

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Interested Parties

FROM: Peter D. Hart Research Associates and Public Opinion Strategies

DATE: September 17, 2008

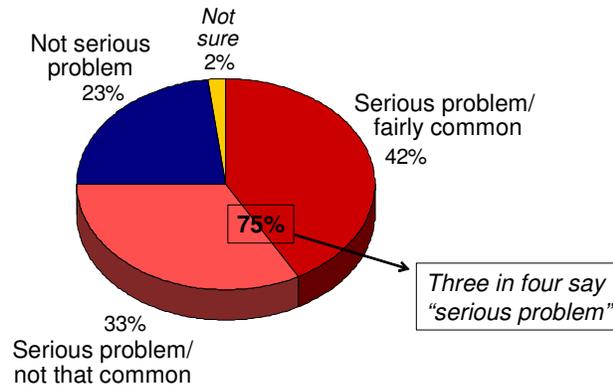
RE: Results Of A National Survey On Produce Safety

A new national survey of likely voters conducted for the **Produce Safety Project**, an initiative of The Pew Charitable Trusts at Georgetown University, finds that the American voting public has significant concerns about produce safety. Voters believe that the federal government and food packagers bear the greatest responsibility for ensuring that produce is safe, and they say that neither group is doing a good job in this regard. Thus it is not surprising that most voters—across the demographic and ideological spectrums—wish to see the produce safety system significantly reformed, supporting new safety requirements even if they increase the cost of produce.

This memorandum outlines the key findings from this survey.

1 Voters see produce safety as a serious problem, and many say they are worried about bacterial contamination in the produce they serve to their family. Fully three in four (75%) voters say that fresh fruits and vegetables being contaminated with bacteria is a serious problem, while 23% say it is not. It comes in just underneath toys being made with unsafe materials (84%) among the consumer safety issues we tested. Among those who say produce safety is a serious problem, 42% say it is a fairly common occurrence. Moreover, 57% of voters say that when it comes to them and their family they are worried about fresh produce being contaminated—including 22% who worry a great deal about this—while 27% say they are not that worried, and 15% are not worried at all. Women and lower-income voters are particularly worried about this (65% and 72%, respectively).

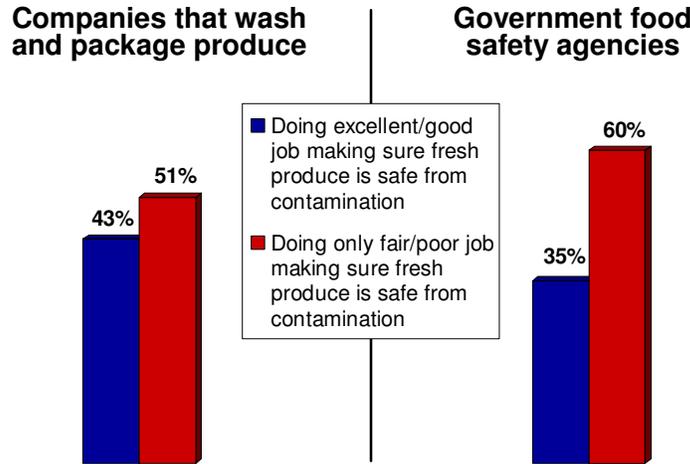
Produce Contamination A Serious Problem



2 Voters say the federal government and produce packagers bear the primary responsibility for produce safety, and that both groups are falling down on the job. When asked which one or two groups have the most responsibility for ensuring produce safety, federal food safety agencies and companies that wash and package fresh produce top the list, both at 41%, with food growers coming in slightly lower (36%).

At the same time, most voters say government agencies and produce packagers are not doing a good job in ensuring produce safety. Forty-three percent (43%) say packagers are doing an excellent or good job, while a 51% majority say they are doing only a fair or a poor job; the government's performance is seen as even worse, with 35% saying they are doing an excellent or good job, and 60% saying their performance is only fair or poor. By contrast, majorities of voters say that grocery stores (62%), food growers (60%), and transporters (52%) are doing an excellent or good job.

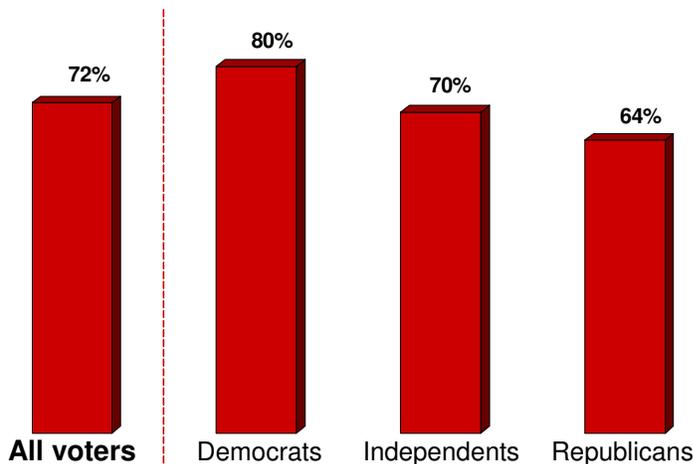
Government/Packagers Doing Mediocre Job



3 A large majority of voters favor new produce safety regulations—even if it increases the price of produce—and when they hear details of the current produce safety system voters say major changes are in order. More than seven in 10 (72%) voters would favor the federal government creating new requirements for produce safety, including 47% who *strongly* favor this, even if it would raise the cost of fresh produce by three to five percent. This is more than three times the proportion who would oppose new requirements (23%), and includes majorities of voters across the political spectrum—80% of Democrats, 70% of independents, and 64% of Republicans.

Strong Support for New Requirements

% who favor new requirements



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Moreover, when the government's current approach to produce safety is described for them, voters definitively say that the status quo is unacceptable.

Currently the federal government relies on voluntary guidelines, education, and awareness campaigns to prevent and respond to produce contamination. It does not require farms or processors to implement plans to prevent bacterial contamination, or to have systems that allow them to track fruits and vegetables once they enter the supply chain. It does not have authority to mandate food recalls. The federal government does not currently conduct inspections on farms and it only inspects food processors once every 10 years on average.

Based on this description, 36% of voters say the federal government's produce safety process needs a complete overhaul, and another 39% say it needs significant changes. Just 24% say it needs only minor changes or no real changes. Again, it is striking that majorities of Democrats (82%), independents (78%), and Republicans (63%)—and even two-thirds (64%) of ideological conservatives—say that significant changes or a complete overhaul of the federal produce safety system are necessary.

Finally, it is interesting to note that 67% of voters—and majorities of all partisan groups—believe that any new regulations should be mandatory, as this will ensure that all produce businesses are meeting the same safety standards. Only 29% say they should be voluntary, because produce businesses already are required to follow too many regulations and it would be in their best business interests to adopt the new standards anyway.

From July 21 to August 3, 2008, Peter D. Hart Research Associates and Public Opinion Strategies conducted a national survey of likely voters on behalf of the Produce Safety Project. A total of 1,002 likely November 2008 general election voters were interviewed by telephone; the survey's results are statistically representative of the country's electorate, and carry a margin of error of ± 3.1 percentage points for the full sample and a higher margin of error for subgroups of the sample (some of which are cited in this memorandum).