion servings per year.



SMARTER AUDITS

A comprehensive review of our audits to ensure they are risk-based, effective and focused on the most critical elements.





Smarter Audits

- After 18 years of adding to the original audit checklist, it was time to conduct a strategic review of the document as well as the audit process.
- The goal of Smarter Audits is to evaluate the checklist and identify opportunities to improve audit effectiveness.

The Full Scope
California LGMA
Audit can include:

Up to 20
hours of
work

Over 600
checkpoints



Smarter Audits Contributors



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Smarter Audits

- A multi-phase approach to reduce duplicative efforts:

Phase 1 – Internal review of our audit checklist

More time spent on field observations

Phase 2 – Leverage other food safety audits

GFSI, PSR, etc.

Phase 3 – Institute supplier & service management program

E.g. soil amendment providers, bathroom providers, laboratories and more



Smarter Audits

What might change?

- Less systems documentation review
- More audit time in the field
- A quicker corrective action process

What will not change?

- The LGMA Food Safety Standards/Metrics
- The rigor of LGMA audits



ROMAINE TEST & LEARN

For the first time ever, farmers are sharing and aggregating data to advance food safety in leafy greens.





Romaine Test & Learn



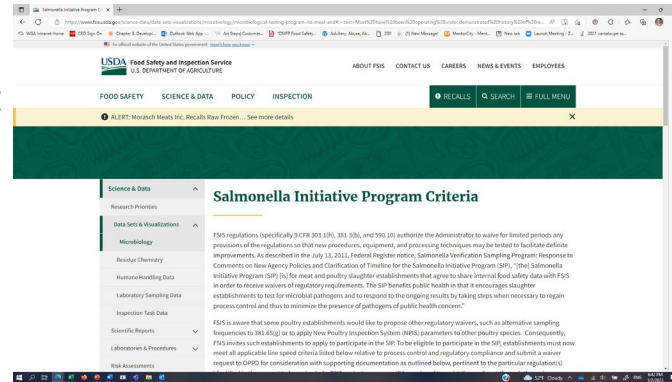
-Jan Berk, LGMA Chair

“Romaine Test & Learn represents the most significant change the LGMA has made to benefit food safety since its inception. This program will allow our members’ individual testing data to collectively provide meaningful, aggregated data to better understand potential risks.”

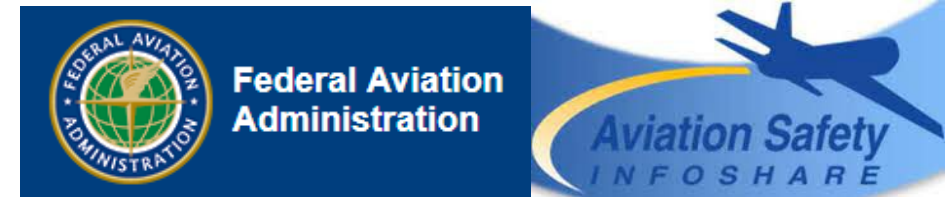


Data Aggregation

USDA Salmonella Initiative Program: Meat and Poultry Slaughter establishments share testing data to receive waivers of regulatory requirements



FDA AI Imported Seafood Program: Allows screening of imported seafood that may be unsafe



Voluntary reporting programs to leverage flight data and identify safety risks.



The proposed NPSB would identify and anticipate significant harm in health care; provide expertise to understand the causes and precursors to harm; and create solutions to prevent patient safety events.



Romaine Test & Learn

TIMELINE

- The data collection period for this project will span October 2023 through October 2025.
- LGMA Members input data quarterly, this requirement will be verified by LGMA audits.





Romaine Test & Learn

HISTORY

- In 2021 the LGMA Advisory Board voted conceptually to mandate risk-based pre-harvest testing.
- However, prior to being an official requirement, the board began analyzing where the pathogen testing could make the biggest positive difference in finding solutions to prevent future outbreaks.
- The new requirement, adopted in June of 2023, allows for data aggregation and testing to improve knowledge and ultimately make leafy greens safer.



Romaine Test & Learn

Aggregating Data

- As of January 2024, LGMA members are required to input testing data into the Greenlink™ database managed by Western Growers.

The data being collected includes:

- sample size
- sample date
- sample stage
- sampling region
- commodity description
- organisms tested
- test result



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STANDARDIZED PATHOGEN TESTING

The Romaine Test & Learn program includes standardized minimum protocols for pre-harvest and post-harvest pathogen tests. See the detailed methodology for each below:

Methodology	Pre-harvest Pathogen Testing	Post-harvest Pathogen Testing
Sampling timeline	≤ 10 days	≤ 24 hours
Sampling lot size	≤ 10 acres	Defined product lot (Field pack vs Processed)
Test organisms	STEC/EHEC, <i>E. coli</i> O157:H7 and <i>Salmonella</i>	
Sample size	Minimum 375 grams from 60 N sub-samples	
Sampling methods	Randomized sampling within a designated lot	



Romaine Test & Learn

The LGMA Data Governance Committee provides oversight of the data trust.



THE DATA GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE IS TASKED WITH DETERMINING WHAT DATA AND FINDINGS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED.



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RESOURCES

www.lgmaconnect.com

The screenshot shows the California LGMA website. At the top left is the logo: a green leaf with a white checkmark, followed by 'CALIFORNIA LGMA' and 'COMMITTED TO SAFE LEAFY GREENS' below it. To the right is a search bar with the placeholder text 'type keyword(s) here' and a green 'SEARCH' button. Further right are social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Instagram. Below the search bar is a navigation menu with links for 'Food Safety', 'Certified Members', 'About Us', and 'News'. The main content area features a large background image of fresh romaine lettuce. Overlaid on this is a white box containing the 'CALIFORNIA LGMA connect' logo and the text: 'Food safety resources for leafy green shippers, growers and harvesters'. Below this text is a paragraph: 'Your destination for food safety updates, training, and resources. Whether you are an LGMA handler, grower, harvester, service provider, or are otherwise involved in lettuce and leafy greens production, LGMA Connect is a simple way for you to stay up to date. Sign up to receive important food safety standards updates, access exclusive'. In the bottom right corner, there is a dark teal box with the 'CALIFORNIA LGMA' logo, the text 'Romaine Test & Learn Basics', a green button with 'GET DETAILS >' and a right arrow, and the text 'ROMAINE TEST & LEARN' at the bottom.



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