

Emerging Findings from UC ANR Needs Assessment of Produce Gleaning & Food Safety

Julia Van Soelen Kim

with Erin DiCaprio, Alda Pires, Rob Bennaton, Rachel Surls, & Suzi Grady

Aligning the Food System for Food Safety in Food Waste Solutions

May 16, 2019

UC Davis



University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Methods

- Needs assessment
- Multidisciplinary team with food safety specialists, CE advisors in urban agriculture and food systems, community partner
- 6 focus groups + Interviews
- Statewide survey (TBD)

Emerging Findings

1. 'Gleaning' means different things in different contexts.



'Gleaning' means different things in different contexts.

- Gleaning
- Harvesting
- Food recovery
- Food rescue

“

“I refer to the overall universe of this kind of thing as the ‘**food recovery universe**’ because there are a lot of related--but at the same time very different--kinds of activities that all fall under that.”

-Gleaner

Emerging Findings

1. 'Gleaning' means different things in different contexts.
2. Limited understanding of breadth of 'food safety.'



Limited Understanding of Breadth of 'Food Safety'

- Food safety is frequently seen as synonymous with quality and freshness.
- Food safety training is frequently seen as synonymous with volunteer/worker training.

“

“[Food safety] is definitely a concern because we have an overriding goal that we want to provide fruits that we would be happy to eat ourselves. So our quality standard is not just food safety[...] we're looking at things that may be cosmetic. We're looking at things that aren't directly what people would put as food safety, which have to do with perishability or can something be transported?”

- Gleaner

Emerging Findings

1. 'Gleaning' means different things in different contexts.
2. Limited understanding of breadth of 'food safety.'
3. Scale matters.



Scale Matters

- More similarities across orgs of similar size than within similar operational types

“

“They all have the same destinations but very different sources, and because they have different sources, they have different operational needs. They have different volumes. They have different structures in terms of who does what, and they have different potential risks and opportunities in terms of food safety.”

– *Gleaner*

Emerging Findings

1. 'Gleaning' means different things in different contexts.
2. Limited understanding of breadth of 'food safety.'
3. Scale matters.
4. Food safety practices are often invisible/obscure.



Emerging Findings

1. 'Gleaning' means different things in different contexts.
2. Limited understanding of breadth of 'food safety.'
3. Scale matters.
4. Food safety practices are often invisible/obscure.
5. Food safety is seen as a social justice issue.



Emerging Findings

1. 'Gleaning' means different things in different contexts.
2. Limited understanding of breadth of 'food safety.'
3. Scale matters.
4. Food safety practices are often invisible/obscure.
5. Food safety is seen as a social justice issue.
6. Regulatory challenges are present, but not evenly experienced.



Regulatory Challenges Not Evenly Experienced

- Location and point in time impact perceptions of regulatory burden.

“

*“Talking about **food safety in isolation tended to create lots of issues**, because the point with food safety is to achieve a balance with providing food to people. [...] The way out of some of those traps was to get everyone focused on the **broader goals of food availability and access**, and to consider safety and risk in balance with availability. Without looking at it as a balancing force, it's very easy to design measures that can maximize safety and minimize availability.”*

- Gleaner

Thank You to
Focus group participants, interviewees,
research team, and USDA NIFA



University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources