UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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PUBLIC HEARING

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IN THE MATTER OF: :

LEAFY GREEN VEGETABLES: Docket No.

HANDLED IN THE : AO-FE-09-0138 UNITED STATES; : AMS-FV-09-0029 HEARING ON PROPOSED :

MARKETING AGREEMENT

NO. 970

Tuesday, October 6, 2009

Greater Columbus Convention Center 400 North High Street Room D130 Columbus, Ohio

The above entitled matter reconvened,

pursuant to notice, at 8:31 a.m. BEFORE: HONORABLE MARC R. HILLSON

Chief Administrative Law Judge

APPEARANCES:

For the United States Department of Agriculture:

SHARLENE DESKINS, Esquire

ANTOINETTE CARTER

MELISSA SCHMAEDICK

ANTHONY SOUZA

SUZANNE DASH

For the Proponents:

JASON RESNICK, Esquire

TOM STENZEL

HANK GICLAS

RAY GILMER

C-O-N-T-E-N-T-S

WITNESSES DIRECT USDA PUBLIC PROPONENT

For the Proponents:

Thomas E. Stenzel Ray Gilmer Hank Giclas	2178	2154 2183 2198		2225
For the Public:				
Brent Baker Raymond J. Yoder	2236 2241			
Lloyd Schrock	2245	2247	2274	2283
Fred Finney	2293	2295	2306	
Jeff Zellers	2308	2315	2321	
Tiffany Leeper	2329	2332		
Chris Blanchard	2337	2356	2344	2375
Brian Snyder	2397	2412		2452
Karl Kolb	2425			
Lisa Schacht	2461	2476		2498
Bob Jones	2508	2514		2517
Carol Goland	2520	2525		
Richard Wander	2534	2537		
Natalie Walden	2540	2543	2551	

EXHIBITS

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57	Statement	2139	2154
58	Document	2178	2185
59	Statement	2198	2198
60	Statement	2237	2247
61	Statement	2242	2247
62	Statement	2242	2247
63	Statement	2245	2247
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- 1 PROCEEDINGS
- 2 (8:31 a.m.)
- JUDGE HILLSON: Good morning
- 4 everybody. It's October 6, 2009 and we're in
- 5 Columbus Ohio for the continuation of the
- 6 hearing on leafy green vegetables handled in
- 7 the United States, docket number AO-FE-09-
- 8 0138, AMS-FV-09-0029, FV09-970-1. This is the
- 9 third site that we've had a hearing at. This
- 10 is our sixth day of hearing. There are four
- 11 more sites, I think it's a total of 11 days of
- 12 hearing total. I may be off by one. My name
- is Marc Hillson, I'm the Chief Administrative
- 14 Law Judge in the Department of Agriculture and
- 15 I am here to run the hearing, but I'm not a --
- 16 I'm not going to be -- I'm not a factor in
- 17 deciding the hearing. I'm just here to make
- 18 sure that witnesses -- the testimony and
- 19 exhibits come in in an orderly fashion.
- 20 All testimony must be under oath
- 21 or affirmation, and after people testify, they
- 22 will be subject to questions by the USDA

- 1 panel, and by, basically, anybody else who is
- 2 here today. Since this is a continuation of
- 3 the hearing -- I mentioned this to the
- 4 reporter but I'll just say this on the record
- 5 as well, that the page numbers should just
- 6 pick up where we left off. This is one
- 7 continuous hearing, and so, the first page of
- 8 today's hearing should begin just after the
- 9 last page number of the hearing that we had
- 10 last week in Jacksonville, Florida. Likewise,
- 11 when I start numbering exhibits, I will be
- 12 starting with number 57. We've already had 56
- 13 exhibits and a little over 50 witnesses
- 14 testify thus far.
- Just a reminder to people, if you
- 16 would, please put your cell phones off or on
- 17 vibrate, thank you very much. And, I can't
- 18 think of any other preliminary matters. Do
- 19 you have any other preliminary matters other
- 20 than -- one thing we always do at our hearings
- 21 is, we ask the people who are here on a
- 22 representative capacity to introduce

- 1 themselves once for the record at the start of
- 2 the hearing, so I'll just ask the people who
- 3 are here to rep -- from the USDA in a
- 4 representative capacity to please introduce
- 5 themselves.
- 6 MS. DESKINS: Sharlene Deskins,
- 7 United States Department of Agriculture,
- 8 Office of General Counsel. I represent the
- 9 Agricultural Marketing Service.
- 10 MS. CARTER: Antoinette Carter,
- 11 with the Marketing Order Administration
- 12 Branch, USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service,
- 13 Fruit and Vegetable Programs.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Melissa
- 15 Schmaedick, USDA, also with Marketing Order
- 16 Administration Branch.
- 17 MR. SOUZA: Anthony Souza, USDA,
- 18 Ag Marketing Service, Fresh Fruit and
- 19 Vegetable Inspection Service.
- 20 MS. DASH: Suzanne Dash, Economic
- 21 Analysis, USDA, AMS.
- JUDGE HILLSON: And, Mr. Resnick?

- 1 MR. RESNICK: Thank you, Your
- 2 Honor. Jason Resnick, Assistant General
- 3 Counsel, Western Growers, and counsel for the
- 4 Proponent group.
- 5 MR. GICLAS: Hank Giclas, Western
- 6 Growers.
- 7 MR. STENZEL: Tom Stenzel,
- 8 President and CEO of United Fresh Produce
- 9 Association.
- 10 MR. GILMER: Ray Gilmer, Vice
- 11 President, Communications, United Fresh
- 12 Produce Association.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Is there anyone
- 14 else here who is in a representative capacity?
- 15 Okay, in that case we can proceed with the
- 16 hearing.
- 17 And, Mr. Resnick, you may call
- 18 your first witness.
- 19 MR. RESNICK: Thank you, Your
- 20 Honor. The Proponent group calls Tom Stenzel.
- JUDGE HILLSON: I'm marking Mister
- 22 Stenzel's written testimony as Exhibit 57.

- 1 (Whereupon, Exhibit 57 was marked
- 2 for identification.)
- 3 If you would please raise your
- 4 right hand.
- 5 Whereupon,
- 6 THOMAS E. STENZEL
- 7 having been first duly sworn, was called as a
- 8 witness herein, was examined and testified as
- 9 follows:
- 10 EXAMINATION DIRECT
- 11 JUDGE HILLSON: Could you please
- 12 state your name and spell it for the record?
- 13 THE WITNESS: Thomas E. Stenzel.
- $14 \quad S-T-E-N-Z-E-L$.
- JUDGE HILLSON: And, you have a
- 16 statement you want to read?
- 17 THE WITNESS: Yes sir.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Why don't you
- 19 proceed to do so?
- 20 THE WITNESS: Thank you. Good
- 21 morning, my name is Tom Stenzel and I'm
- 22 President and CEO of the United Fresh Produce

- 1 Association. United Fresh is a membership
- 2 trade association representing some 1200
- 3 companies, from growers, packers, and fresh
- 4 processors through the produce supply chain to
- 5 retailers and food service companies.
- 6 Together these companies produce and market
- 7 the vast majority of fruits and vegetables
- 8 sold in the United States. Our association is
- 9 one of the proponent organizations that has
- 10 requested the USDA to consider a national
- 11 marketing agreement for leafy greens.
- 12 Our member leadership reached the
- 13 decision to support a national marketing
- 14 agreement in the belief that this would
- 15 provide an opportunity, not a burden, for
- 16 growers, shippers, and processors of leafy
- 17 greens. It is important to state from the
- 18 beginning that we support this initiative
- 19 because it is indeed voluntary for leafy
- 20 greens handlers. If USDA moves forward with
- 21 this agreement, it is entirely up to
- 22 individual handlers, whether they want to

- 1 participate. That is a huge distinction from
- 2 a mandatory marketing order. If the agreement
- 3 holds value in an opportunity for handlers of
- 4 leafy greens, they can join in. If not, there
- 5 is no need to take that step.
- 6 We believe this fact provides a
- 7 simple choice both for leafy greens handlers
- 8 and the USDA. For handlers, simply watch and
- 9 see as the agreement is developed and make
- 10 your own choice of whether to participate.
- 11 For USDA, with overwhelming support from the
- 12 majority of the leafy greens industry, we
- 13 submit that you have no reason not to move
- 14 forward with a voluntary agreement. You are
- 15 imposing no burdens on the industry by
- 16 allowing a voluntary agreement to move
- 17 forward.
- 18 As I testify here in Ohio, I also
- 19 want to recognize that we've heard various
- 20 concerns and objections raised about the
- 21 potential agreement. Some of our own members
- 22 here in Ohio have expressed these concerns.

- 1 While I believe fundamentally that the
- 2 voluntary nature of the agreement answers
- 3 those concerns, I would like to spend a few
- 4 minutes talking about issues that I've heard
- 5 that may be based on misunderstandings. I've
- 6 summarized below the top 10 concerns I've
- 7 heard in our own association's listening with
- 8 the industry over the past year.
- 9 Number one, a national agreement
- 10 would be little more than California imposing
- 11 it's system on others. As a national
- 12 organization, we do not agree. It would not
- 13 support such an outcome. In fact, the
- 14 National Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement, as
- 15 proposed, would require input and direct
- 16 leadership control from all regions. Ohio is
- one of the states in Zone Four, which would
- 18 have two handlers and one producer on the
- 19 NLGMA administrative committee.
- 20 We should actually recognize that
- 21 this is an over-representation based on volume
- 22 produced due to the very large volume of leafy

- 1 greens produced in California and Arizona.
- 2 USDA 2007 census of agriculture data presented
- 3 by Suzanne Dash in an earlier hearing shows
- 4 the following acreage comparing just
- 5 California and Ohio. Head lettuce or iceberg,
- 6 118,000 acres harvested in California, three
- 7 acres in Ohio. Leaf lettuce, 44,000 compared
- 8 with 354 acres. Romaine lettuce, 64,000
- 9 compared with 78 acres. With this large
- 10 volume difference, if California interest had
- 11 truly sought to impose their will on others,
- 12 they may simply have advocated for a mandatory
- 13 marketing order and simply voted that in with
- 14 their sheer overwhelming size.
- 15 Instead, UFPA believes this
- 16 agreement gives you in Ohio and other
- 17 production regions an opportunity to voice
- 18 your interest in the leadership of the
- 19 initiative. Additionally, the California and
- 20 Arizona agreements are operating fine today
- 21 for the handlers and producers there. They
- 22 really don't need a national agreement to

- 1 demonstrate their compliance with good
- 2 agricultural practices. On the other hand,
- 3 our association believes growers and handlers
- 4 outside of those areas should have the same
- 5 opportunity to demonstrate your compliance
- 6 with GAPs as they do.
- 7 Number two, the standards
- 8 contained in the California and Arizona
- 9 agreements are not appropriate for other
- 10 regions. Actually, we may agree on that one.
- 11 The entire concept of the leafy greens
- 12 industry getting together nationally is to
- 13 allow for regional differences to be
- 14 incorporated into an overall audit system that
- 15 still provides public and buyer assurance.
- 16 Until the California and Arizona agreements,
- 17 everyone was dealing with their own
- 18 interpretation of FDA guidance. The
- 19 California agreement was a way for leafy
- 20 greens industry there to come together to
- 21 agree on a common approach, and even they had
- 22 to find a way to address differences ranging

- 1 from irrigation from deep wells in Salinas to
- 2 irrigation with Colorado River water in the
- 3 desert regions. A national agreement will
- 4 allow all regions to participate and shape the
- 5 standards that work for each area.
- 6 Number three, grower-handler rules
- 7 or standards are not needed, food safety is
- 8 only a bagged salad problem. Unfortunately,
- 9 that's not the case. FDA reports numerous
- 10 outbreaks in cases of food-borne illness
- 11 associated with multiple types of commodity
- 12 lettuces. Packaged salads only give officials
- 13 an easier way to identify clusters of
- 14 illnesses when product is distributed more
- 15 widely in geography. In addition, in most
- 16 cases with packaged products, scientists have
- 17 identified the original examination point as
- 18 somewhere on the farm. We as an industry must
- 19 not minimize the responsibility we all share
- 20 in preventing pathogens from ever coming into
- 21 contact with our foods, as well as minimizing
- 22 the negative impact in processing, if and when

- 1 that should occur. In fact, the California
- 2 agreement has brought growers, packers and
- 3 processors together better than ever instead
- 4 of blaming each other when breakdowns in
- 5 safety occur.
- 6 In addition, I think it's wise for
- 7 all of us to realize that mandatory GAPs, good
- 8 agricultural practices, for all leafy greens
- 9 are not far away. Today, the FDA has clearly
- 10 stated it's intention to propose mandatory
- 11 regulations for leafy greens production and
- 12 handling.
- 13 As a precursor to regulation, the
- 14 FDA recently issued guidance for leafy greens,
- 15 which all producers should be following today.
- 16 A National Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement
- 17 will not forestall nor replace those eventual
- 18 FDA regulations and the need for Ohio growers
- 19 to comply with these rules. However, it can
- 20 be helpful now in gaining grower and handler
- 21 input and consensus on what those rules ought
- 22 to be, and subsequently, in demonstrating

- 1 compliance with those rules. Opposing a
- 2 marketing agreement is not going to change the
- 3 fact that FDA will soon require specific GAPs
- 4 and metrics for leafy greens.
- 5 Number four, a national marketing
- 6 agreement will cost too much. Actually one of
- 7 the goals of the National Leafy Greens
- 8 Agreement is to reduce the cost of auditing by
- 9 reducing the number of audits a producer or
- 10 handler has to conduct. The California
- 11 experience has shown that buyers have come to
- 12 recognize the California Leafy Greens
- 13 Marketing Agreement as a sound, rigorous
- 14 standard in audit protocol. This reduces the
- 15 need and expense of multiple audits. In fact,
- 16 a national agreement could do the same for
- 17 Ohio. If retailers today are already
- 18 expecting California standards for 90% of the
- 19 volume they buy, it could save Ohio industry
- 20 time and money to be part of a similar
- 21 national approach. As for the fees, since
- 22 fees would be based on a per package

- 1 assessment, these are fair and equitable based
- 2 on the size of the operation.
- 3 Number five, some say my
- 4 operations already have audits that are
- 5 sufficient for your customers. From a
- 6 national perspective, we increasingly see the
- 7 major retail and food service buyers looking
- 8 for common standards in audit processes, not
- 9 continuing with a diverse sets of audits in
- 10 different regions. There is also tremendous
- 11 diversity in auditor quality. With one of the
- 12 goals of the NLGMA to bring you only USDA
- 13 certified auditors, including employees of the
- 14 state Department of Agriculture, who know you
- 15 best, how many audit companies are based in
- 16 Ohio and know your farming systems as well as
- 17 your own state Department of Agriculture?
- 18 Number six, small growers or
- 19 organic growers can't or shouldn't have to
- 20 comply. This is an often cited but always
- 21 invalid argument. Every grower and handler of
- 22 leafy greens must comply with basic good

- 1 agricultural practices and food safety
- 2 standards to protect the health of our
- 3 consumers. Making one person sick at a
- 4 roadside stand is no more acceptable than
- 5 contamination in a product that goes to all 50
- 6 states. Food safety is not an option, every
- 7 grower must ensure that water meets
- 8 appropriate standards, that soil amendments do
- 9 not raise the risk of contamination, that
- 10 workers follow proper hygiene steps, and that
- 11 animal incursion does not bring new risk into
- 12 the field. The same goes for packing houses
- 13 and processors. A small regional processor
- 14 like Freshway Foods here in Ohio has to comply
- 15 with the same standards as Dole or Fresh
- 16 Express.
- 17 Number seven, we need to pay more
- 18 attention to imported foods than domestic.
- 19 USDA statistics show that there is actually
- 20 very little volume in leafy greens imported in
- 21 the United States. Yet, a national agreement
- 22 gives us a vehicle for handlers to apply the

- 1 same standards for imported product. Handlers
- 2 who sign onto the NLGMA agree to only buy from
- 3 growers are audited against these standards.
- 4 Therefore, a US company that grows or sources
- 5 90% of its greens in the United States but
- 6 supplements that volume with Mexican
- 7 production can assure the same standards.
- 8 That actually allows for greater compliance of
- 9 imports.
- 10 Number eight, an NLGMA would
- 11 penalize growers who are already doing GAPs.
- 12 Actually, a national agreement could protect
- 13 growers and handlers who are now in compliance
- 14 from those who are not. We recognize that it
- 15 would be a change in business model for some
- 16 to only source product from previously audited
- 17 growers, even for fill-in needs from those
- 18 that you trust.
- 19 But just because you have
- 20 confidence in your practices, what about
- 21 others? Consider this, do you really want
- 22 other packers and processors buying from

- 1 growers who may not follow good agricultural
- 2 practices? Do you think there is anyone out
- 3 there in our industry who might be cutting
- 4 corners just to have the cheapest price? If
- 5 all are included, it's fair for all.
- 6 Number nine, my leafy greens sales
- 7 are fine and I haven't had a problem with
- 8 safety. To my friends who share this opinion,
- 9 I say congratulations and Godspeed. I hope
- 10 these trends hold. But, I also say, don't
- 11 underestimate the impact of consumer fear of
- 12 fresh leafy greens today. We know that sales
- of spinach have not fully recovered from three
- 14 years ago and we can only guess what, at that
- 15 time, was the fastest-growing leaf vegetable
- 16 might have meant to all of us in increased
- 17 sales without that outbreak.
- 18 On other products, we know the
- 19 general consumption of salads is flat. We may
- 20 not know how our markets today are already
- 21 affected by consumer fear. If we can boost
- 22 public confidence, it doesn't take too many

- 1 more salads consumed to strengthen not only
- 2 your sales but market prices. Greater demand
- 3 through public confidence has the ability to
- 4 strengthen markets.
- 5 And last, this agreement is being
- 6 forced down our throats. Let me return to
- 7 where I started, a National Leafy Greens
- 8 Marketing Agreement would be 100% voluntary.
- 9 No individual grower or handler has to
- 10 participate. For those who fear that
- 11 retailers will demand it, an NLGMA will no
- 12 more raise nor reduce the likelihood that
- 13 retailers will want compliance that you follow
- 14 GAPs. And clearly, the US government will
- 15 soon require compliance through mandatory FDA
- 16 regulation.
- 17 Instead, the National Leafy Greens
- 18 Marketing Agreement would provide you an
- 19 opportunity, if you choose to participate.
- 20 You here in Ohio can get involved in shaping
- 21 the standards, ensuring local differences are
- 22 allowed for, setting the funding rates, and

- 1 really writing the road rules of the road.
- Once in place, you can choose, if you want, to
- 3 use the system to demonstrate your compliance
- 4 with a nationally comprehensive standard that
- 5 gives confidence to your buyers and consumers.
- 6 And, you can ensure that your audits are
- 7 carried out by USDA certified auditors and
- 8 state Department of Agriculture employs who
- 9 know your farms best. A National Leafy Greens
- 10 Marketing Agreement leaves it up to you
- 11 totally whether to participate.
- But for those of you who still
- don't feel that the system is for you, I have
- one last request. Please don't try to deny
- 15 this opportunity to your neighbors. They may
- 16 want to be part of a national system, working
- 17 together with other leafy greens growers
- 18 across the industry to increase public
- 19 confidence in our products, and thus grow
- 20 sales and consumption to confident consumers.
- 21 This ends my written testimony.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Do you have any

- 1 further direct questions, Mr. Resnick?
- 2 MR. RESNICK: We do not.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, I'm going to
- 4 receive Exhibit 57, Mr. Stenzel's testimony,
- 5 into evidence and then I will ask the members
- 6 of the panel of the USDA if they have any
- 7 questions of Mr. Stenzel.
- 8 (Whereupon, Exhibit 57 was
- 9 received into evidence.)
- 10 Ms. Schmaedick?
- 11 EXAMINATION BY USDA
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Good morning.
- 13 THE WITNESS: Good morning.
- 14 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Melissa
- 15 Schmaedick, USDA. Thank you for your
- 16 testimony. You mentioned that your
- 17 organization was one of the organizations that
- 18 identified itself as a proponent when this
- 19 request was submitted to USDA?
- 20 THE WITNESS: That is correct.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: And, how long
- 22 were you involved in the drafting and

- 1 development of the proposal?
- THE WITNESS: I would estimate
- 3 probably about a year. We had a number of
- 4 conversations and meetings, conference calls
- 5 in the development of the development of the
- 6 proposal.
- 7 MS. SCHMAEDICK: And, as far as
- 8 the other members of the proponent group, do
- 9 they represent other parts of the country?
- 10 THE WITNESS: Yes, I believe they
- 11 do.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Can you give me
- 13 some examples?
- 14 THE WITNESS: If you'll bear with
- 15 me one moment.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Certainly.
- 17 THE WITNESS: The other proponent
- 18 organizations include the Produce Marketing
- 19 Association, which is a national organization
- 20 representing all of the states, the Georgia
- 21 Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, the
- 22 Texas Vegetable Association, Arizona Farm

- 1 Bureau, Leafy Greens Council, a number of
- 2 different organizations from around the
- 3 country.
- 4 MS. SCHMAEDICK: And was there an
- 5 opportunity for all of those members to
- 6 provide input during the drafting?
- 7 THE WITNESS: There was. In fact,
- 8 this is actually a smaller group than was
- 9 involved in the discussion phase. We included
- 10 as many groups from around the country,
- 11 including here in Ohio, as part of those
- 12 discussions, going forward.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: So, in your
- 14 opinion, was there an opportunity for outreach
- 15 and involvement during the drafting?
- 16 THE WITNESS: Yes, very much so.
- 17 MS. SCHMAEDICK: You mentioned,
- 18 just briefly, on page one of your testimony,
- 19 point one, you spoke about zones and
- 20 representation of growers and handlers per
- 21 zone. Can you explain, generally, how that
- 22 would work within the proposed agreement?

- 1 THE WITNESS: Yes, as we
- 2 considered drafting the agreement, one of the
- 3 essentials was to make sure there was regional
- 4 representation. So the proposal outlines, I
- 5 believe, five different zones to cover the
- 6 leafy greens producers and handlers in the
- 7 country. The idea was to make sure there was
- 8 adequate representation from regions, small
- 9 and large producers, to make sure that it
- 10 really did serve the entire industry.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: So, you've used
- 12 two different terms, zones and regions. Can
- 13 you explain if there's a difference between
- 14 those two terms?
- 15 THE WITNESS: I don't believe
- 16 there is. Zone is really the proper term in
- 17 the proposal.
- 18 MS. SCHMAEDICK: So, zone would be
- 19 -- is it more of an administrative term in
- 20 terms of how the country would be divided up
- 21 for the purpose of representation on the
- 22 administrative committee?

- 1 THE WITNESS: That's correct.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay. And, why
- 3 did the proponent group feel that it was
- 4 important to provide representation for areas
- 5 that perhaps on a volume basis might be
- 6 relatively smaller than other areas?
- 7 THE WITNESS: I think from our
- 8 perspective, for there to be a national
- 9 agreement, it really did require involvement
- 10 of representatives from throughout the
- 11 country. Even though they may not have the
- 12 same volume that is grown in California and
- 13 Arizona, we thought it was very important to
- 14 get the input from producers in those
- 15 different zones and make sure that they were
- 16 part of the agreement. One of the key aspects
- 17 of this is to recognize regional differences
- in production methods. That's something
- 19 that's very important and we're not going to
- 20 get that input unless we ensure adequate
- 21 representation from the different zones.
- 22 THE WITNESS: So, you mentioned in

- 1 your testimony that perhaps some of the best
- 2 practices that are used in California or
- 3 Arizona may not be appropriate for other parts
- 4 of the country. Is that correct?
- 5 THE WITNESS: Yes.
- 6 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Can you explain
- 7 what some of those differences might be?
- 8 THE WITNESS: Well, the example I
- 9 used even between California and Arizona, I
- 10 think, is interesting to growers. Where,
- 11 irrigation is used in the Salinas Valley
- 12 primarily from deep wells, but growing in Yuma
- 13 Arizona, they're taking water out of the
- 14 Colorado River aqueduct system.
- If you're growing in the east, I'm
- 16 not sure exactly what your irrigation methods
- 17 are going to be, but the common, consistent
- 18 factor is the water you use that comes in
- 19 contact with the leafy greens needs to be safe
- 20 for that purpose. So, whatever the source of
- 21 that water, that's something that the
- 22 agreement could look at to make sure that

- 1 there's adequate recognition of variations.
- 2 But, the standard itself would require that
- 3 that water be safe for its intended use.
- 4 MS. SCHMAEDICK: What about
- 5 variations in size of operation? Are there
- 6 differences in the size of producer operations
- 7 or handler operations throughout the country?
- 8 THE WITNESS: I tried to make the
- 9 point in my testimony that the basic good
- 10 agricultural practices apply to every
- 11 producer, no matter how large or how small.
- 12 And that's something that's not part of this
- 13 agreement per se, that's a food safety
- 14 standard that's an FDA expectation and
- 15 probably greater than that, it's a consumer
- 16 expectation.
- 17 The basic good agricultural
- 18 practices are not something that are hard to
- 19 comply with or that are more difficult for
- 20 small producers. Making sure that the water
- 21 is safe, making sure that workers follow
- 22 adequate hygiene, making sure that fertilizers

- 1 you use have been adequately composted, not
- 2 using raw manure, those types of things are
- 3 basic, good agricultural practices, and those
- 4 should be followed by all producers large and
- 5 small.
- 6 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Is there anything
- 7 in the proposed agreement that would
- 8 contradict, let's say, an operation that is
- 9 certified organic?
- 10 THE WITNESS: No, I don't believe
- 11 so. Organic producers have the exact same
- 12 issues that I've just outlined in terms of
- 13 following good agricultural practices. They
- 14 may use different types of products, crop
- 15 protection tools, or different types of
- 16 production methods, but clearly, you still
- 17 have the same issues to follow good
- 18 agricultural practices to prevent pathogens
- 19 from coming into contact with those leafy
- 20 greens.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: On page two of
- 22 your testimony, you mentioned that the

- 1 proposed NLGMA will allow all regions to
- 2 participate and shape the standards that work
- 3 for each area. Can you explain that process?
- 4 How would someone become involved in the
- 5 shaping of those?
- 6 THE WITNESS: Yes. First the
- 7 administrative committee would have adequate
- 8 representation from each of the zones and that
- 9 would be a primary place of leadership
- 10 involvement for each part of the country. We
- 11 then would expect that the committee would
- 12 work to look at what are the standards going
- 13 to be, what are the metrics for auditing, and
- 14 that's the place where a robust discussion on
- 15 regional differences would take place. I
- 16 think it's -- that's probably the most likely
- 17 source of input. I would not be surprised,
- 18 however, if the administrative committee feels
- 19 the need for further input. That is certainly
- 20 within the bounds of the proposal, to go back
- 21 out in additional public meetings with growers
- 22 in different regions of the country to talk

- 1 about any specific issues that they may have
- 2 a concern on.
- 3 MS. SCHMAEDICK: And, are you
- 4 referring to the proposed Technical Review
- 5 Board? Is that what you're referring to?
- 6 THE WITNESS: I may be speaking of
- 7 that but also the administrative committee
- 8 that has the handler-producer representatives.
- 9 So, both.
- 10 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay, thank you.
- 11 On page three of your testimony, under point
- 12 four, you say, as for fees, since these would
- 13 be based on a per package assessment, these
- 14 are fair and equitable based on size of
- 15 operation. Can you explain how the assessment
- 16 process would work?
- 17 THE WITNESS: I may not have the
- 18 best understanding of that. I'll do my best,
- 19 but perhaps one of my colleagues will also be
- 20 able to address that.
- 21 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Certainly.
- 22 THE WITNESS: On the per package

- 1 assessment -- and the point I was trying to
- 2 make here is that for a small producer, you
- 3 only pay the same rate for your production
- 4 that a very large producer would. So, if you
- 5 would -- you only grow -- or, you're a handler
- of 100 packages, your assessment would be on
- 7 those 100 packages. If there's a much larger
- 8 handler with 1000 packages or 10,000 or
- 9 100,000, they would pay commensurately more
- 10 based on their volume. So, that's the point
- in terms of equity between small and large.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay. And, I'm
- 13 sorry -- I thought I heard you say, grower and
- 14 handler.
- THE WITNESS: Actually, this would
- 16 be a handler fee.
- 17 MS. SCHMAEDICK: A handler
- 18 assessment. Okay.
- THE WITNESS: Yes.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay, and how
- 21 would the cost of the audit verifications be
- 22 paid for under this program?

- 1 THE WITNESS: I believe there may
- 2 be opportunity for the administrative
- 3 committee of the marketing agreement to
- 4 determine that in finality. In California, it
- 5 operates where all the assessments cover all
- 6 of the cost. So, the individual audits are
- 7 not a separate expense. I believe that is
- 8 possible, however, if the administrative
- 9 committee, with input from different zones,
- 10 felt that they wanted to have a lower
- 11 assessment and then charge for audits, that
- 12 that is a possibility.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay. That
- 14 concludes my questions. Thank you.
- 15 JUDGE HILLSON: Anyone else in the
- 16 panel have questions? Ms. Dash?
- 17 MS. DASH: Suzanne Dash. How would
- 18 a national agreement assure public confidence
- in leafy green products?
- 20 THE WITNESS: One of the real
- 21 concerns right now among the public is the
- 22 number of outbreaks that have been associated

- 1 with leafy greens products, both whole
- 2 commodities and bagged or packaged products.
- 3 As we look at the need to restore public
- 4 confidence, I think consumers are looking for
- 5 a sense that the leafy greens they buy, no
- 6 matter where they're grown, or under what
- 7 conditions, are safe. A national standard
- 8 gives all of us in the production community an
- 9 opportunity to grow and package and handle our
- 10 products to a common standard and also to
- 11 demonstrate compliance. I think the
- 12 compliance factor is one of the most important
- 13 parts of this agreement, that it really does
- 14 give the handlers and their particular growers
- 15 an opportunity to demonstrate through a third-
- 16 party USDA certified audit that their leafy
- 17 greens are in full compliance with good
- 18 agricultural practices. That's something that
- 19 we don't have in our industry right now with
- 20 the myriad number of auditors and private-
- 21 sector auditors, all kind-of operating on
- 22 different standards. So the ability to have

- 1 one approach that's nationally representative
- 2 to certify against USDA auditors, we think,
- 3 would be very helpful.
- 4 MS. DASH: And, the other question
- 5 I had was, can you talk a little bit about
- 6 United Fresh -- if you can describe your
- 7 membership by the type of companies and
- 8 individual who would become members, and if
- 9 you have any information about -- by regions
- 10 in the country?
- 11 THE WITNESS: I may have to get
- 12 you some further information. I can provide
- as much detail as you might like, if that's
- 14 appropriate, for the judge. But, just in
- 15 general, about 1200 member companies. These
- 16 are all throughout the produce supply chain,
- 17 growers, packers, shippers, processors, on
- 18 through to wholesalers, retailers, and even
- 19 some food service companies. I would say
- 20 probably 70% of that membership is on the
- 21 supply side of the produce industry, so the
- 22 actual producers, growers, shippers, packers,

- 1 and fresh processors. Here in Ohio we have
- 2 about 50 member companies, and that includes
- 3 some of the larger growers here. And it's a
- 4 regionally diverse membership pretty much
- 5 based upon the larger production areas, that's
- 6 what the concentration of membership would be.
- 7 MS. DASH: Thank you.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Ms. Carter?
- 9 MS. CARTER: Good morning,
- 10 Antoinette Carter, with the USDA. Just -- I
- 11 guess, just a follow-up question from the
- 12 questions Susan -- Ms. Dash just asked. With
- 13 regards to your membership, do you know how
- 14 many of those growers and/or companies are
- 15 engaged in leafy green production?
- 16 THE WITNESS: I don't have that
- 17 number. Certainly, from an estimate purpose,
- 18 the majority of the leafy greens production
- 19 and volume would be members of our
- 20 association.
- 21 MS. CARTER: And, do you have any
- 22 sense of the size of those growing operations,

- 1 if they're considered small growers and/or
- 2 large?
- THE WITNESS: I think it varies.
- 4 There are -- just on a volume basis, I think
- 5 the USDA statistics would indicate that leafy
- 6 greens production is pretty concentrated. So,
- 7 it -- overall volume of the country falls
- 8 within larger operations. But we do include
- 9 in our membership many of the smaller
- 10 organizations that are in the east: Georgia,
- 11 North Carolina, some cabbage producers all the
- 12 way up the coast, New York, that area, who
- 13 were smaller farms.
- MS. CARTER: On page one of your
- 15 prepared statement, you discussed a little bit
- 16 about the administrative committee under the
- 17 proposal. Could you talk about producer and
- 18 handler representation? Under the proposal,
- 19 there is also -- it also provides for
- 20 representation of the retail food service
- 21 sector as well as a public member and importer
- 22 representation. Could you explain why that's

- 1 beneficial and an important component?
- 2 THE WITNESS: Speaking in general
- 3 about the whole committee makeup, I've already
- 4 addressed the regional importance of getting
- 5 representation from each of the regions in the
- 6 country. I think between the handlers and the
- 7 producer, that's also important. This is a
- 8 handler marketing agreement, that's who would
- 9 actually pay the fees and choose to be
- 10 involved, but at the same time we recognize
- 11 that the growers who sell to those handlers
- 12 are going to be impacted by it. So that's
- important that the producers themselves, even
- 14 though they're not paying or they're not a
- 15 signatory to the agreement, that they would
- 16 have a place at this table as well. In terms
- of having a public member, a retailer, an
- 18 importer, again, those are stakeholders in
- 19 this entire effort. We're looking at a leafy
- 20 greens agreement as a way to bring the
- 21 industry together to do the very best job we
- 22 possibly can, to get input from all the key

- 1 stakeholders, and I think that's why you have
- 2 such a wide representation.
- 3 MS. CARTER: I guess, just one
- 4 final question. You mentioned in your
- 5 prepared statement that imports would be
- 6 covered under the proposed agreements. What
- 7 in the proposal provides for consideration of
- 8 differences in production and growing
- 9 practices in those foreign regions? How would
- 10 that be accounted for?
- 11 THE WITNESS: The basic way
- 12 imports would come under this agreement would
- 13 be through the handlers. So, if a US-based
- 14 handler is a signatory to the agreement, they
- 15 would agree to purchase their leafy greens
- 16 from companies that have been audited
- 17 according to these standards. So in that
- 18 case, whether it was grown in Mexico or
- 19 Canada, they would have to have a similar
- 20 audit to demonstrate compliance with the same
- 21 standards. So, that's really the methodology
- 22 by which imports would be included.

- 1 MS. CARTER: Okay. Well, I have
- 2 one more follow-up question. In your
- 3 testimony you state that the proposal
- 4 addresses, I guess, minimizing the risk of
- 5 contamination at the field level. How would
- 6 that -- the proposal minimize that risk that
- 7 others -- areas within the chain?
- 8 THE WITNESS: That's a good
- 9 question, I'm not real sure that I can answer
- 10 that myself, but I might ask a colleague to
- 11 speak specifically about upstream
- 12 requirements.
- MS. CARTER: Okay, thank you.
- 14 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from
- 15 the panel? Mr. Souza?
- MR. SOUZA: Anthony Souza, USDA.
- 17 Good morning, Mr. Stenzel.
- 18 THE WITNESS: Good morning.
- 19 MR. SOUZA: One quick question. On
- 20 your written statement on page two, you speak
- 21 about, you think it's wise that the
- 22 realization that mandatory GAPs is going to

- 1 come. Why do you think it's important to go
- 2 forth with a national leafy green program?
- THE WITNESS: I think that's a
- 4 very good question. We firmly believe, and
- 5 FDA has made it clear, that they are moving
- 6 forward to propose mandatory regulations for
- 7 leafy greens production and handling. As we
- 8 look at a marketing agreement at this point in
- 9 time, it really gives the industry an
- 10 opportunity to be ahead of that game, to be
- involved in making sure that we have adequate
- 12 input into the process of what those good
- 13 agricultural practices should be, the
- 14 standards that are being set, and then finally
- in demonstrating our compliance. We envision
- 16 a point down the road where after FDA does
- 17 have mandatory regulations, we may still be in
- 18 a situation where the leafy greens industry
- 19 chooses to participate in a marketing
- 20 agreement such as this in order to demonstrate
- 21 our compliance with FDA regulations. One of
- 22 the key principles that we have voiced

- 1 throughout this process is that FDA is the
- 2 public health agency of the US government that
- 3 has primacy on setting health standards.
- 4 We're not trying to usurp that role in any
- 5 possible way. FDA is the one that is going to
- 6 tell us what the standards for leafy greens
- 7 should be. The marketing agreement is very
- 8 clear that it will follow whatever FDA comes
- 9 up with, but it does provide all of us in the
- 10 industry an opportunity to demonstrate our
- 11 compliance with what are going to be public
- 12 health standards that are mandatory for
- 13 everyone.
- 14 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from
- 15 the panel? Any other questions for this
- 16 witness? Any redire -- Oh, you need to come
- 17 up and identify -- to the microphone and
- 18 identify yourself, and then ask your question.
- 19 EXAMINATION BY THE PUBLIC
- MS. WALDEN: Good morning.
- 21 THE WITNESS: Good morning.
- MS. WALDEN: My name is Natalie

- 1 Campbell Walden, and I don't know if you -- I
- 2 wanted to ask if, in looking at the sales
- 3 being flat in creating this marketing thing,
- 4 how have you looked at -- in California, how
- 5 much the impact of the new local surge of
- 6 people's interest in exactly where their food
- 7 is coming from, because organic farmers are
- 8 put under very strict safety -- mandatory --
- 9 position to grow and people -- is there an
- 10 impact on your sales because of people going
- 11 to their local farmer because they know where
- 12 it comes from, rather than because of the
- incident in 2006? That is my question.
- 14 THE WITNESS: No, the sales
- 15 numbers that I referenced were national total
- 16 sales of spinach So, that would include local
- 17 farms, small farms as well as big. I will
- 18 suggest this, however, that we are strongly
- 19 supportive of local agriculture and local
- 20 farms and organic farms. We really think that
- 21 the growth of support and interest in knowing
- 22 your farmer and know your food -- those areas,

- 1 that is, those are good things for our
- 2 industry.
- 3 MS. CARTER: Judge Hillson, if she
- 4 could spell her name for the record?
- 5 MS. WALDEN: It's N-A-T-A-L-I-E,
- 6 Campbell as in soup, C-A-M-P-B-E-L-L, and
- 7 Walden, W-A-L-D-E-N, as in pond or book.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Thank you. Do we
- 9 have any redirect, Mr. Resnick?
- 10 MR. RESNICK: No, Your Honor.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, thanks for
- 12 testifying.
- THE WITNESS: Thank you.
- JUDGE HILLSON: You may step down,
- 15 and you may call your next witness.
- MR. RESNICK: The proponent group
- 17 calls Ray Gilmer.
- 18 JUDGE HILLSON: While Mr. Gilmer
- 19 is passing out his statements, I just want to
- 20 remind everyone that even though this hearing
- 21 is supposed to end at five o'clock, we only
- 22 have one day in Columbus. I see a lot of

- 1 people here, I don't know how many of them are
- 2 going to testify. We'll go until the hearing
- 3 is done, within reason. And if -- when we
- 4 take our morning break in about an hour or so.
- 5 If the people who need to testify earlier
- 6 rather than later, who have a plane to catch
- 7 or whatever, just let me know and we'll get
- 8 you in earlier rather than later. I think Mr.
- 9 Resnick, just told me he has just three
- 10 witnesses to call, although that might've
- 11 changed since I last talked to them.
- MR. RESNICK: No, it's still three,
- 13 Your Honor.
- JUDGE HILLSON: So, after the
- 15 proponents call their witnesses, anyone else
- 16 will be able to testify and I'll try to --
- 17 we'll try to work everyone in. I don't know
- 18 how many of you are watching, and how many of
- 19 you are testifying, but I'll find out soon.
- So, you don't have a written
- 21 statement, you just have a document.
- 22 MR. GILMER: Just a document that

- 1 I would like to read from the first couple of
- 2 paragraphs of that.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Let me swear you
- 4 in first.
- 5 Whereupon,
- 6 RAY GILMER
- 7 having been first duly sworn, was
- 8 called as a witness herein, was examined and
- 9 testified as follows:
- 10 EXAMINATION DIRECT
- 11 Please state your name and spell
- 12 it for the record.
- 13 THE WITNESS: Ray Gilmer, R-A-Y G-
- $14 \quad I-L-M-E-R$.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, and you
- 16 handed me a document which is from the
- 17 Washington Post it looks like, and you want me
- 18 to mark that as Exhibit 58?
- 19 JUDGE HILLSON: Yes Your Honor.
- THE WITNESS: Okay.
- 21 (Whereupon, Exhibit 58 was marked
- for identification.)

- 1 THE WITNESS: And I apologize for
- 2 not having more copies. It was pulled off
- 3 this morning's Washington Post website. I
- 4 would be happy to provide additional copies
- 5 later.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, do you have
- 7 a -- so, you just want to --
- 8 THE WITNESS: Just a brief
- 9 statement, and then I'll call attention to
- 10 this article in the Washington Post website
- 11 that looked -- that would be the extent of the
- 12 testimony.
- 13 JUDGE HILLSON: Go right ahead.
- 14 THE WITNESS: Good morning and
- 15 thank you. I just wanted to raise awareness
- 16 of leafy greens in the news, unfortunately.
- 17 The Center for Science in Public Interest is
- 18 making an announcement later today at 11
- 19 o'clock making public a report, as they are
- 20 known to do on a regular basis, to raise
- 21 awareness about certain food safety issues.
- 22 I'm sure, you may know, the Center for Science

- 1 in Public Interest as the food police.
- 2 They've been in the news for the past few
- 3 years. They've issued a new report that was
- 4 made public to the media yesterday and is
- 5 being posted on their website at 11 o'clock
- 6 today. The Washington Post has a story that's
- 7 posted on their website that I pulled up this
- 8 morning. Your Honor, I would like to read the
- 9 first three paragraphs of the story for -- as
- 10 part of my testimony, if that's all right.
- 11 JUDGE HILLSON: That's all right,
- 12 you can go ahead and do that.
- 13 THE WITNESS: From the Washington
- 14 Post today: healthy foods carry hidden
- 15 dangers, new study finds. The first three
- 16 paragraphs of the story. Leafy greens,
- 17 tomatoes and berries, they are packed with
- 18 vitamins and showcased by nutritionists as
- 19 healthful foods that Americans should eat
- 20 regularly. They're also among the 10 foods
- 21 most likely to make you sick, according to a
- 22 nonprofit research group's analysis.

- 1 Researchers analyzed federal data collected
- 2 since 1990 to identify the foods regulated by
- 3 the Food and Drug Administration that caused
- 4 the largest numbers of food-borne illness
- 5 outbreaks. The 10 riskiest foods were, in
- 6 descending order, leafy greens, eggs, tuna,
- 7 oysters, potatoes, cheese, ice cream,
- 8 tomatoes, sprouts, and berries. That
- 9 concludes the reading from that article.
- 10 I would only wish to add to -- to
- 11 point out that these kind of stories are the
- 12 kind of stories that will degrade consumer
- 13 confidence in fresh produce, as well as in the
- 14 leafy green industry. Consumer confidence has
- to be a priority for the produce industry, and
- 16 certainly, stories like this, whether they're
- 17 valid or not, work to degrade that. Adoption
- 18 of an NLGMA would certainly work to try to get
- 19 ahead of that, restoring consumer confidence,
- 20 working even before any possible legislation
- 21 that Congress might pass regarding food safety
- 22 legislation that's currently before the

- 1 Senate. And, it would work to bolster and
- 2 restore consumer confidence in buying and
- 3 consuming leafy greens, given the assurances
- 4 of USDA inspection and a national standard.
- 5 That concludes my testimony.
- 6 JUDGE HILLSON: Any other direct
- 7 Mr. Resnick?
- 8 MR. RESNICK: Just for the record,
- 9 would you just give a little bit of your
- 10 professional background?
- 11 THE WITNESS: No, I serve as Vice
- 12 President of Communications for United Fresh
- 13 Produce Association in Washington. My
- 14 previous background has been working in a
- 15 similar capacity for the Florida Fruit and
- 16 Vegetable Association based in Maitland,
- 17 Florida. I've also, prior to my service in
- 18 the produce industry, I worked for about 10
- 19 years as it should is a journalist in
- 20 broadcast television.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, let me turn
- 22 it over to the USDA panel. Do you have

- 1 questions of Mr. Gilmer Gilmer? Ms.
- 2 Schmaedick?
- 3 EXAMINATION BY USDA
- 4 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Melissa
- 5 Schmaedick, USDA. Good morning. And thank
- 6 you, Mr. Gilmer for your testimony. I have a
- 7 question about the proposed agreement. Does
- 8 the -- in your opinion, would the proposed
- 9 agreement prevent contamination from occurring
- in the leafy green industry?
- 11 THE WITNESS: There's no way that
- 12 I think that any agreement would ever prevent
- 13 contamination.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: What is the
- 15 benefit of having a system as proposed in the
- 16 agreement then?
- 17 THE WITNESS: There is -- there
- 18 has to be a two-step program process in my
- 19 opinion on essentially establishing a standard
- 20 that can be widely adopted and followed, and
- 21 then communicating how that standard is making
- 22 an impact on food safety. The advantage that

- 1 I see in the National Leafy Greens Marketing
- 2 Agreement would be that it does, in a
- 3 relatively simple way, communicate to the
- 4 consumers, to the end-users, that there is a
- 5 higher standard -- there is a consistent
- 6 standard no matter where your product was
- 7 grown or how it was grown, and where you
- 8 bought it, what form, either whole or in the
- 9 processed form, that consumers could know that
- 10 that standard was being followed, and
- 11 communicate that there is a reasonable
- 12 assurance that every possible step has been
- 13 taken to ensure food safety.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Would the
- 15 proposed agreement also include a type of
- 16 tracking mechanism or a trace-back system?
- 17 THE WITNESS: I'm not sure I
- 18 understand the question.
- 19 MS. SCHMAEDICK: In the proposed
- 20 agreement, are there requirements that would
- 21 allow for -- if a contamination were to occur,
- 22 would the proposed system allow for a

- 1 mechanism to identify where the contamination
- 2 came from?
- THE WITNESS: I confess, I'm not
- 4 sure if the trace-back or the traceability
- 5 component would be fully assured by the
- 6 agreement itself.
- 7 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay, thank you.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from
- 9 the panel? Any other questions of this
- 10 witness? Okay, Mr. Gilmer, I'm going to
- 11 receive the Washington Post article as Exhibit
- 12 58, and thank you for testifying. You may
- 13 step down.
- 14 (Whereupon, Exhibit 58 was
- 15 received into evidence.)
- MR. GILMER: Thank you.
- 17 JUDGE HILLSON: Mr. Resnick, you
- 18 may call your next witness.
- 19 MR. RESNICK: Thank you, Your
- 20 Honor. The proponent group calls Hank Giclas.
- 21 JUDGE HILLSON: Mr. Giclas, you've
- 22 already testified earlier in this hearing, so

- one oath is good for the whole hearing. So,
- 2 you have an additional written statement that
- 3 you want to read it, I take it?
- 4 MR. GICLAS: I do, sir.
- 5 JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, well then,
- 6 why don't you proceed with that statement.
- 7 EXAMINATION DIRECT
- 8 THE WITNESS: Okay, thank you very
- 9 much. My name is Hank Giclas. For the
- 10 record, it's H-A-N-K G-I-C-L-A-S. I'm the
- 11 Vice President for Strategic Planning, Science
- 12 and Technology, for Western Growers. Western
- 13 Growers is a nonprofit trade association
- 14 representing growers and handlers of fresh
- 15 fruits, nuts, and vegetables grown in and sold
- 16 from California and Arizona.
- 17 Roughly one third of those are
- 18 Growers and handlers. The remaining members
- 19 are companies such as seed, fertilizer,
- 20 container and other supporting and related
- 21 service-type companies. Collectively, our
- 22 members grow and shift almost half of the

- 1 United States' total output of fruits and
- 2 vegetables and in some commodities like leafy
- 3 greens, the percentage is far higher, perhaps
- 4 approaching 90%. As most of the Growers and
- 5 handlers in California and the Arizona are
- 6 Western Growers members.
- 7 As such, Western Growers has been
- 8 directly engaged in the development and
- 9 implementation of a national marketing
- 10 agreement for leafy greens since it's
- 11 inception. We've taken part in the drafting
- 12 of the current proposal, have advocated for
- it's acceptance and establishment, and we're
- 14 committed to working with all parties to
- 15 continue to improve the agreement so that it's
- 16 workable for all, does not disenfranchise any
- 17 segment of the industry, and improves the
- 18 quality of leafy greens offered in this
- 19 country and beyond. We firmly believe that a
- 20 national agreement for leafy greens will help
- 21 to accomplish this by empowering willing
- 22 handlers of leafy greens to collectively

- 1 organize to improve the quality of these
- 2 products produced and sold in the United
- 3 States by facilitating the development and
- 4 adoption of good agricultural handling and
- 5 manufacturing practices that will minimize the
- 6 potential for contamination by pathogens of
- 7 human concern in the field, packing, and
- 8 processing facilities.
- 9 Western Growers believes that a
- 10 standardized set of best practices in these
- 11 areas can and should be developed so that they
- 12 are accessible to all parties in this very
- 13 diverse industry, including both large and
- 14 small, as well as conventional and organic
- 15 Growers and handlers, and that the approved
- 16 practices are based on the best available
- 17 science, as well as practical and
- 18 implementable in a variety of geographies and
- 19 production environments. Western Growers
- 20 believes that a set of audit metrics that
- 21 addresses FDA requirements and is grounded in
- 22 their guidance and that is developed with

- 1 direct input from a strong cross-section of
- 2 industry under the supervision and oversight
- 3 of the USDA will equip Growers and handlers
- 4 with the standardized and agreed-upon set of
- 5 practices that can be utilized to push back on
- 6 and help extinguish the diverse market-driven
- 7 specifications and independent audits that
- 8 plague Growers and handlers across the
- 9 country.
- 10 A standardized set of best
- 11 practices will additionally facilitate
- 12 commerce by allowing engaged handlers broader
- 13 access to products that are available today by
- 14 allowing their suppliers to demonstrate
- 15 they're following these accepted practices.
- 16 That said, we are convinced that a one-size-
- 17 fits-all set of audit metrics will not work
- 18 for the industry. We strongly contend,
- 19 though, that there are agreed-upon areas of
- 20 risk that can and should be accounted for in
- 21 all operations and that specific, measurable,
- 22 and verifiable audit points can be developed

- 1 for every type and size of operation. We
- 2 firmly believe that every operation should be
- 3 employing the best food safety practices
- 4 available for the sake of the industry and the
- 5 consumer and that a National Leafy Greens
- 6 Marketing Agreement is the best method of
- 7 ensuring that industry is at the table and
- 8 engaged in the development of those practices.
- 9 We are convinced that absent such
- 10 an agreement, food safety practices won't be
- 11 developed for the leafy greens producers and
- 12 handlers as a mandate of new federal law and
- 13 that the leafy green industry will have
- 14 minimal input in that process. We are
- 15 concerned that once food safety becomes a
- 16 construct of federal legislation and
- 17 regulation, it may be politicized, less
- 18 accessible to the industry, and that once
- 19 codified, it will be much more difficult to
- 20 change as we learn more about how to be
- 21 protective, and as science advances.
- 22 So these are the tenets that are

- 1 important to us, that willing leafy green
- 2 producers and handlers be allowed to organize
- 3 to improve their industry and facilitate the
- 4 marketability of their products, that they do
- 5 so in a matter that is flexible, adaptive, and
- 6 fosters strong collaboration between
- 7 government and industry, that they do so in a
- 8 manner that ensures accessibility for diverse
- 9 operations and does not disenfranchise select
- 10 categories of business.
- 11 Western Growers believes a
- 12 National Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement is
- 13 the best mechanism available to create a
- 14 structure and framework for industry
- improvement as it empowers us all to engage
- 16 with government in a cooperative and
- 17 collaborative manner that brings forth the
- 18 strengths of FDA, USDA and others with the
- 19 expertise of industry to design a program that
- 20 works for all.
- 21 What I would also like to discuss
- 22 briefly is some of the things that we do not

- 1 believe. We do not believe, as some have
- 2 alleged, that this will force consumers to
- 3 choose or look for a branded product that is
- 4 safer. Several parties, in previous
- 5 testimony, have stated that the NLGMA, the
- 6 National Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement,
- 7 will result in a consumer label, forcing
- 8 consumers to separate the safe product from
- 9 unsafe product. This is not contemplated in
- 10 any way by a National Leafy Greens Marketing
- 11 Agreement, which talks about the use of a mark
- on bills of lading and other sales documents.
- 13 The mark is contemplated as a tool to
- 14 communicate to buyers, retail and food service
- 15 and not as a label for packages or products in
- 16 the marketplace. We do not believe that the
- 17 marketing agreement will shut down or
- 18 extinguish relationships between local Growers
- 19 and buyers who are sourcing their products
- 20 directly. In fact, retailers, food service
- 21 buyers, and even brokers are not eligible to
- 22 become signatories to the agreement. They

- 1 would not be able to sign in and require those
- 2 practices from their local Growers. That
- 3 said, it is reasonable to assume that they
- 4 will pay attention to the best practices
- 5 developed in conjunction with the national
- 6 agreement and perhaps modify their
- 7 specifications if they deem it appropriate and
- 8 necessary, but there is nothing to suggest
- 9 that they will not work to ensure their local
- 10 suppliers are capable of continuing to sell
- 11 products into local restaurants, farmers
- 12 markets, and retail outlets. If the marketing
- 13 agreement informs these relationships and
- 14 improves upon the best practices in these
- 15 areas, we believe that it is positive for the
- 16 industry as a whole.
- 17 It has been suggested that a
- 18 national marketing agreement for leafy greens
- 19 will not reduce the burden on Growers and
- 20 small business. But Western Growers believes
- 21 that there is potential for this in the
- 22 reduction of multiple audits that we

- 1 anticipate may occur as a result of consistent
- 2 standards established in conjunction with the
- 3 National Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement. We
- 4 likewise do not believe that a national
- 5 marketing agreement will increase the burden
- 6 for small businesses and Growers associated
- 7 with such a program. A program implemented by
- 8 USDA could ensure coordination between
- 9 requirements of marketing agreements, and the
- 10 requirements of the National Organic Program,
- 11 for example, both administered under the
- 12 authority of USDA-AMS. This, in fact, if
- 13 properly tailored and/or coordinated, could
- 14 reduce audit and inspection burdens. While
- 15 not specifically addressed at this time, it
- 16 would be feasible, practical, and recommended
- 17 for industry and government to develop tools
- 18 and resources that would help small businesses
- 19 and Growers adapt and comply with requirements
- 20 of an agreement. Several individuals
- 21 testifying in previous hearings have discussed
- 22 the need for education and extension to help

- 1 Growers comply and Western Growers both
- 2 supports this suggestion and is committed to
- 3 ensuring that it is in fact built into the
- 4 agreement.
- 5 One comparison that has been
- 6 brought out continually in previous hearings
- 7 is the comparison to the California and
- 8 Arizona marketing agreements and the metrics
- 9 associated with those programs. Western
- 10 Growers was fundamentally engaged in the
- 11 development of those programs and while we
- 12 believe them to be strong, credible, and
- 13 protective programs grounded in available
- 14 science, we also strongly believe that it is
- 15 not appropriate to force the audit metrics
- 16 associated with those programs into a national
- 17 agreement as the rules of the road. The
- 18 national agreement presents an opportunity to
- 19 revisit metrics to ensure that they are
- 20 scalable and appropriate for the diversity of
- 21 producers and handlers that make up our
- 22 industry. We believe that audit metrics

- 1 should be science-based, practical in the
- 2 field, specific, measurable, and verifiable.
- 3 We recognize that they may vary, and we
- 4 believe that by appropriately crafting these
- 5 metrics, we can, as an industry, minimize the
- 6 burden and cost for all while ensuring these
- 7 are meaningful and protective.
- 8 Western Growers has also been
- 9 aware that in previous testimony, the role of
- 10 industry has been questioned, along with the
- 11 opportunity for input by other interested
- 12 parties such as consumers, environmental and
- 13 wildlife sciences, and others. It has been
- 14 disturbing that in several instances when
- 15 presenters have been asked if they would
- 16 participate in the developmental process, they
- 17 have refused having instead subjected to the
- 18 mere premise of an agreement rather than
- 19 engaging with industry to perfect and improve
- 20 improve it so that it meets the needs of these
- 21 parties.
- 22 That said, from Western Growers'

- 1 standpoint, we are supportive of the addition
- 2 of these parties to the technical review board
- 3 and are receptive to potential
- 4 reconfigurations of the administrative
- 5 committee to ensure that the diversity of
- 6 growers in the leafy greens industry is fairly
- 7 represented.
- 8 We likewise believe that the
- 9 process for developing and improving audit
- 10 metrics for the agreement is open,
- 11 transparent, and inclusive, allowing access
- 12 from any individual consumer, and judging by
- 13 the level of interest in the agreement we
- 14 would anticipate strong engagement in the
- 15 process from across the country.
- In conclusion, we see this
- 17 proposed national marketing agreement for
- 18 leafy greens as a means to creating a
- 19 collaborative structure for industry that will
- 20 allow them to engage proactively with
- 21 government and other interested parties to
- 22 craft a workable program that is accessible to

- 1 a diverse set of operations, and that in so
- 2 doing, the industry is empowered to improve
- 3 the quality and marketability of their
- 4 products for their own benefit and for that of
- 5 consumers. And this concludes my remarks.
- 6 JUDGE HILLSON: Do you have any
- 7 further direct for Mr. Giclas?
- 8 MR. RESNICK: No, Your Honor.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, I'm going to
- 10 receive Exhibit 59 into evidence as Mr.
- 11 Giclas's statement. And I'll ask the USDA
- 12 panel if they have any questions of Mr.
- 13 Giclas.
- 14 (Whereupon, Exhibit 59 was marked
- for identification and received
- into evidence.)
- 17 EXAMINATION BY USDA
- 18 JUDGE HILLSON: Are you going
- 19 first, Ms. Schmaedick?
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Yes.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, go right
- 22 ahead.

- 1 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Melissa
- 2 Schmaedick, USDA. Good morning, Mr. Giclas,
- 3 and thank you for your testimony.
- 4 THE WITNESS: Good morning.
- 5 MS. SCHMAEDICK: You mentioned in
- 6 your testimony that you personally, as well as
- 7 your organization, have been involved in the
- 8 drafting of this national agreement as
- 9 proposed. Is that correct?
- 10 THE WITNESS: That is correct.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: And, about how
- 12 long have you been working on this?
- 13 THE WITNESS: Well, the concept
- 14 for a national marketing agreement actually
- originated probably in early 2007 or late 2006
- 16 as we, as an industry, were crafting and
- 17 developing the California and Arizona
- 18 agreements. At that point in time there was
- 19 a recognition that, you know, many of the
- 20 handlers in California, for example, who were
- 21 also sourcing product from outside of those
- 22 states would be precluded from doing that if

- 1 they didn't have, you know, a broader either
- 2 regional or national agreement. So, the
- 3 conceptual inception dates back at least a
- 4 couple of years. The actual drafting,
- 5 probably, I would say, dates back to late 2008
- 6 or so. So maybe like about a year's worth of
- 7 effort in the actual drafting and
- 8 construction. And, that's partly because the
- 9 idea had to be discussed and sort-of mature on
- 10 the standpoint that -- you know, kind of
- 11 getting that out there and talked about and
- 12 discussed by industry organizations over the
- 13 course of the year. And, there was a lot of
- 14 trade press and discussion about it, you know,
- in the period between 2007 and 2008 when
- 16 drafting -- you know, it originally kind of
- 17 began. Several, you know, calls with many
- 18 organizations facilitated by the American Farm
- 19 Bureau and United and other kind of national
- 20 groups, and it ultimately sort of, I think,
- 21 got down to a coalition of, you know, willing
- 22 proponents to sort of put pen to paper and

- 1 come up with a draft. And that process, you
- 2 know, again, sort of took place over the
- 3 course of a year or so.
- 4 MS. SCHMAEDICK: You touched on
- 5 something briefly in your last statement,
- 6 which, I believe, was the impetus for
- 7 considering a national program. I believe you
- 8 said that in California and Arizona you
- 9 realized that there was some business that
- 10 crossed state lines. So, can you talk more
- 11 about how the idea of how a national approach
- 12 came to be?
- 13 THE WITNESS: Well, you know,
- 14 again, the state agreements are authorized
- 15 under state law. And, even though there is
- 16 some oversight with USDA, the actual
- 17 inspectors, the actual verification and audit
- 18 programs that are employed in conjunction with
- 19 those agreements, can't go outside those state
- 20 lines to ensure that suppliers from other
- 21 areas are actually following the practices
- 22 that might be required by the handlers. So

- 1 the handlers, you know, may be requiring
- 2 similar or exactly the same best practices,
- 3 but they can't have that product verified ,
- 4 and if they can't have that product verified
- 5 by an auditor, they actually can't bring it in
- 6 in conjunction with, you know, the California
- 7 and/or Arizona agreements. The produce
- 8 industry, you know, sources products from all
- 9 over the country and internationally and as a
- 10 result, you know, it was obvious right away
- 11 that, you know, we needed to try to expand the
- 12 state agreements in order to facilitate that
- 13 commerce, and that's, I think, one of the
- 14 principal ideas behind the national marketing
- 15 agreement is it will facilitate, you know, in
- 16 a much greater fashion, you know, the exchange
- of products between suppliers in different
- 18 states and different areas.
- 19 MS. SCHMAEDICK: So would be
- 20 correct to say that if a handler is operating
- 21 in California and in Arizona, do they have two
- 22 different audits under two different state

- 1 programs? Is that correct?
- THE WITNESS: Well, it's fair to
- 3 say that the programs are operated under two
- 4 different state authorities. Because the
- 5 areas are so connected, the operations are
- 6 very similar, there's a lot of people doing
- 7 business across the states, the actual audit
- 8 metrics and the actual good ag practices that
- 9 have been established in conjunction with
- 10 those programs are essentially the same. I
- 11 mean, there are a couple of minor wording
- 12 differences that reflect, you know, some
- 13 differences in terminology between the two
- 14 states, but the audit practices are really the
- 15 same and, you know, I think that's is a kind
- of additionally, kind of, testimony that to
- 17 the fact that, you know, a well crafted set of
- 18 metrics is applicable in a lot of different
- 19 and diverse regions, and those metrics
- 20 actually work in some very different
- 21 production environments like coastal
- 22 California versus the desert areas of

- 1 California and Arizona.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: And currently, is
- 3 product coming in from, let's say, for
- 4 example, Mexico. Is that covered under those
- 5 products -- under those programs?
- 6 THE WITNESS: It is not covered
- 7 under those programs. Those programs are, I
- 8 think, because of the constructs of state law,
- 9 precluded from, you know, engaging with
- 10 international supplies. But that's another
- 11 reason why the national marketing agreement is
- 12 important, is because the national marketing
- 13 agreement would allow us, you know, through
- 14 the engagement of handlers, as Mr. Stenzel
- 15 discussed, you know, to be able to go in and
- 16 certify that suppliers from outside of this
- 17 country were actually compliant with best
- 18 practices that were established in conjunction
- 19 with the national agreement.
- 20 MS. SCHMAEDICK: In your testimony
- 21 you touched briefly upon representation, and
- 22 I believe that's representation on the

- 1 administrative committee. Is that correct?
- 2 THE WITNESS: Well, in my
- 3 testimony, I actually talked about
- 4 representation on both the administration
- 5 committee and the technical review board.
- 6 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay, so I'd like
- 7 to start with questions about the
- 8 administrative committee.
- 9 THE WITNESS: Okay.
- 10 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Can you talk
- 11 about how members of the administrative
- 12 committee would be identified, nominated, and
- 13 selected?
- 14 THE WITNESS: The forms haven't
- 15 been, you know, established, but I think we
- 16 would look to the industry, you know, in the
- 17 diverse, you know, administrative zones, if
- 18 you will, which are political constructs -- I
- 19 mean as much as anything else, I mean, they're
- 20 a way to sort of categorize representation.
- 21 But, you know, to recommend, you know,
- 22 handlers and growers to the secretary for

- 1 appointment in the administrative body,
- 2 subsequent to their kind of initial
- 3 appointment by the secretary, there's an
- 4 opportunity for those individuals to be
- 5 elected. So there's, you know, kind of a
- 6 short-term process and then, you know, a more
- 7 definitive process that comes into play after
- 8 -- assuming the agreement is established.
- 9 MS. SCHMAEDICK: So for example,
- 10 would the grower or the handler population
- 11 within a specific zone have the opportunity to
- vote or nominate members for voting?
- 13 THE WITNESS: They would always
- 14 have the opportunity to nominate, and they
- 15 would ultimately have the opportunity to vote.
- 16 But written -- the original setup of the
- 17 committee, I think, is dependent upon the
- 18 secretary's approval. So the original setup
- 19 would be based on nomination. The subsequent
- 20 setup would be actually based on election.
- 21 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay, and then if
- 22 I understand you correctly, the -- there would

- 1 be an election process where folks would cast
- 2 a ballot. Is that correct?
- THE WITNESS: That's my
- 4 understanding, yes.
- 5 MS. SCHMAEDICK: And then those
- 6 names would be forwarded to USDA for approval
- 7 by the secretary is that correct?
- 8 THE WITNESS: That is correct.
- 9 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay.
- 10 THE WITNESS: And I think we have,
- 11 you know -- there may be language in their --
- 12 it's been a while since I've gone back and
- 13 looked at it but I mean, we have sort of
- 14 encouraged if not charged the secretary with,
- 15 you know looking at those recommendations to
- 16 ensure balanced and equitable representation.
- 17 MS. SCHMAEDICK: So the members of
- 18 the administrative committee, are they at all
- 19 -- could -- are they quote unquote hand-picked
- 20 by any specific group or is it a sort of
- 21 democratic process that leads to their
- 22 identification?

- 1 THE WITNESS: I would characterize
- 2 it as a democratic process.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: On your second
- 4 page of testimony, you state that, in your
- 5 opinion, the proposed agreement would help
- 6 extinguish the diverse market driven
- 7 specifications and independent audits that
- 8 plague growers and handlers across the
- 9 country. Can you explain what you mean by
- 10 that statement?
- 11 THE WITNESS: Well, I've been with
- 12 Western Growers for almost 20 years now. In
- 13 my capacity with Western Growers, you know, in
- 14 the last decade, one of the single largest
- issues, I believe, you know, facing our grower
- 16 and handler members is the multiplicity of
- 17 audits and the multiplicity of standards that
- 18 are forced upon them by receivers of their
- 19 product as, you know, buyer specifications.
- 20 They come, you know, as requirements for
- 21 different auditors, requirements for different
- 22 standards, I think is an industry, in

- 1 organizations like United and Western Growers,
- 2 and PMA and some others, have been looking at
- 3 these. They're probably 90% the same, but
- 4 there's, you know, 10% variation in them and
- 5 it's a great single point of frustration that,
- 6 you know, there's a lot of cost added into the
- 7 system, if you will, when a grower has to, you
- 8 know, actually meet four or five different
- 9 separate audits to supply to four or five
- 10 different receivers. One of the things that
- 11 we have seen, and there's no mandate for this,
- 12 there's no ceiling for this, it's sort of
- 13 natural industry pressure, if you will, but
- one of the things that we've seen in
- 15 conjunction with the California agreements, it
- 16 is slowly but surely, you know -- we are
- 17 reducing the number of these discrete sets of
- 18 buyer specifications that are required.
- 19 People are looking to these from the
- 20 purchasing community as a standardized,
- 21 credible set of metrics with strong, credible
- 22 verification in the field. And they're saying

- 1 that's good enough for us, we don't need a
- 2 separate audit from, you know, a third-party
- 3 provider, or we don't need to have a separate
- 4 standard. It's part of an educational
- 5 process. I mean, the marketing agreement
- 6 itself has to get out and you know, extend
- 7 that information to the purchasing community,
- 8 but I think we're firmly convinced that over
- 9 time, this provides one of the best
- 10 opportunities to sort of push back on that
- 11 phenomenon and reduce the number of those
- 12 audits.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: What, in your
- 14 opinion, are some of these market driven
- 15 specifications? Are they based on science?
- 16 THE WITNESS: I'm sorry, are they
- 17 based on science?
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Yes.
- 19 THE WITNESS: Well, I think you
- 20 can always find a link, I think to, you know,
- 21 science. I don't recall if it was the
- 22 Jacksonville hearing or where was, but, I

- 1 mean, there's a notion, for example, that if
- 2 a buffer is appropriate between a leafy greens
- 3 operation and a confined animal feeding
- 4 operation, for example, you know, the science
- 5 can't tell you exactly what the approximate
- 6 safe distance would be. I think, you know,
- 7 well-crafted standards would say that there is
- 8 a lot of different things that you can do to
- 9 mitigate that risk , you know, everything from
- 10 windbreaks to controls that can be put in
- 11 place in the livestock operations, et cetera,
- 12 but you might have a standard or a spec that's
- 13 put out by a buyer that says, you know, that
- 14 even though we think buyer X says half a mile
- is an appropriate distance, you know, we
- 16 think, to be safer, a mile is going to be our
- 17 acceptable distance. So, you know, you can
- 18 say yeah there's some science behind that, you
- 19 need to mitigate that risk. But is it
- 20 practical, is it acceptable, can you point to
- 21 the fact that a mile is better than a half of
- 22 a mile or 100 feet? No.

- 1 MS. SCHMAEDICK: You also state in
- 2 your testimony that the proposed agreement
- 3 would allow for changes in metrics or best
- 4 practices as science and technology develop.
- 5 Is that, in your opinion, an important part of
- 6 the way this is being proposed?
- 7 THE WITNESS: I think it's a
- 8 critical component. One of the things that
- 9 is, you know, a strength of a program like
- 10 this that engages industry within the
- 11 regulatory community but establishes these,
- 12 you know, these best practices in this type of
- 13 process is that it's much more reactive than,
- 14 say, you know, regulation or legislation. I
- 15 mean, there are actually requirements in the
- 16 marketing agreement written in to go back
- 17 and review these metrics periodically, and I
- 18 think we could discuss whether that should be
- 19 more frequent or those types of things, but,
- 20 there is a lot of money being invested in
- 21 research today to try to inform us about the
- 22 risks and the best practices that might be

- 1 available to producers to try to minimize or
- 2 mitigate that risk and you can't let these,
- 3 you know, these best practices for food safety
- 4 just be, you know -- they have to continually
- 5 evolve to reflect the new knowledge and new
- 6 learnings that, you know, are associated with
- 7 this research and practical experience in the
- 8 field. So I think that's one of the strengths
- 9 of the marketing agreement is the fact that
- 10 these types of things can be brought back,
- 11 retooled, revisited as we learn, and they can
- 12 be strengthened consistently.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: And I -- you've
- 14 been present at all of the earlier hearings
- 15 sessions, is that correct?
- 16 THE WITNESS: Yes.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: So, you are aware
- 18 of the question has come up with regard to the
- 19 definition of region?
- THE WITNESS: Yes.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Could you
- 22 explain, in your opinion and based on your

- 1 understanding, what the term region is
- 2 supposed to address?
- 3 THE WITNESS: Well, a region was
- 4 designed -- was incorporated into, I think,
- 5 the section on the technical review board in
- 6 the draft agreement. It was really designed
- 7 to reflect the fact that there are different
- 8 microclimates, different geographies,
- 9 different production practices, you know, that
- 10 we all kind of associated as regional
- 11 differences that have to be addressed in the
- 12 context of, you know, developing best
- 13 practices for a national marketing agreement.
- 14 I think we, you know, as I said in my
- 15 testimony, I recognize that their -- this is
- 16 not a one-size-fits-all. These things have to
- 17 be tailored to these diverse environments and
- 18 the varying production practices that are
- 19 employed either for different style operations
- 20 or different, you know, infrastructure
- 21 associated with operations.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Based on my

- 1 understanding of the proposed agreement, there
- 2 is proposed language that would allow for the
- 3 formation of subcommittees under the technical
- 4 review board. What would be the purpose of
- 5 additional subcommittees?
- 6 THE WITNESS: Well, the purpose
- 7 that was anticipated was, you know, we put a
- 8 sort of overarching set of representatives on
- 9 the technical review board that we believed
- 10 would reflect the science, the industry
- 11 expertise, the -- you know, the regulatory
- 12 community, the conservation community, as well
- 13 as some of the environmental issues. But
- 14 again, if you go back to the fact that there
- 15 are a lot of different microclimates, a lot of
- 16 different areas that you know have different
- 17 production characteristics, it would be
- 18 appropriate, you know, to set up subcommittees
- 19 to provide input to the technical review
- 20 board, you know, to sort of craft the specific
- 21 metrics that might be associated with, you
- 22 know, a specific area. And that area could be

- 1 defined by a state border or, you know, it
- 2 could be defined by a set of production
- 3 practices, it could be defined -- you know, in
- 4 any way that, really, the technical review
- 5 board deems appropriate. But, you know, it is
- 6 important to get that diversity of input to
- 7 make sure that it's workable for all.
- 8 MS. SCHMAEDICK: On, I believe
- 9 it's, page three of your testimony, you speak
- 10 about activities that are related to research
- 11 and promotion. Would there be authority for
- 12 research and promotion under the proposed
- 13 agreement?
- 14 THE WITNESS: There is authority
- in the draft agreement for research and
- 16 promotion, but it's research and promotion in
- 17 terms of extending, you know, knowledge about
- 18 the benefits and/or the acceptance of the
- 19 marketing agreement itself. It is not
- 20 designed to collect assessments, if you will,
- 21 to fund generic promotion for leafy greens or,
- 22 you know, generic research for, you know,

- 1 risks associated with leafy greens. There are
- 2 a lot of other mechanisms to do that. We
- 3 didn't feel like we needed to build that into
- 4 this marketing agreement. This is more about
- 5 quality and the quality that's associated with
- 6 good ag, good handling, good manufacturing
- 7 practices.
- 8 MS. SCHMAEDICK: And, in your
- 9 opinion, is as a having a set of metrics for
- 10 agricultural production equally important to
- 11 a set of metrics for handling or processing?
- 12 THE WITNESS: Absolutely. You
- 13 know, one of the common inconsistent
- 14 observations, if you will, by the growers that
- 15 we represent is, it's important for us to do
- 16 everything that we can on the farm, you know,
- in terms of production and harvesting to
- 18 ensure the quality of the product, the safety
- 19 of the product when it leaves our control.
- 20 But nobody else upstream or downstream should
- 21 be, you know, excused, if you will, for not
- 22 taking that product and ensuring the integrity

- 1 throughout the supply chain. In other words,
- 2 everybody has to do their part throughout the
- 3 supply chain. So the marketing agreement is
- 4 designed, you know, to ensure that the
- 5 handling practices and/or manufacturing
- 6 practices can also be verified, if you will,
- 7 so that growers can have confidence that, you
- 8 know, the people that they're doing business
- 9 with are holding up their part of the bargain.
- 10 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Thank you, I have
- 11 no further questions.
- 12 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from
- 13 the panel for Mr. Giclas? Mr. Souza?
- MR. SOUZA: Anthony Souza, USDA.
- 15 Good morning, Mr. Giclas. You mentioned in
- 16 your statement that you worked with growers --
- 17 you have growers that are members.
- 18 THE WITNESS: Yes.
- 19 MR. SOUZA: Could you explain the
- 20 role of the growers in your current program,
- 21 what role they had in the implementation and
- 22 development of it?

- 1 THE WITNESS: You mean in the
- 2 California programs or --
- 3 MR. SOUZA: Yes sir.
- 4 THE WITNESS: Growers had a
- 5 minimal role, probably, in the development and
- 6 implementation of the California and Arizona
- 7 agreements. I mean, there were growers there,
- 8 but they were grower-handlers, grower-
- 9 shippers, those types of things, and I think,
- 10 you know, that's one of the things that we
- 11 built into the national agreement because we
- 12 saw that as a -- you know, as an improvement
- or, as a, if you want to look at it this way,
- 14 as a flaw in what we did in California. I
- 15 mean we should have had growers and handlers
- 16 engaged, you know, together in that agreement
- 17 because they're both kind of impacted parties,
- 18 if you will. The California and Arizona
- 19 agreements don't have growers on the boards
- 20 and, you know, there -- like I said, there is
- 21 engagement by growers, but it's through trade
- 22 associations like Western Growers that we kind

- of bring them to the table. They don't have
- 2 any voting power or those types of things.
- 3 MR. SOUZA: In your statement, you
- 4 stated that the National Leafy Green Marketing
- 5 Agreement does not disenfranchise selected
- 6 areas of business. What you mean by that?
- 7 THE WITNESS: Well, I mean -- it's
- 8 our intention, if you will, that the national
- 9 agreement be crafted in such a way as to
- 10 ensure it is workable and accessible for the
- 11 diversity of the industry. And, that could
- mean, small grower versus large grower, small
- 13 answer versus large handler, it could mean
- 14 conventional grower versus organic grower, it
- 15 could mean kosher practices versus
- 16 conventional practices, et cetera. I mean, we
- 17 believe that a national agreement can be
- 18 crafted to meet all of those needs.
- MR. SOUZA: Thank you. You also
- 20 mentioned in your statement, you spoke a
- 21 little bit about the service mark. Could you
- 22 explain why you think that it's important that

- 1 the mark be on the bill of lading or on the
- 2 sales, rather than on the consumer packaging?
- THE WITNESS: Well, there's a lot
- 4 of diversity of opinion, if you will, about
- 5 where a mark should be. But I mean, the
- 6 fundamental issue, I think, that we're trying
- 7 to address, you know, with a national
- 8 agreement is really, you know, targeting at
- 9 the place where we have the greatest
- 10 influence, and that is with the buyer -- or
- 11 the greatest, you know, potential influence,
- 12 and that is what the buyers. So,
- 13 communicating effectively to buyers that these
- 14 people are willing, you know, subscribers to
- 15 a national agreement is what we believe is of
- 16 paramount importance. We think it's a much
- 17 more expensive proposition to try to
- 18 communicate, you know, or promote, you know,
- 19 a national program to the consuming public, if
- 20 you will, and frankly, I think we agree with
- 21 some of the folks who say it's
- 22 counterproductive, if you will, to try to

- 1 create in a retail outlet or a restaurant
- 2 outlet, a perception that product A is safer
- 3 than product B. We really want people to walk
- 4 into the grocery store and know that all
- 5 product in there is safe.
- 6 MR. SOUZA: No further questions.
- 7 Thank you.
- 8 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else on
- 9 the panel? Ms. Carter?
- 10 MS. CARTER: Antoinette Carter
- 11 with the USDA. I just had one follow-up
- 12 question for you, Mr. Giclas. On page four of
- 13 your prepared statement, you indicated that
- 14 Western Growers supports, I quess, a
- 15 recommendation that has been made at previous
- 16 hearings, to include an education and
- 17 extension or outreach component if this
- 18 proposal is indeed adopted. Can you explain
- 19 or -- why you feel that's valuable and have
- 20 you given any thought of how such a component
- 21 or program could work under the proposal?
- 22 THE WITNESS: Well, I think, you

- 1 know, part of this goes back to our experience
- 2 with the California agreement. When the
- 3 California agreement was established there was
- 4 a phase in, if you will, and in the context of
- 5 that phase in, there were probably two or
- 6 three months where the industry was, you know,
- 7 fundamentally engaged in a sort of getting
- 8 out, talking to growers in large meetings
- 9 across the state, the -- you know, I
- 10 personally participated in probably a dozen
- 11 meetings with hundreds of growers in the room,
- 12 talking about the new requirements, what it
- 13 would take to comply with them, you know, as
- 14 a trade association. We came up with, you
- 15 know, forms that could be used to facilitate
- 16 documentation that might be associated with
- 17 the marketing agreement. We came up with a
- 18 kind of how-to guides to address some of those
- 19 things. I think all of those things would be
- 20 important in the context of a national
- 21 agreement as well. And while it's not, you
- 22 know, built into the draft agreement, the

- 1 suggestion came up in some of the previous
- 2 hearings and I think, you know, that we would
- 3 be receptive to trying to build that in. We
- 4 probably are trying to think about that now.
- 5 After recognizing that that actually occurred
- 6 but never was formally written into any of the
- 7 state agreements, that extension and education
- 8 program actually was vitally important in
- 9 terms of making sure that people could comply
- 10 and that they could comply at, you know,
- 11 reasonable costs and without reasonable -- I
- 12 mean, without unreasonable, you know,
- 13 expenditure of resources and time and energy,
- 14 and those types of things.
- MS. CARTER: Thank you.
- 16 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else?
- 17 Ms. Deskins?
- 18 MS. DESKINS: Based on what you
- 19 just said, as you as the proponent proposing
- 20 any language to be included in the agreement
- 21 to cover outreach?
- THE WITNESS: Not today.

- 1 MS. DESKINS: Thank you.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Is that it for the
- 3 panel? Any questions in front of me? Any
- 4 redirect?
- 5 EXAMINATION BY PROPONENTS
- 6 MR. RESNICK: Yes your honor.
- 7 Jason Resnick, Western Growers. Mr. Giclas,
- 8 there have been witnesses who have testified
- 9 that the California LGMA was somehow
- 10 inconsistent with good environmental
- 11 practices, and that it contains certain
- 12 metrics that required so-called scorched-earth
- 13 techniques. Would you take a moment to
- 14 address some of those concerns, and first and
- 15 foremost, do the metrics require those types
- 16 of practices?
- 17 THE WITNESS: I'm very familiar
- 18 with the California metrics and I can tell you
- 19 that there is absolutely nothing in the
- 20 metrics that have been, you know, accepted by
- 21 the California marketing agreement or the
- 22 Arizona marketing agreement that require any

- 1 elimination of habitat, any removal of
- 2 riparian areas, any draining of water
- 3 reservoirs, any onslaught, if you will, on
- 4 wild animals. It's just tatamountly incorrect
- 5 as to suggest that. Are those things
- 6 potential risks? Yes. Are there other ways
- 7 to mitigate that? Yes. The actual language
- 8 of the metrics advises growers, you know, to
- 9 consult with resourcing resource and
- 10 conservation experts, it cautions them not to
- 11 do anything that would put them out of
- 12 compliance with environmental law or
- 13 regulation, and we're in the process,
- 14 actually, of working with environmental
- 15 partners in California to insert new language
- 16 into the metrics and this is -- it kind of
- 17 goes to the point of, you know, they need to
- 18 be flexible enough to be continually updated
- 19 and improved to try to maybe even encourage
- 20 some of these practices that may have, you
- 21 know, potentially strong environmental
- 22 benefits as well as good food safety benefits.

- 1 An example of that might be a vegetated filter
- 2 strip, you know, that both reduces pathogens
- 3 that may come into the field as well as, you
- 4 know, keeps pesticides and pathogens from
- 5 moving out of the field and into the
- 6 environment, and those types of things. So
- 7 those types of practices, you know, are either
- 8 misinterpretation of California metrics or
- 9 they're required by somebody other than the
- 10 marketing agreement.
- 11 MR. RESNICK: Is there anything
- 12 about the national LGMA that in your opinion
- 13 would require some of these extreme anti-
- 14 environment, anti-habitat practices?
- THE WITNESS: Well, the metrics
- 16 that are associated with the national
- 17 agreement have not been, you know -- have not
- 18 been established. I mean, the national
- 19 agreement as it's proposed is essentially a
- 20 framework for industry to sit down and discuss
- 21 and to collaborate with others in the
- 22 development of these types of best practices.

- 1 And we've tried to put the people at the
- 2 table, you know, who are the experts in these
- 3 types of arenas to be able to ensure that, you
- 4 know, that doesn't happen. And I think, you
- 5 know, there's plenty of people who will engage
- 6 in this process and keep us honest, if you
- 7 will, in terms of what's going on in
- 8 California and to try to, you know, reduce the
- 9 potential for that. From our standpoint, as
- 10 you know, organizations like Western Growers
- 11 and others who's members are committed to both
- 12 environmental goals and food safety goals, we
- don't want to see that in any kind of national
- 14 metrics, and we're going to work to make sure
- 15 that doesn't happen.
- 16 MR. RESNICK: Thank you, I have
- 17 nothing further.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else?
- 19 MR. RESNICK: Yes your honor.
- 20 MR. STENZEL: May I ask --
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay.
- MR. STENZEL: Tom Stenzel, United

- 1 Fresh Produce Association. Mr. Giclas, let me
- 2 just ask you a couple of questions. Western
- 3 Growers represents California and Arizona
- 4 growers, is that correct?
- 5 THE WITNESS: Yes, that's correct.
- 6 MR. STENZEL: And, what percentage
- 7 of the overall volume of producers there?
- 8 THE WITNESS: The overall volume
- 9 of producers do we represent, or --
- 10 MR. STENZEL: Fruits and
- 11 vegetables.
- 12 THE WITNESS: As a trade
- 13 association, you know, our members
- 14 collectively produce about half of the United
- 15 States' total fruit and vegetable output.
- 16 MR. STENZEL: And in the leafy
- 17 greens industry, what percentage of the
- 18 national leafy greens volume, do you suppose?
- 19 THE WITNESS: Well, Arizona and
- 20 California collectively account for 90% of the
- 21 national volume, and we believe that most of
- 22 the members of -- most of the leafy greens

- 1 industry in California and Arizona are members
- 2 of Western Growers.
- 3 MR. STENZEL: So, your association
- 4 alone would represent 90% of the volume of
- 5 leafy greens grown and handled in the United
- 6 States?
- 7 THE WITNESS: Approximately.
- 8 MR. STENZEL: S and you o, I know
- 9 there is a fear about California imposing its
- 10 will on the rest of the country. Why didn't
- 11 you just go for a national mandatory marketing
- 12 order and vote that in yourself?
- 13 THE WITNESS: Well, I'm -- I
- 14 think, you know, this is -- you know, this is
- 15 a construct that was, you know, debated early
- on, do we want to do an order that forces
- 17 people, you know, to comply? Do we want to do
- 18 an agreement? I think, you know, we
- 19 anticipated that the best and brightest come
- 20 forward willingly, voluntarily, and, you know,
- in a collaborative framework as offered by an
- 22 agreement. So, that's the pathway that we

- 1 took. I -- you know, I can tell you that we
- 2 are second-guessed, if you will, by some of
- 3 our own membership about, you know, why didn't
- 4 we do that, you know, why don't we have more
- 5 seats on the administrative committee? You
- 6 know, et cetera, but, you know, our leadership
- 7 believes that, you know, this is the best
- 8 mechanism, if you will.
- 9 MR. STENZEL: So, at the end of and
- 10 the day, you are proposing a voluntary
- 11 marketing agreement that requires individual
- 12 handlers to sign up if they choose, or they
- don't have to choose. So, no one in this room
- 14 would be required to participate as a handler
- in this voluntary agreement?
- 16 THE WITNESS: No one would be
- 17 required, and I think, you know, what we're --
- 18 our premise has always been that we'd like to
- 19 encourage people to engage, you know,
- 20 voluntarily in this and make it a better
- 21 product.
- MR. STENZEL: Thank you, that's

- 1 all.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else?
- 3 Okay, you may step down, Mr. Giclas.
- I just want to try to come up with
- 5 some sort of a plan for the rest of the day.
- 6 Ms. Lovera, are you going to be coordinating
- 7 most of the -- since I'm talking to you on the
- 8 record, would you just come up to the
- 9 microphone and say who you are since I know
- 10 you are coordinating it to some degree.
- 11 MS. LOVERA: Patty Lovera, L-O-V-
- 12 E-R-A, Food and Water Watch.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Thank you, and
- 14 you're coordinating, what is sort-of called
- 15 the opposition or --
- 16 MS. LOVERA: I know of some, but
- 17 more have arrived, so --
- 18 JUDGE HILLSON: There are a lot of
- 19 people here.
- MS. LOVERA: Yeah, we know about 8
- 21 or 9 or so --
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay.

- 1 MS. LOVERA: I think more have
- 2 arrived, I would like to check the list.
- JUDGE HILLSON: So, we'll take a
- 4 morning break. You'll come back with a plan.
- 5 MS. LOVERA: Yes.
- 6 JUDGE HILLSON: If there are
- 7 people who are not part of Ms. Lovera's plan,
- 8 who still want to testify, you'll have to let
- 9 me know as well.
- 10 MS. LOVERA: I was actually going
- 11 to ask about the idea of panels, and maybe we
- 12 can talk about that.
- 13 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything you want
- 14 to setup can be okay as long as we have
- 15 something -- so, let's take a 15 minute break
- 16 to get organized. Let's go off the record.
- 17 (Off the record.)
- 18 JUDGE HILLSON: Before we take our
- 19 next witnesses, just two things I wanted to
- 20 say. I know that several people have wanted
- 21 to just, like, drop statements of and say that
- 22 that's their testimony. And under our rules

- 1 governing this proceeding, it does not work
- 2 that way. In order to have something
- 3 considered as testimony, you have to basically
- 4 be sworn in or affirmed in and present it as
- 5 your testimony and be subject to examination
- 6 by the panel and by anyone else here. So, you
- 7 can't just drop a statement and say, that's my
- 8 testimony. You can certainly, when the
- 9 hearing is all done in another couple of
- 10 weeks, anyone can submit comments, and that's
- 11 all it would be considered, but it wouldn't be
- 12 considered evidence. So, if you want to get
- 13 something in his your testimony, you have to
- 14 come up front here and be subject to
- 15 examination.
- 16 The other thing is that after the
- 17 USDA panel gets a chance to ask questions,
- there's no bar on anyone in the audience
- 19 coming up to the podium and identifying
- 20 themselves and asking a question or two if
- 21 they have something on their mind with respect
- 22 to a given witness. The purpose of these

- 1 hearings is to be as public and open as
- 2 possible. Anyone who's interested can
- 3 testify, and anyone who is interested
- 4 generally can ask questions. I do have the
- 5 right to stop things if they get out of hand
- 6 or if the testimony -- if 10 people read the
- 7 exact same statement or whatever, I can just
- 8 say -- I can cut off the testimony, but the
- 9 idea is to let everyone testify and, as I
- 10 said, you know, if we need to stay late, will
- 11 stay a little bit late. I understand that
- 12 there were some people with kind time
- 13 constraints, and I think Ms. Lovera is taking
- 14 that into consideration in calling the next
- 15 witness. I think we're going to have three --
- 16 a three-person panel. Each person, I will --
- 17 I will swear them in or affirm them in, I
- 18 guess is the way to put it, and give them a
- 19 chance to read a statement each and then the
- 20 panel will ask questions of them, and
- 21 whichever one of them is appropriate to answer
- 22 will -- can answer the questions. We'll give

- 1 that a try, just as a way of getting people in
- 2 and out of here a little bit faster and having
- 3 the hearing, move along.
- So, Ms. Lovera, who are you going
- 5 to call?
- 6 MS. LOVERA: Brent Baker, Raymond
- 7 Yoder, and Lloyd Schrock.
- 8 JUDGE HILLSON: You three
- 9 gentlemen, come up here please.
- 10 Whereupon,
- 11 BRENT BAKER
- having been first duly sworn, was
- 13 called as a witness herein, was examined and
- 14 testified as follows:
- 15 EXAMINATION DIRECT
- 16 JUDGE HILLSON: Could you please
- 17 state your name and spell it for the record?
- 18 THE WITNESS: My name is Brent
- 19 Baker, B-R-E-N-T B-A-K-E-R.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, and let me
- 21 make sure I have the right statement from you.
- 22 You have a one-page document, sir? Okay, I'm

- 1 going to mark that as Exhibit 60.
- 2 (Whereupon, Exhibit 60 was marked
- 3 for identification.)
- 4 JUDGE HILLSON: And you want to
- 5 read that statement into the record?
- 6 THE WITNESS: Yes sir.
- 7 JUDGE HILLSON: Go right ahead and
- 8 do so.
- 9 THE WITNESS: Ladies and
- 10 gentlemen, it is my pleasure to tell you that
- 11 my family and I are the seventh generation to
- 12 farm on the same property which my relatives
- 13 purchased in the early 1800s. On our farm, we
- 14 raise apples, peaches, and many different
- 15 vegetables including those that fall into the
- 16 leafy greens description.
- 17 Many things have changed since my
- 18 great-grandfather built our roadside market in
- 19 the 1920s. One thing that hasn't changed is
- 20 the desire to grow the highest quality and
- 21 safest food possible. In addition to my
- 22 family's involvement in the produce industry,

- 1 I work part-time as a field consultant for
- 2 Farmer's Produce Auction in Mount Hope, Ohio,
- 3 with many farmers in the plain community. I
- 4 am reminded daily of the agricultural heritage
- 5 of these hard-working individuals. Many Amish
- 6 growers are able to trace their farming roots,
- 7 and many agricultural practices, back two
- 8 centuries to their European ancestors.
- 9 Although often seen as antiquated and
- 10 sometimes naive, or even described as being
- 11 backwards in this modern day and age, I can
- 12 testify to the fact that these individuals who
- 13 market the majority of their fresh fruits and
- 14 vegetables through a produce auction are some
- of the most progressive and food safety minded
- 16 individuals to ever plant a seed. Through
- 17 implementation of good agricultural practices
- 18 as well as our own in-house inspections, we
- 19 feel that at Farmer's Produce Auction, we are
- ahead of the curve of food safety.
- 21 The problem that I see with the
- 22 national marketing agreement in question is

- 1 first that it is said to be a voluntary
- 2 program, however, proponents are the first to
- 3 admit that those parties not participating
- 4 will not realize the preference for the labors
- 5 of their toil that those participating will
- 6 receive. Those not informed of the parameters
- 7 of the agreement might say, then just sign up.
- 8 However, a University of California research
- 9 document states that compliance costs average
- 10 \$13.60 per acre. Food safety costs in general
- 11 increase to \$54.63 per acre. The same
- 12 document also states per acre costs for a
- 13 medium grower are 159% higher than that of the
- 14 largest growers, who would normally hire an
- 15 individual for all of their food safety
- 16 compliance issues. The agreement has an air
- of prejudice towards the small farm.
- 18 Secondly, I take issue with the
- 19 exclusion of all animals, including those
- 20 providing the means to execute most farming
- 21 operations for an Amish grower, the majestic
- 22 draft horse. I can find no instance where it

- 1 has been stated that horses have ever been the
- 2 point source for contamination of E. coli in
- 3 fresh grown produce. Therefore, to assume the
- 4 metrics being applied in California for this
- 5 marketing agreement are a standard for the
- 6 whole country is not founded in science.
- 7 In conclusion, I would like to
- 8 state that the effectiveness of the California
- 9 Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement is not well
- 10 represented, as evidenced by the Ippolito
- 11 International California Leafy Greens
- 12 Marketing Agreement signatory recall on
- 13 September 18, 2009, of over 1700 cases of
- 14 spinach potentially contaminated with
- 15 salmonella. It is unfortunate that product
- 16 was possibly contaminated, but it bears
- 17 witness to the fact that another seal of
- 18 quality does not mean an end to all food
- 19 safety concerns, especially to the consumer.
- 20 Thank you.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Mr. Baker, there's
- 22 two -- I have two documents -- I have a

- 1 sticker that says from the Farmer's Produce
- 2 Auction and a little writeup of the Farmer's
- 3 Produce Auction. Is that coming in under you?
- 4 Or is that coming in --
- 5 THE WITNESS: No, that's Mr.
- 6 Yoder's.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, that's fine.
- 8 Who's going next? Mr. Yoder?
- 9 MR. YODER: Yes.
- 10 Whereupon,
- 11 RAYMOND J. YODER
- having been first duly sworn, was
- 13 called as a witness herein, was examined and
- 14 testified as follows:
- 15 EXAMINATION DIRECT
- 16 JUDGE HILLSON: Could you please
- 17 state your name and spell it for the record,
- 18 sir?
- 19 THE WITNESS: My name is Raymond
- 20 J. Yoder, R-A-Y-M-O-N-D J. Y-O-D-E-R.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, and Mr.
- 22 Yoder, I'm going to mark your written

- 1 statement as Exhibit 61.
- 2 (Whereupon, Exhibit 61 was marked
- 3 for identification.)
- 4 JUDGE HILLSON: Should I mark the
- 5 Farmer's Produce Auction -- should I --
- 6 there's a sticker. Can I just put that was it
- 7 so it will stay together?
- 8 THE WITNESS: Correct.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, so I'm
- 10 putting this sticker that I was handed and
- 11 attaching that to a document entitled Farmer's
- 12 Produce Auction Growers Code of Excellence,
- 13 Seal of Quality, Guiding Principles. And I'm
- 14 going to mark that as Exhibit 62.
- 15 (Whereupon, Exhibit 62 was marked
- for identification.)
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, if you want
- 18 to read your written statement statement, go
- 19 ahead and do so sir.
- 20 THE WITNESS: Greetings to all. I
- 21 am Raymond Yoder. We have a family of six
- 22 children. We grow vegetables and berries on

- 1 our 20 acre farm in Fredericksburg, Ohio. All
- 2 our vegetables and berries are sold by the
- 3 auction method. At Farmer's Produce Auction,
- 4 Mount Hope, Ohio. The growers for the 66
- 5 auctions that are spread across the Midwest
- 6 consist of mostly Amish growers. The smaller
- 7 auctions have 50 growers and the larger ones
- 8 have from 5- to 600 growers. These auctions
- 9 all have mostly Amish and Mennonite growers
- 10 that use horse and buggy for their source of
- 11 transportation. These growers also use the
- 12 horses for their source of power in the
- 13 produce field.
- When we add up these numbers, we
- 15 find that over 20,000 family farms could be
- 16 directly affected if the California leafy
- 17 greens proposal laws -- rules would become
- 18 law. We are quite concerned about food safety
- 19 and we want to do all that we can to provide
- 20 safe food.
- I feel we can achieve this by
- 22 education and adapting to the GAPs program now

- 1 available. I feel we need a state by state,
- 2 and also a tier program in order to make it
- 3 possible for us small growers to participate.
- 4 A one-size-fits-all program will not work
- 5 simply because of the many differences in
- 6 production practices. If the leaf --
- 7 California leafy greens mar -- proposal rules
- 8 would become the marketing agreement across
- 9 the US, it would cause financial hardship for
- 10 many Amish families that now grow vegetables
- 11 for their income. I feel we need scientific
- 12 research, common sense, and look at every
- 13 angle, to set up a food safety program that
- 14 can be viable for all of us that are
- 15 concerned.
- 16 Thank you for having a hearing in
- 17 Columbus.
- 18 JUDGE HILLSON: Thank you for your
- 19 testimony. Would you pass your microphone
- 20 down and we'll --
- 21 Whereupon,
- 22 LLOYD SCHROCK

- 1 having been first duly sworn, was
- 2 called as a witness herein, was examined and
- 3 testified as follows:
- 4 EXAMINATION DIRECT
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, could you
- 6 please state your name and spell for the
- 7 record?
- 8 THE WITNESS: Lloyd Schrock,
- 9 that's L-L-O-Y-D S-C-H-R-O-C-K.
- 10 JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, and Mr.
- 11 Schrock, I'm going to mark your written
- 12 statement as Exhibit 62.
- 13 (Whereupon, Exhibit 63 was marked
- for identification.)
- 15 JUDGE HILLSON: And I assume you
- 16 want to read it into the record. Go right
- 17 ahead and do so.
- 18 THE WITNESS: I'm Lloyd Schrock
- 19 and I, as well as several of my family, are
- 20 produce growers in the bluegrass region of
- 21 central Kentucky. I'm also chairman of the
- 22 board for the Lincoln County Produce Auction,

- 1 which serves about 200 small- and medium-size
- 2 produce growers and Lincoln and surrounding
- 3 counties. Our concern is that the food safety
- 4 guidelines proposed by the California leafy
- 5 greens agreement would seriously hinder the
- 6 livelihood of many of our growers. We do have
- 7 a real concern about food safety and would
- 8 like to see and support a set of guidelines
- 9 tailored to fit the needs of our area and
- 10 situation. We are one of the produce auctions
- 11 mentioned by Raymond Yoder and would support
- 12 the guidelines he has presented.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, thank you
- 14 and I erred slightly. I should have marked
- 15 your document as Exhibit 63. I have corrected
- 16 that.
- 17 So, I have Exhibit 60 which is Mr.
- 18 Baker's statement, I have 61, which is Mr.
- 19 Yoder's statement, I have 62, which is the
- 20 Farmer's Produce Auction principles, and I
- 21 have 63, which is Mr. Schrock's statement.
- 22 And I'm admitting those for documents --

- 1 excuse me, receiving those four documents into
- 2 evidence.
- 3 (Whereupon, Exhibits 60-63 were
- 4 received into evidence.)
- 5 JUDGE HILLSON: And at this point
- 6 I will ask the USDA panel if they have any
- 7 questions of these witnesses and to identify
- 8 who they're talking to, so they'll know to
- 9 answer. Ms. Schmaedick, go right ahead.
- 10 EXAMINATION BY USDA
- 11 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Melissa
- 12 Schmaedick, USDA. Good morning, and thank
- 13 you, all three of you, for your testimony. I
- 14 would like to start out by directing my
- 15 questions to Mr. Yoder and Mr. Schrock. My
- 16 first question is, in your prepared
- 17 statements, you identified the California
- 18 leafy greens proposal, and I'm a bit confused
- 19 because the proposal that we are discussing
- 20 today is for the National Leafy Greens
- 21 Marketing Agreement. Do you understand that
- 22 there is a difference?

- 1 MR. YODER: I'm sorry if I got
- 2 that wrong. I guess I didn't understand there
- 3 was a difference in the two and it's very
- 4 possible that being naive to this, I did not
- 5 realize that I may not have been addressing
- 6 the correct agreement.
- 7 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Have you had a
- 8 chance to read the proposed language for the
- 9 national program?
- MR. YODER: Yes, I have had the
- 11 chance.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: And, based on
- 13 your understanding of the proposed language,
- 14 is there anything that would indicate that the
- 15 California program would be imposed in Ohio?
- MR. YODER: My take, or the way I
- 17 interpreted it as, would be that it would not
- 18 fit, such as buffer strips and numerous other
- 19 things such as animal intrusion was what I
- 20 would be referring to that would not fit for
- 21 us small family farms where we may have other
- 22 animals on the farm other than horses, and we

- 1 would also use the horses for our source of
- 2 power as I stated, which was my understanding
- 3 that those would possibly be eliminated from
- 4 from being in the fields.
- 5 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Based on your
- 6 understanding of the proposed language as
- 7 submitted, does it specifically state that
- 8 those items would be prohibited?
- 9 MR. YODER: Not directly, but my
- 10 understanding, or again as I interpreted it,
- 11 it would be -- I understood it to be
- 12 indirectly connected to those items. And like
- 13 I stated, maybe I did misunderstand it.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: The proposed
- 15 language provides for a technical review board
- 16 and subcommittees underneath the technical
- 17 review board. And, based on my understanding
- 18 and previous testimonies, there would be
- 19 opportunity for representatives from differing
- 20 production areas to participate in the
- 21 development of metrics. If that were the
- 22 case, would you be willing to participate?

- 1 MR. YODER: I would be willing to
- 2 participate in in what ever I can be of help
- 3 in to represent the small family farm, or we
- 4 could say, the plain people. Yes, I would be
- 5 willing to.
- 6 MS. SCHMAEDICK: In your testimony
- 7 you mention -- you state that we need a state-
- 8 by-state and also a tier program. Can you
- 9 explain what you mean by a tier program?
- 10 MR. YODER: What I mean by the tier
- 11 program would be that small growers -- and I'm
- 12 sure that my terminology as a small grower may
- 13 not be what someone else would state as a
- 14 small grower. A small grower in my situation,
- 15 may be a quarter or 1/2 acre grower. My tier
- 16 program that I was anticipating that might
- 17 work would be that it would be divided into
- 18 different size farms would qualify for
- 19 different tiers.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: So, am I
- 21 understanding you correctly that there would
- 22 be a -- depending on the size of the

- 1 operation, there might be different methods
- 2 used to meet the GAP or GHP requirements?
- 3 MR. YODER: Exactly. If I could
- 4 take a minute and explain the end result that
- 5 I would anticipate to see would be achievable
- 6 in a different way. Such as, the very small
- 7 grower, I would feel, should or could be
- 8 audited by possibly a field consultant as a
- 9 third-party audit, and he may just sell his
- 10 products very locally or at a farmers market,
- 11 where the next tier might be a grower, who has
- 12 between two to 20 acres, I'll just use numbers
- 13 as they come to my mind, and, that farm might
- 14 be able to hire a third-party audit, such as
- 15 a retired extension agent or such as whatever
- 16 to accomplish the same thing, whereas the farm
- 17 -- and they might sell their produce at a
- 18 produce auction, whereas the farmer with 20
- 19 acres to 50 acres might sell direct to a store
- 20 or directly market his product and he could
- 21 afford to have a third-party audit in the way
- 22 that they are set up now.

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1 MS. SCHMAEDICK: In your opinion,
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- 2 is it possible for an operation of any size to
- 3 operate in a way that uses best practices and
- 4 falls within the guidelines of GAP and GHP?
- 5 MR. YODER: I'm not sure that I
- 6 understood. Did you say a farm of any size?
- 7 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Yes. Can any
- 8 size operation operate in such a way that
- 9 they're following good agricultural practices
- 10 and good handling practices?
- 11 MR. YODER: Yes. I feel that any
- 12 farm can follow those practices, now --
- 13 understanding that, in the plain people's
- 14 operation, there is no refrigeration, there is
- 15 no electricity, there is things naturally with
- 16 the temperature of the cooler or things like
- 17 that that would not be applicable. But, what
- 18 we have proven with the growers at Farmer's
- 19 Produce Auction is that they can -- we can ask
- 20 them to follow a quideline rules -- quidelines
- 21 and rules no matter what size the operation.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: So are you

- 1 indicating that you've been able to identify
- 2 alternatives to, for example, you mentioned,
- 3 no refrigeration. You've been able to work
- 4 around that particular cultural practice and
- 5 find a way to still meet the guidelines of
- 6 good handling practices.
- 7 MR. YODER: Yes, we have been able
- 8 to alter or to -- alter is not the correct
- 9 word -- to change the way that we do things
- 10 that they fit with a lot -- or fit in with the
- 11 good agricultural practices such as hand
- 12 washing stations, such as the towels, hand
- 13 washing stations, toilets in the field, Porta
- 14 Johns, whatever. A lot of those things -- and
- in that order, the other direction that you
- 16 are coming from without refrigeration, yes.
- 17 Our items are picked and shipped immediately.
- 18 They are not held over. Strawberries,
- 19 raspberries, sweet corn, all those items are
- 20 picked in the morning, early in the morning
- 21 when they are cold, and they are taken to the
- 22 produce auction, which starts at 10 o'clock,

- 1 four days a week, and are sold.
- 2 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Have these
- 3 adaptations added costs to your operation?
- 4 MR. YODER: Yes, they have added
- 5 some cost. They have added more management
- 6 requirements than cost, particularly in our
- 7 operation, but yes, it is some added cost, but
- 8 it is not to the extent that it is not
- 9 possible.
- 10 MS. SCHMAEDICK: And in your
- 11 producer association membership, in your
- 12 opinion, is -- are the costs -- those
- 13 additional costs balanced out by the benefits
- 14 that are brought about by your program?
- 15 MR. YODER: Yes. In our -- in the
- 16 program that we have, with the rules and
- 17 regulations that we set forth to be proactive,
- 18 they are easily returned, simply -- returned
- 19 to the grower simply because if we follow the
- 20 Growers Code of Excellence Seal of Quality, we
- 21 are able to put the seal of quality, that you
- 22 have one from our farm, on every box of our

- 1 produce. This gives the buyer traceability
- 2 back to our farm. So in turn, he will pay
- 3 more for our product, or for any grower's
- 4 product that has the seal of quality versus
- 5 the farmer that will just grow whatever he
- 6 wants any way he wants and brings it to the
- 7 auction. It is to the point we have
- 8 implemented this program for four years, and
- 9 it is to the point where there are stores that
- 10 will not buy a product that does not have the
- 11 seal of quality.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Are any of your
- 13 members certified organic producers?
- MR. YODER: No.
- 15 MS. SCHMAEDICK: You mentioned --
- 16 I believe you mentioned that you use draft
- 17 animals in the field, or was that --
- 18 MR. YODER: Correct.
- 19 MS. SCHMAEDICK: -- one of the
- 20 other --
- MR. YODER: Belgian draft horses.
- 22 MS. SCHMAEDICK: What are some of

- 1 the techniques that you use in the field to
- 2 prevent cross contamination between the animal
- 3 and the product?
- 4 MR. YODER: Okay, the procedures
- 5 that we started using when we started getting
- 6 concerned about food safety was that we made
- 7 our driveways, which is the passage or the
- 8 path between the crop, we made those wider.
- 9 We made them from 12 feet to 20 feet wide,
- 10 and, after the crop is grown, we will not take
- 11 the horses into the crop. The horses will
- 12 stay on the path itself to harvest the crop,
- 13 to spray the crop, or whatever we may need to
- 14 do.
- The other thing that we have done
- 16 on our farm and that is, if we work with the
- 17 horses, if we harness the horses, if we drive
- 18 the horses, that person is to wash his hands
- 19 before they touch any produce. And whenever
- 20 they come in from the packing -- from the
- 21 picking, everybody is to wash hands and make
- 22 sure that everything is clean before they

- 1 start packing the products.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: In your opinion,
- 3 is your community concerned about food safety
- 4 issues or contamination of product?
- 5 MR. YODER: Yes. In our community,
- 6 the produce growers are concerned. Now, let
- 7 me make this clear that not 100% of the people
- 8 in each community think the same way that we
- 9 do. And I don't want to state that everybody
- 10 is concerned, because that would not be the
- 11 truth. But, in our grower circle that we
- 12 have, that are serious to grow produce
- 13 properly, then yes. They are very concerned,
- 14 they come to the meetings when OSU comes to do
- 15 education classes, they come to the GAPs
- 16 meetings, things like that. But, we do have
- maybe 5%, maybe 10% at the most, of people
- 18 that still think, oh well, food safety, that's
- 19 just for the people in the big cities. That's
- 20 not the way that 90-, 95% of our growers feel.
- 21 We feel that it is one of the most critical
- 22 points that we need to educate new growers

- 1 when they come into the circle. And, I can
- 2 also say that that varies from community to
- 3 community. There is areas among these 66
- 4 produce auctions that I stated that on my
- 5 paper, auctions that I visit, that I helped to
- 6 set up the infrastructure, that they really
- 7 need to have a shaking up on food safety.
- 8 MS. SCHMAEDICK: What would the
- 9 impact be of some sort of contamination event?
- 10 If it were associated product from your
- 11 community? What would that -- how would that
- 12 impact your community?
- 13 MR. YODER: Tremendously. That
- 14 would probably -- maybe I'm thinking too
- 15 negative, I think it would probably shut down
- 16 the produce auction, if we actually had a
- 17 contamination that was traced to our produce
- 18 auction. That's the way I would feel. And,
- 19 it would shake up the entire community very
- 20 much.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: In your opinion,
- 22 is there a relationship between the quality of

- 1 the product and lack of contamination?
- MR. YODER: Yes, there is. I'm not
- 3 sure how to answer this. The farm -- let me
- 4 word it like this. The farmer that is a good
- 5 steward of the land, and he has his farm
- 6 clean, he does everything he can to do it
- 7 correctly, he will have better quality produce
- 8 simply because he has better quality soil to
- 9 begin with, and most of those farmers are very
- 10 concerned about food safety. Now, we can
- 11 bring in a number one product, and we can mess
- 12 it up in the packing house with contamination,
- 13 with whatever we may do wrong. If there's
- 14 birds around, if there's dogs running around,
- 15 cats, whatever, if -- but one thing that we
- 16 cannot do, we cannot bring in a contaminated,
- 17 sloppy, low-grade product and pack a number
- 18 one grade product coming out of the packing
- 19 house. Hopefully that answers your question.
- 20 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Thank you. You
- 21 mentioned that you're with the Farmer's
- 22 Produce Auction in Mount Hope. Is that

- 1 correct?
- 2 MR. YODER: Correct.
- 3 MS. SCHMAEDICK: How many members
- 4 do you have of that particular auction?
- 5 MR. YODER: Okay, there -- the
- 6 growers are not signed up as members, or we
- 7 don't -- it's not like a co-op, it is a public
- 8 business. It is the link between the farm
- 9 gate and the retail buyer, or the wholesale
- 10 buyer. How many members? There is over 700
- 11 growers at Mount Hope Auction. Now, that
- 12 being said, about 150 growers bring in 80% of
- 13 the product. So, we do have a lot of small,
- 14 small growers. And, in my heart, that is one
- of the fears that I have, that someday some
- 16 overgrown housewife patch product will come in
- 17 and contaminate and ruin it for us all.
- 18 MS. SCHMAEDICK: I have a question
- 19 for Mr. Schrock. Mr. Schrock, you mentioned
- 20 that you are representing the Lincoln County
- 21 Produce Auction in Kentucky. Is that correct?
- 22 MR. SCHROCK: That is correct.

- 1 MS. SCHMAEDICK: I have a similar
- 2 question for you. How many growers does your
- 3 auction work with?
- 4 MR. SCHROCK: We probably sell for
- 5 about 250 growers. Again, we have probably 75
- 6 or 80 growers that are bringing in 85% of the
- 7 product. We also have the same concern that
- 8 Raymond stated, we, as a board, have talked
- 9 about ways of controlling or demanding quality
- 10 food safety practices from those smaller
- 11 growers. Because, they definitely pose a
- 12 scary problem if you we have no control, so,
- 13 you have talked about implementing some kind
- 14 of quality control for those -- for everybody,
- 15 including the smaller growers.
- 16 MS. SCHMAEDICK: How would you go
- 17 about developing those quality controls?
- 18 MR. SCHROCK: Probably, and the
- 19 first thing we would do is requiring him them
- 20 to show us a GAP certificate before they can
- 21 sell there. That would be there -- the first
- 22 step that we talked about, and we would

- 1 approach that as the need arises, but that
- 2 would be the first step.
- 3 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Based on your
- 4 understanding of the proposed agreement, would
- 5 there be an opportunity for your interests,
- 6 your growing community interests to voice
- 7 concerns in the development of the metrics?
- 8 MR. SCHROCK: I think I understand
- 9 the question correctly. Yes, there would be.
- 10 MS. SCHMAEDICK: And if given the
- 11 opportunity, would you be willing to
- 12 participate?
- MR. SCHROCK: Yes, if that's -- if
- 14 we need to do that to help work out something
- that's workable for us, the plain communities,
- 16 we would be willing to do that.
- 17 MS. SCHMAEDICK: I apologize if
- 18 you've already answered this, but, do you
- 19 currently have a GAP type of program in place?
- 20 MR. SCHROCK: We're a much younger
- 21 auction than the Mount Hope Auction. And,
- 22 we've been, maybe, followers more than

- 1 leaders. Last year, we did start encouraging
- 2 people to at least get their GAP certificates,
- 3 make them aware of what is out there, but we
- 4 have not made it mandatory that they do so.
- 5 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay.
- 6 MR. SCHROCK: Now, we are looking
- 7 at making it mandatory that they do so to sell
- 8 there. We think that would eliminate some of
- 9 the, I think Raymond used the proper term, the
- 10 overgrown housewife product.
- 11 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Should I have
- 12 them define that? Okay, so, given that you're
- in the process of beginning to adapt and
- 14 embrace the GAP certification, are you aware
- 15 of changes that producers or certain farm
- 16 operations might have to make in order to
- 17 become compliant?
- 18 MR. SCHROCK: Yes.
- 19 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Can you describe
- 20 some of those?
- 21 MR. SCHROCK: The -- probably one
- 22 of the things for our horse farmers up to this

- 1 time, we have encourage them to be careful,
- 2 encouraged them to cover their product as they
- 3 bring it in from the field and bring it to the
- 4 auction and so forth, but we have not required
- 5 that. The -- like the wider driveways through
- 6 the field, probably, that's one thing that may
- 7 be coming up that we would require. Actually,
- 8 I just got -- before the last board meeting,
- 9 I got the requirements, the little flier that
- 10 Raymond makes for their auction and we're
- 11 looking at using those same guidelines.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay, do you
- 13 believe that participating in your program
- 14 poses insurmountable costs to some of your
- 15 members?
- MR. SCHROCK: It imposes costs but
- 17 not insurmountable costs. I think it would be
- 18 very doable.
- 19 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay. Thank you,
- 20 that's all the questions I have.
- 21 JUDGE HILLSON: Are there any
- 22 other questions from the USDA panel for any of

- 1 these three witnesses? Ms. Dash?
- MS. DASH: Suzanne Dash. I think
- 3 these questions are for any of -- for all
- 4 three of you, if you'd care to answer. In the
- 5 areas that you farm, are most farms in your
- 6 area small farms?
- 7 MR. YODER: Yes. A -- the farms in
- 8 our area would be from five, 10 acre parcels
- 9 to 100 and -- I would have to travel -- I
- 10 would probably have to travel five miles to
- 11 find a 200 acre farm in our area.
- MR. SCHROCK: That's likewise in
- 13 Kentucky, especially among the produce
- 14 growers. One thing that I think is probably
- 15 hard for us to compare or imagine is the huge
- 16 difference between what were doing and what
- 17 these guys over here are doing. We have, and
- 18 Raymond has even more so, people making a
- 19 living raising a family on, say, a 20 acre
- 20 farm raising produce.
- 21 And I've had the opportunity to
- 22 travel through central California. It's

- 1 beautiful and it's very interesting. It's
- 2 also very different.
- 3 MS. DASH: USDA looks at small
- 4 farms versus large farms based on the Small
- 5 Business Administration definition, and their
- 6 definition is a farm that grosses \$750,000 per
- 7 year or less. Would any of you be willing to
- 8 identify yourselves as a small farmer based on
- 9 that definition?
- MR. SCHROCK: Very small.
- 11 MR. YODER: I think that's probably
- 12 a very prime example of one size does not fit
- 13 all.
- MR. BAKER: I might just add to
- 15 that by saying yes, I'd fall into that
- 16 category as well. However, we do have one
- 17 concern with -- yes, maybe we're under
- 18 \$750,000 gross income per year, however,
- 19 cumulatively, with the produce auctions in our
- 20 area, we represent a lot of acreage and so
- 21 have a vested interest in making sure that, as
- 22 a whole, we all protect the safety of the food

- 1 we sell through that produce auction.
- MS. DASH: Are you aware of any of
- 3 the auctions currently having GAP
- 4 requirements?
- 5 MR. BAKER: We have GAP
- 6 requirements at our produce auction in the
- 7 form of the seal of quality that a grower can
- 8 apply for. After they fill out the
- 9 application they are required to do several
- 10 things. The guidelines that we have developed
- 11 have been under the advisement of the Ohio
- 12 State Extension food safety team, which I see
- 13 a few of those members here today, and they
- 14 conduct meetings throughout the year to inform
- 15 growers of new requirements, anything from
- 16 water testing to -- there are a lot of
- 17 parameters, I guess, I can't think of any
- 18 right now to expand upon that or expound upon
- 19 that. We do have those guidelines in place
- 20 and they have helped us develop that, so yes,
- 21 we do have GAP requirements.
- 22 MS. DASH: Do you feel the benefits

- 1 that growers receive are greater than the cost
- 2 of those requirements?
- 3 MR. BAKER: Yes.
- 4 MS. DASH: That's all I have, thank
- 5 you.
- 6 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from
- 7 the panel? Mr. Souza?
- 8 MR. SOUZA: Anthony Souza, USDA.
- 9 Good morning. Just one quick question for the
- 10 three of you. The auction houses, do they
- 11 handle produce from different states, or is a
- 12 product handled inclusive from each auction
- 13 house within a state?
- MR. YODER: Okay, in our case, at
- 15 Farmer's Produce Auction, the produce would
- 16 all be very local and I can only think of
- 17 maybe an instance or two where some out-of-
- 18 state product drifted onto the auction floor,
- 19 not on a regular basis or not -- it would
- 20 basically somebody dumping their product.
- 21 Now, in produce auctions, that I was referring
- 22 to that are close to state lines, like the one

- 1 in Iowa is very close to the state line, and
- 2 yes, they have growers from both states. The
- 3 one at Accident, Maryland is also very close
- 4 to the Pennsylvania line, they have growers
- 5 from both states participating.
- 6 MR. SCHROCK: At our auction, we're
- 7 not close to the state line. We do
- 8 occasionally have dealers that buy, say, a
- 9 load of product and have more than they need
- 10 and bring some to the auction and resell. We
- 11 have a designated row at the last of the
- 12 auction, where we sell all out-of-state or
- dealer produce so everybody knows what it is.
- 14 When we get there to sell that, a lot of times
- 15 I'll make a little comment that this is out-
- 16 of-state produce or it's dealer produce and
- 17 I'll say, you guys look at it, because when
- 18 you buy it it's yours. We do have a separate
- 19 place to sell that and we want everybody to
- 20 know what's going on.
- MR. SOUZA: How about Mr. Baker?
- 22 Do you handle produce at your auction house

- 1 from --
- 2 MR. BAKER: I work with the same
- 3 produce auction that Raymond Yoder does. Like
- 4 he said, we occasionally see some out-of-state
- 5 product, but it's usually somebody that's
- 6 trying to make it move.
- 7 MR. SOUZA: If there were a state
- 8 by state GAP program, would you feel that that
- 9 would pose a problem in those instances?
- MR. BAKER: No, it would be an easy
- 11 solution. We would not accept any out-of-
- 12 state product.
- MR. SOUZA: Thank you.
- 14 JUDGE HILLSON: Ms. Carter?
- 15 MS. CARTER: Antoinette Carter
- 16 with the USDA. Just a few questions for the
- 17 panel. Could you tell us or explain in detail
- 18 what specific leafy greens products you grow
- 19 for those that are --
- 20 MR. YODER: The leafy green
- 21 products that we would grow on our farm would
- 22 be cabbage and broccoli.

- 1 MR. SCHROCK: Same here. The --
- 2 and also the product that goes through the
- 3 auction, basically, is cabbage and broccoli.
- 4 Very very little leaf lettuce, romaine
- 5 lettuce, that kind of thing comes in very
- 6 small quantities and sells very local, or to
- 7 the farmers market. People on the roadside
- 8 stand people.
- 9 MS. CARTER: And, Mr. Baker?
- MR. BAKER: At my farm, we do grow
- 11 some cabbage, we also grow some lettuce, some
- 12 mescaline mix, and occasionally radicchio
- MS. CARTER: And I believe Mr.
- 14 Yoder, and -- in describing the Seal of
- 15 Quality Excellence Program, is it my
- 16 understanding that there are recordkeeping
- 17 requirements as a part of that program?
- 18 MR. YODER: Most certainly. Yes,
- 19 each farmer has a record book, and those are
- 20 occasionally, and in another year we will make
- 21 it mandatory, that those books, all the
- 22 records need to be brought to our monthly

- 1 meetings so that they can be checked over and
- 2 we can help one another make sure that all of
- 3 the records are correct and up-to-date.
- 4 MS. CARTER: So, specifically,
- 5 what are they documenting? What's --
- 6 MR. YODER: They are documenting
- 7 what -- first of all, a field map of their
- 8 farm, and secondly, they would be documenting
- 9 who was picking what on what day. There is --
- 10 we have -- the charts, or the sheets are made
- 11 that you fill in the names of the workers at
- 12 the top and then as the days go down along the
- 13 front, you can just make an X of who was
- 14 picking want, how much was picked, and then
- 15 there is a sheet, a separate sheet for all of
- 16 the spray records, whatever was sprayed, and
- 17 this same program is also adapted by a local
- 18 organic co-op and they have -- we took some of
- 19 their rules and regulations from the NOP and
- 20 combined those into these recordkeeping books
- 21 so that the organic grower is able to just
- 22 hand over -- we call it a white book, because

- 1 the put it in a white 3-ring binder and, when
- 2 they have their inspection, that's all that
- 3 they need. They would have a sheet that would
- 4 fill in where their seed came from, if it was
- 5 treated or untreated seed, et cetera, when we
- 6 do sprays on the spray sheet, there's REI,
- 7 reentry dates, times, and also if there was
- 8 any manure or fertilizer applied to the fields
- 9 prior to planting, what and when.
- 10 MS. CARTER: Okay. And, this
- 11 question is just directed to the panel in
- 12 general. Based on your understanding of the
- 13 proposal, who would be assessed under the
- 14 program that's being proposed?
- 15 MR. BAKER: The farms that would be
- 16 assessed would be the ones that would have
- 17 signed and agreed to be part of the program
- 18 and as I recall reading it last evening,
- 19 different descriptions, whether it be a
- 20 handler, who handles, I believe it was a
- 21 specific dollar amount of product per year,
- 22 gross product per year, and same with a retail

- 1 location, as I remember.
- 2 MR. YODER: My understanding would
- 3 have been the same, that the signatories would
- 4 be the people to be assessed. In other
- 5 things, in other agreements, and other
- 6 whatever over the years, it seems like, and my
- 7 experience has been that it usually ends up
- 8 that we farmers are the one that pay for it in
- 9 the long run.
- 10 MR. SCHROCK: I really don't have
- 11 anything to add to that. Like Raymond said,
- 12 it usually ends up coming out of our pockets.
- MS. CARTER: Okay, thank you,
- 14 that's all I had.
- 15 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from
- 16 the panel? Any questions from the audience
- 17 before I turn it over to the proponents?
- 18 Okay, come up. You need to identify yourself
- 19 before you ask the question.
- 20 EXAMINATION BY THE PUBLIC
- 21 MR. KLINE: My name is Bill Klein.
- 22 That's B-I-L-L K-L-I-N-E. I was kind of

- 1 curious on what your perception is -- and this
- 2 could be anybody on the panel, in regards to
- 3 the significance of the size of the -- or, the
- 4 impact that your grower groups have in the
- 5 fresh fruits and vegetable industries. A lot
- 6 of the testimony was about how small you are
- 7 and some of them, 1/2 acre patches,
- 8 collectively, what's your perception of -- are
- 9 you a significant source of fresh fruits and
- 10 vegetables in -- within the regions, or the
- 11 states, or the communities that that you
- 12 participate in?
- MR. SCHROCK: Probably, Bill could
- 14 answer that question better than I can. I
- 15 have one particular grower -- or buyer in
- 16 Louisville, that I was visiting with that also
- 17 would order by at our auction for people.
- 18 And, he has a buyer at three or four different
- 19 auctions on a given day. He said, my business
- 20 would be hard to operate without the plain
- 21 people's produce auctions. We like to feel
- 22 like we're small, we are small but, given that

- 1 the numbers -- 66 produce auctions in this
- 2 area, I feel like those put a significant
- 3 amount of produce in the area, however, I
- 4 realize the scope of the market is huge.
- 5 MR. YODER: Yes, in answer to that
- 6 question, it's very plain to see, and it's
- 7 very clear that the produce auctions do
- 8 contribute a huge amount to the local fruits
- 9 and vegetables. In one given day, there --
- 10 one produce auction in Pennsylvania is selling
- 11 six days a week and they have more than one
- 12 week that they sell over \$100,000 a day. And,
- 13 Farmer's Produce Auction this year had
- 14 numerous days that were between 85 and 90,000
- 15 a day. And that's 4 days a week.
- 16 Tractor-trailers filling product,
- 17 yes, lots of them, but do we compare to some
- 18 of the huge farms? No, we don't. But
- 19 collaboratively, collectively, we do
- 20 contribute a lot, and if that would happen to
- 21 get shut off, there would be many small farms
- 22 for sale in our area and in many other areas.

- 1 So, total sales last year at the largest
- 2 produce auction that I'm affiliated with was
- 3 between 7 and 8 million, and there's numerous
- 4 ones in the 5 to 7,000,000. So, that gives
- 5 you a little bit of an idea. Now there is
- 6 young ones, or we call them young ones, that's
- 7 not the correct word. You'll have to excuse
- 8 my wording. But, ones that just started this
- 9 year that had only \$200,000 in sales up until,
- 10 like, September 1. If that answers your
- 11 questions.
- MR. KLINE: And, I just have one
- 13 follow-up question. What's the overall trend
- 14 when you look at the establishment of the
- 15 produce auctions, are we in an upward trend or
- 16 is it leveled off, or what's your opinion
- 17 about that?
- 18 MR. YODER: Well, I guess I could
- 19 probably answer that. I get asked the
- 20 question all the time, do we need a more
- 21 produce auctions? The growth and the trend is
- 22 up. There is more produce being grown for the

- 1 auctions every year. And, I'm not sure
- 2 whether I should answer this here or not, but
- 3 I will. There is nine local -- there is nine
- 4 areas of Amish communities and Mennonite
- 5 communities that each want to start a produce
- 6 auction next year. There is nine on the list
- 7 that I am supposed to visit, help set up their
- 8 infrastructure, set up their base, and they
- 9 want to be operating in 2010. In a way,
- 10 that's scary to me. There has been six a year
- 11 growing -- six numbers added, there was never
- 12 nine added in one year.
- 13 MR. BAKER: Just one comment to
- 14 that, Bill, as a field scout, field consultant
- 15 for Farmer's Produce Auction, I've worked
- 16 there -- this is the fifth year, I think. I
- 17 work Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday during
- 18 the week in season, and in the past, sometimes
- 19 I have to look pretty hard to find trouble to
- 20 go diagnose. This year there were so many new
- 21 growers that I couldn't get around to
- 22 everybody. I think we've probably increased

- 1 the number of growers at Farmer's Produce
- 2 Auction this year, I would guess, 15 to 20%.
- 3 MR. KLINE: Okay, well, thank you
- 4 very much.
- 5 MR. SCHROCK: One last comment
- 6 about that that maybe some of you were not
- 7 aware of, the economy has had an effect on
- 8 produce auctions. A lot of our members are
- 9 carpenters or associated with building, and
- 10 that is down. So, that tends to induce the
- 11 produce growing.
- MR. DUNCANSON: Hello, my name is
- 13 Bruce Duncanson. I'm somewhat unfamiliar with
- 14 this facet of agriculture.
- 15 JUDGE HILLSON: What was your name
- 16 again for me please?
- 17 MR. DUNCANSON: Duncanson. D-U-N-
- 18 C-A-N-S-O-N.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay.
- 20 MR. DUNCANSON: It sounds like
- 21 you've met some regulations that are ongoing
- 22 right now. You know I -- the refrigeration

- 1 and that kind of thing. And, there's a new
- 2 angle to regulations being proposed over the
- 3 board to establish them. My question is, with
- 4 your previous cultural and ethical standards
- 5 that you practice as a farmer, what has been
- 6 any ramifications or, you know, food
- 7 contamination without any regulations at all,
- 8 I mean, your community's, you know, been a
- 9 part of the agricultural community for
- 10 hundreds of years. How effective or
- 11 preventative have these new regulations that,
- 12 you know, this woman was referring to, helped
- or had an influence on food safety?
- 14 MR. YODER: I'm not sure how that
- 15 question should be answered. We as farmers
- 16 feel that when we're in the fields and we're
- 17 working with the animals, and we're working
- 18 with the soil, we probably have bacteria in
- 19 our bodies that will effectively carry on and
- 20 take care in of that apple that we're eating,
- 21 and it fell down on the ground and we picked
- 22 it up. I, however, feel that in the public,

- 1 as a whole, where the people are drinking
- 2 fluorinated water, chlorinated water, the
- 3 milk, the cider, we could go on and on -- I
- 4 feel that the bacteria is not in those bodies
- 5 to ward off E. coli. To answer your question,
- 6 I think we have to be concerned. And I am
- 7 concerned, but how much has it helped? I
- 8 think it has brought a lot of testing, and it
- 9 has brought a lot of pathogens, gene, et
- 10 cetera, to light that were not known about
- 11 years ago.
- MR. BAKER: To just add to that, I
- 13 think the concern for safe food has always
- 14 been there. With the awareness that the
- 15 consumer has today, we're trying to stay ahead
- 16 of the curve, not lag behind, but be proactive
- 17 and take any precaution we can to make sure
- 18 that whoever's going to purchase that food at
- 19 the end of the line has the utmost confidence
- 20 in who grew it.
- 21 MR. DUNCANSON: And, as far as the
- 22 E. coli, it would seem like basic washing

- 1 vegetables would take care of that. I was
- 2 wondering, the seal of quality you spoke of,
- 3 is that something that you did on your own or
- 4 in conjunction to meet these other regulations
- 5 that were referred to earlier, or is that just
- 6 something you came up with to ensure safety as
- 7 a quality producer?
- 8 MR. BAKER: The seal of quality
- 9 came about at our auction about three years
- 10 ago in answer to -- the auction was approached
- 11 by some folks with the food safety team at
- 12 Ohio State University Extension, and at that
- 13 point, we became aware of the fact that we
- 14 probably needed to do something to let the
- 15 consumer know that we were taking every
- 16 precaution we could for safe food. So, it's
- 17 not in answer to the California Leafy Greens
- 18 Marketing Agreement, it's something we started
- 19 about three years ago.
- 20 MR. DUNCANSON: So, it was a
- 21 suggestion by Ohio State University that you
- 22 thought was a good idea?

- 1 MR. BAKER: Yes.
- 2 MR. DUNCANSON: Okay, thank you.
- JUDGE HILLSON: What about the
- 4 proponents? Mr. Resnick? Do you have any
- 5 questions?
- 6 EXAMINATION BY PROPONENTS
- 7 MR. RESNICK: Yes, Your Honor.
- 8 Jason Resnick, Western Growers, for the
- 9 proponent group. I'm trying to understand --
- 10 first of all, thank you this morning for
- 11 coming today to testify, we appreciate your
- 12 testimony. Do you represent the auction, are
- 13 you officials of the auction, or do you only
- 14 supply the auction? And, I'm speaking about
- 15 the Farmer's Produce Auction.
- 16 MR. BAKER: I represent the auction
- 17 from the standpoint that our manager was not
- 18 able to be here today. I do act as a field
- 19 scout for the auction, so yes, I represent the
- 20 auction.
- 21 MR. YODER: I was voted -- Raymond
- 22 Yoder, I was voted on the board back in 1995

- 1 when Farmer's Produce Auction was started,
- 2 simply because I was one of those that
- 3 couldn't keep his mouth shut, sometimes when
- 4 he should have. And, over the years, I've
- 5 tried to get off of the board numerous times
- 6 and it so happened that I just got reelected
- 7 every time, so I've been on the board since
- 8 1995 and I serve as chairman of the board at
- 9 this time, however, I am also a produce
- 10 grower.
- 11 MR. RESNICK: I appreciate that,
- 12 thank you. Can you speak about the code of
- 13 excellence and the seal of quality? What of
- 14 the practices that a farmer must adhere to to
- 15 get the seal of quality?
- 16 MR. YODER: Everything that is
- 17 listed on the sheet of paper that I handed
- 18 out.
- MR. RESNICK: So, for example,
- 20 keeping good records, you spoke about that a
- 21 little earlier. Has any of your members of
- 22 the auction -- are they members? Are they

- 1 considered members?
- 2 MR. YODER: They are not written up
- 3 as members. But, as you read this, you can
- 4 see that if a grower comes to one meeting
- 5 early in the spring and then he shows up with
- 6 produce, he is not a dedicated grower, and he
- 7 will not get the seal of quality.
- 8 MR. RESNICK: So, only dedicated
- 9 growers get the seal of quality? Is that
- 10 correct?
- MR. YODER: Correct.
- MR. RESNICK: Have any of the
- 13 growers complained about the record-keeping
- 14 aspects?
- MR. YODER: Yes.
- MR. RESNICK: Did they complain
- 17 that the record-keeping is -- becomes a full-
- 18 time job and that they can't do farming?
- MR. YODER: Not to that point, but
- 20 yes. They complain that, oh, we're so tired
- 21 in the evening and we would really like to
- 22 just go to bed, but we need to fill out this

- 1 paper each evening -- this sheet each evening
- 2 after work -- after work done, and yes, we
- 3 compliment them for it and we try to make it
- 4 sound as easy as possible, but it is a
- 5 problem.
- 6 MR. RESNICK: I appreciate that,
- 7 and you're a farmer yourself. You've complied
- 8 by the same record-keeping standards?
- 9 MR. YODER: Exactly. I could have
- 10 brought my book -- brought my white book
- 11 along, but I didn't want to be the show of the
- 12 whole thing.
- MR. RESNICK: And, those record-
- 14 keeping requirements don't prevent you from
- 15 tending to your farm?
- 16 MR. YODER: No. It is set up
- 17 simply enough that if you're not able to fill
- 18 out the sheets as we've printed them out, if
- 19 you're not able to follow that, sorry to say,
- 20 in our meetings, I just make it plain and
- 21 clear, you better, probably better -- should
- 22 be doing something else.

- 1 MR. RESNICK: What would you say is
- 2 the ultimate purpose of the seal of quality?
- 3 MR. YODER: The ultimate purpose of
- 4 the seal of quality is to bring us all
- 5 together as -- all of the serious growers
- 6 together and provide a -- three tractor-
- 7 trailer loads of product that is uniformly
- 8 packed, graded, and is able to be put together
- 9 for chain stores, et cetera.
- 10 MR. RESNICK: Is -- does the seal
- 11 appear on the packaging?
- MR. YODER: Absolutely. The seal
- 13 that I handed to you or -- was handed out
- 14 here, just for an example, there is a large
- 15 105 on that number on that seal, and that is
- 16 our identification for our farm, and has been
- 17 since 1995, when the produce auction started.
- 18 MR. RESNICK: Can you tell me what
- 19 volume of leafy greens, excluding broccoli, is
- 20 run through the Farmer's Produce Auction each
- 21 year?
- MR. YODER: Boy, I can't give you

- 1 an exact number. That could be pulled -- the
- 2 manager could pull that off of the computer,
- 3 I would gladly share it. But, I can share
- 4 this much, there is days when we would have 50
- 5 to 75 -- yeah, there's probably days when
- 6 there is 100 bins of cabbage there. A bulk
- 7 bin, meaning, a bin that is on a 42x48 pallet
- 8 that is 24 inches high.
- 9 MR. RESNICK: Thank you, I have
- 10 nothing further at this time.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Go ahead Mr.
- 12 Giclas.
- 13 1JUDGE HILLSON: Thank you, Mr.
- 14 Baker, Mr. Yoder, Mr. Schrock, for taking time
- to be with us here this morning and to offer
- 16 your testimony. I don't know who the best
- 17 person to ask, but I just -- I really wanted
- 18 to kind of better understand who actually buys
- 19 at the auction. I mean, if somebody would
- 20 describe for me kind of what the typical, or
- 21 what the range of, you know, buyers were
- 22 purchasing at the auction -- I think it would

- 1 be helpful.
- 2 MR. YODER: The buyers at Farmer's
- 3 Produce Auction, the number one buyer would be
- 4 a family owned chain store that has 13 stores.
- 5 The next one would also be a family owned
- 6 chain that has 19 stores. And from there, it
- 7 will dwindle down to the small farm market
- 8 buyer that needs only, let's say, a pickup
- 9 load of product.
- 10 MR. SCHROCK: At our auction, we do
- 11 quite a bit smaller quantity of total product,
- 12 we will do probably somewhere just under 2
- 13 million this year. We also noticed that we
- 14 get bigger crowds, sometimes, than Farmer's
- 15 Produce Auction, which does much bigger
- 16 quantity. And, we're in an area of lots of
- 17 small towns, lots of little mom and pop
- 18 stores, and I heard the comment amongst my
- 19 buyers the other day, one of my bigger buyers,
- 20 said, I think every mom and pop store in three
- 21 counties is out here trying to buy produce.
- 22 That has a tendency to be a fairly big part of

- 1 our buyer crowd, however we do sell to --
- 2 we've had a -- several larger wholesalers have
- 3 bought there, we've got one company that has
- 4 little trucks that they send around to service
- 5 all the restaurants, and the little stores,
- 6 and so forth, and then the farmers market
- 7 people and roadside stand people are very
- 8 active.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else?
- 10 1JUDGE HILLSON: No, I have
- 11 nothing else. Thank you very much.
- 12 JUDGE HILLSON: Mr. Stenzel has a
- 13 question.
- 14 MR. STENZEL: Tom Stenzel from
- 15 United Fresh Produce Association. Gentlemen,
- 16 let me just thank you, not just for
- 17 testifying, but for your commitment to food
- 18 safety. I mean, those of us sitting here at
- 19 on this panel recognize, just listening to you
- 20 talk, how seriously you take this, and we
- 21 appreciate that. I have only one question.
- Let's think about the bigger

- 1 growers by USDA's definition. If there is an
- 2 Ohio grower of 500 acres of romaine, and they
- 3 signed this agreement, they're selling to
- 4 Kroger or, you know, to a 1000 store chain,
- 5 would that harm your business in any way?
- 6 MR. BAKER: I think the answer to
- 7 that is no. Also, I appreciate getting a
- 8 little better understanding of what you are
- 9 doing. I think you are doing the same thing
- 10 we are doing, but on a different scale to a
- 11 different group of farmers. So, I think the
- 12 answer to that question is no. Like I said,
- 13 again, the people that's got the Krogers, the
- 14 Wal-Marts, they're not out there buying
- 15 produce at our auction. There is instances
- 16 where there may be some pumpkins go there, but
- 17 we're serving a little bit different of
- 18 buyers.
- 19 JUDGE HILLSON: Is that it?
- 20 MR. YODER: I would answer that the
- 21 same.
- 22 MR. BAKER: One comment real quick

- 1 here.
- 2 MR. STENZEL: Okay.
- 3 MR. BAKER: We do occasionally
- 4 compete with some of the larger Ohio growers,
- 5 some of whom are here today, I'm glad to see
- 6 them here too. The long-lasting implications
- 7 of the marketing agreement, yeah, from time to
- 8 time we do compete, and someday we fear there
- 9 may be preference for someone who has
- 10 participated in the program.
- 11 MR. STENZEL: Thank you, no other
- 12 questions.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, thank you
- 14 all for testifying. You may step down. Thank
- 15 you very much, all three of you.
- 16 I was handed a note -- I just want
- 17 to accommodate people, where there's -- there
- 18 are two people, Mr. Finney and Mr. Zellers,
- 19 who need to leave by 12:30. Is there anyone
- 20 else who needs to go -- who needs to testify
- 21 before lunch?
- What I'm going to do, is I'm going

- 1 to call a five-minute break right now, and
- 2 then we'll hear Mr. Finney and Mr. Zellers,
- 3 and depending on how quickly they are, I'll
- 4 accommodate you after that, ma'am. I forgot
- 5 your last name, but I can squeeze you in. And
- 6 then that will -- the whole afternoon will go
- 7 to you, Ms. Lovera. So, let's take a five-
- 8 minute break.
- 9 (Off the record.)
- JUDGE HILLSON: Have a seat, we'll
- 11 give the attorneys a chance to get here.
- 12 You've got a written statement? I just need
- one. You need to give one to the panel and
- 14 one to the proponents.
- 15 Whereupon,
- 16 FRED FINNEY
- 17 having been first duly sworn, was
- 18 called as a witness herein, was examined and
- 19 testified as follows:
- 20 EXAMINATION DIRECT
- 21 JUDGE HILLSON: Could you please
- 22 state your name and spell it for the record?

- 1 THE WITNESS: My name is Fred
- 2 Finney. F-R-E-D F-I-N-N-E-Y.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay.
- 4 THE WITNESS: I represent the
- 5 Moreland Fruit Farm in Wooster, Ohio. I'm a
- 6 fruit and vegetable grower from Northeast
- 7 Ohio. I and my family grew up on many
- 8 different fruits and vegetables, marketing
- 9 many different ways including direct to the
- 10 consumer on our farm, through wholesale,
- 11 through brokers, and produce auctions. I and
- 12 my family are concerned about the leafy green
- 13 marketing agreement and the precedent it could
- 14 set for other agreements and rules of
- 15 marketing for other fruits and vegetables.
- 16 We are diligent in ensuring the
- 17 safety of our crops that we grow and market,
- 18 we apply a whole host of food safety practices
- 19 and work in his extensively to keep up with
- 20 the latest science-based food safety
- 21 quidelines for our area. We cannot support
- 22 this proposal because it tries to encompass

- 1 too large an area, has so little
- 2 representation in the implementation process,
- 3 and it appears to unfairly favor one growing
- 4 area of the country. There are three to four
- 5 distinct growing areas in Ohio that make it
- 6 difficult to even include our state in one
- 7 zone, let alone make an agreement that covers
- 8 the whole country. I understand the proposal
- 9 divides the country into regions, but as
- 10 distinct as the regions of Ohio are, how many
- 11 variations and cultural practices and are
- 12 there in the proposed region that includes
- 13 Ohio, stretching from Wisconsin to Alabama?
- I am also an advisory board member
- of the produce -- Farmer's Produce Auction in
- 16 Mount Hope, Ohio. This is one of several
- 17 produce auctions in Ohio, and one of nearly 60
- 18 spread across the Midwest. There are
- 19 approximately 600 regular growers that market
- 20 produce through our auction. The buyers at
- 21 these auctions tell us that the produce
- 22 purchased from the auctions is the freshest,

- 1 high quality, local grown produce that they
- 2 can buy anywhere in the country. Many of the
- 3 growers at these auctions are plain people or
- 4 Amish. Most farm with horses, have no
- 5 electricity or refrigeration, but do have a
- 6 keen interest in food safety and producing
- 7 food according to good agricultural practices.
- 8 Many of these farms are small, from two acres
- 9 to 80 acres, most use integrated pest
- 10 management practices for insect and disease
- 11 control. Some of the rules in the contract --
- 12 California leafy greens agreement that appear
- to be the example for the rules going forward
- in this proposed agreement do not allow for
- 15 animals in the field for any reason, either
- 16 for work or by wildlife intrusion.
- 17 There is no science that tells us
- 18 that this is good or bad. These growers would
- 19 be severely disadvantaged by any such
- 20 agreement that would require practices such as
- 21 audits that would financially -- that would be
- 22 financially prohibitive because of size and

- 1 scale of these operations. It seems like
- 2 marketing agreements of this nature should be
- 3 made on a regional or state basis that
- 4 includes similar cultural practices and
- 5 growing climates. It makes more sense to
- 6 allow the states to control their own areas of
- 7 production with the reciprocity, and control,
- 8 and acceptance of inspections from one state
- 9 to another. A one-size-fits-all approach does
- 10 not appear to be the solution to food safety
- 11 issues.
- 12 This proposal, under the guise of
- 13 a national agreement, unfairly favors several
- 14 specific areas of the country, does not
- 15 include the diversity of production across
- 16 this great country, and intentionally or
- 17 unintentionally, adversely will affect the
- 18 smaller growers in all regions of the United
- 19 States. Thank you.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay.
- 21 THE WITNESS: And thank you for
- 22 having this in Columbus.

- JUDGE HILLSON: Thank them, don't
- 2 thank me. And, I'm marking this -- I'm
- 3 marking your written statement as Exhibit 64
- 4 and receiving it into evidence.
- 5 (Whereupon, Exhibit 64 was marked
- 6 for identification and received
- 7 into evidence.)
- 8 JUDGE HILLSON: And, at this point
- 9 I'll ask the USDA panel if they have any
- 10 questions of Mr. Finney. Ms. Schmaedick?
- 11 EXAMINATION BY USDA
- 12 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Yes. Melissa
- 13 Schmaedick, USDA. And, thank you, Mr. Finney
- 14 for your testimony. Based on your statement
- 15 here, do you understand zones to be the
- 16 equivalent of region in the proposed language?
- 17 THE WITNESS: Yes.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: So, were you here
- 19 earlier in the day?
- 20 THE WITNESS: No, I was not. I'm
- 21 sorry, I --
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: That's okay.

- 1 There has been testimony stating that the
- 2 zones were established for administrative
- 3 purposes and not necessarily for the
- 4 development of metrics, and that metrics would
- 5 be developed on a regional basis that would
- 6 look at differences in growing and cultural
- 7 practices. Based -- since you weren't here,
- 8 I'm sort of restating what was said earlier.
- 9 Does that change your understanding of the
- 10 proposed agreement in any way?
- 11 THE WITNESS: It depends on how
- 12 large the those regions are, and, you know, if
- 13 they encompass a similar climatory area in the
- 14 Midwest, it would be okay, but when you
- 15 stretch all the way -- and of course, there
- 16 was not any discussion of this early on, or a
- 17 chance to discover these technical regions.
- 18 It depends on how small those are, and I'm
- 19 sure -- well I'm not -- well I guess I won't
- 20 prejudge this but if they're small enough that
- 21 it's a state-by-state, that may be okay for
- 22 that, but it appeared as though -- as a way

- 1 that proposal was written, that would be a
- 2 steering committee or a governing body across
- 3 the whole United States with one
- 4 representative from each of those slices
- 5 which, to me, did not give enough
- 6 representation to any one state or any part of
- 7 one state.
- 8 MS. SCHMAEDICK: So, if the
- 9 interests, and needs, and differences of
- 10 specific regions were given an opportunity to
- 11 participate in the development of metrics that
- 12 would be applied to those specific areas, does
- 13 that change your understanding of the
- 14 proposal?
- 15 THE WITNESS: Yeah, it would be
- 16 better, but I have worked on enough state and
- 17 national committees to know that until you can
- 18 get this down to a small enough area, it
- 19 really -- really, you can't have any effect.
- 20 I mean, you can be one small fish in a large
- 21 pond. And it's going to be a fairly large
- 22 pond.

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1 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Do you have a --
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- 2 how would you describe or define the term
- 3 region, if you had to define it?
- 4 THE WITNESS: Well, in Ohio, there
- 5 are times when we have the Northern region,
- 6 the central region, and the southern region,
- 7 and it's hard enough to design things in the
- 8 state of Ohio that would encompass all three
- 9 of those regions. And, if you get down to
- 10 microclimates, you can talk about several
- 11 farms in the township being in a microclimate,
- 12 which could be a region. So, you know -- it
- 13 just depends on how you want to define it and
- 14 how narrow you want -- if you want to get the
- 15 cultural practices as to growing season, and
- 16 we even have that difference in Ohio. So,
- 17 it's -- you can define it however you want to
- 18 and to some of us is going to be good, and to
- 19 some of us, it's not going to be good.
- 20 MS. SCHMAEDICK: At this time, you
- 21 don't have any proposed definition of region
- 22 that you could offer?

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1 THE WITNESS: Well, I would offer
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- Ohio, I could settle it with that as a region,
- 3 and go state by state region. I mean, it
- 4 wouldn't be great, but it would be good.
- 5 MS. SCHMAEDICK: And, you wouldn't
- 6 be opposed to smaller than Ohio?
- 7 THE WITNESS: No, correct.
- 8 MS. SCHMAEDICK: In your statement
- 9 you say that this proposal under the guise of
- 10 a national agreement unfairly favors several
- 11 specific areas of the country. It does not
- 12 include the diversity of production. Can you
- 13 explain that statement?
- 14 THE WITNESS: Yes. It appears in,
- 15 and all the discussions that we've had
- 16 previous -- or, at least all that I have heard
- 17 -- been privy to, that the kind of the basis
- 18 to start with, it would be the California
- 19 leafy green proposal. And I've looked at some
- 20 of the guidelines or the rules in that, and
- 21 they just don't take into effect some of the
- 22 things that happen in Ohio compared to what

- 1 happens in California.
- Now, leafy greens, yeah, we don't
- 3 grow a lot of leafy greens in Ohio. I do grow
- 4 some cabbage, I do grow some spinach, but my
- 5 concern here today is not totally with this
- 6 proposal, but if this one gets on the books,
- 7 what's the next one going to be, and is it
- 8 going to be for one of the other 35 crops that
- 9 I grow? And, am I going to have 30 different
- 10 proposals or 35 different proposals as this
- 11 unfolds down the road? That's -- you know, if
- 12 I can have an effect on it today, then maybe
- 13 I don't have to work so hard on shaping the
- 14 other proposals later on.
- 15 MS. SCHMAEDICK: And, are you
- 16 aware of the FDA -- the proposed FDA
- 17 guidelines that are commodity specific?
- 18 THE WITNESS: No. I know that
- 19 there has been some proposed, but I'm sorry,
- 20 I haven't caught up with them. What -- I'm a
- 21 typical farmer and we've been in harvest
- 22 season since June 1, and hopefully in another

- 1 three weeks we'll have the apples harvested
- 2 and will be done for the year, but, then I can
- 3 sit down and read those things.
- 4 MS. SCHMAEDICK: While I
- 5 appreciate your time today. I believe that's
- 6 it for my questions, thank you.
- 7 JUDGE HILLSON: Anyone else the
- 8 panel? Ms. Carter?
- 9 MS. CARTER: Hello, Antoinette
- 10 Carter with the USDA. I just had a follow-up
- 11 question. Could you explain to us, what --
- 12 you mentioned that you grow cabbage and
- 13 spinach. Could you explain what the growing
- 14 and harvesting season is for those products?
- 15 THE WITNESS: Spinach is typically
- 16 most of the summer, usually early spring and
- 17 late fall. Cabbage, in our area, or at least
- 18 on our farm, is either early in the spring or
- 19 late in fall. And, it's one of the last crops
- 20 that we harvest. In fact, we haven't started
- 21 harvesting on our farm yet. But, as noted in
- 22 my written document there, I am one of the

- 1 Farmer's Produce Auction and we've had --
- 2 typically had cabbage coming in all summer.
- 3 MS. CARTER: Thank you.
- 4 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from
- 5 the panel? Ms. Dash?
- 6 MS. DASH: Suzanne Dash. Do you
- 7 have any buyers that have GAP requirements?
- 8 Or any food safety requirements?
- 9 THE WITNESS: No, not at this
- 10 time. I helped develop the seal of quality
- 11 and the requirements for the Farmer's Produce
- 12 Auction and we try to be proactive on that,
- 13 ahead of the curve, and we do a lot during the
- 14 year throughout that organization on food
- 15 safety. In fact, I will have to comment that
- 16 I've been atsome grower meetings around Ohio
- 17 and in the hallways I hear the comment, well,
- 18 the Amish don't have to follow these rules.
- 19 I will, here before God and everyone else,
- 20 tell you that the Amish growers in our area
- 21 probably know more about food safety than most
- 22 of the other growers in several other states.

- 1 MS. DASH: I just had one other
- 2 question. Would you be willing to identify
- 3 yourself as a small or large farmer based on
- 4 small business administration's definition,
- 5 which is --
- 6 THE WITNESS: Yeah, I'm very
- 7 small.
- 8 MS. DASH: Thank you. That's all
- 9 I had.
- 10 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
- 11 JUDGE HILLSON: That's it for the
- 12 panel? Are there questions from the audience
- 13 before turn it over to the proponents? Seeing
- 14 nobody jumping up, I will ask Mr. Resnick, any
- 15 questions from your side?
- 16 EXAMINATION BY PROPONENTS
- 17 MR. RESNICK: Thank you very much.
- 18 Jason Resnick, Western Growers. Thank you for
- 19 your testimony today, I appreciate it. How
- 20 many acres of cabbage and other leafy greens
- 21 do you grow?
- 22 THE WITNESS: I basically only

- 1 grow an acre of that. But, we have -- on our
- 2 small family farm, we have 75 acres of fruits
- and produce, so it's one of the things that's
- 4 on there, but -- and, you know, if we sell it
- 5 all at our farm market, then your agreement
- 6 will not cover us. I mean, it won't -- but,
- 7 it may lead, then, to something else that I
- 8 sell on a wholesale basis and I want to make
- 9 sure that I can live with what that happens to
- 10 be down the road.
- 11 MR. RESNICK: Do you currently
- 12 sell leafy greens wholesale?
- 13 THE WITNESS: No.
- MR. RESNICK: Do you sell other
- 15 commodities wholesale?
- THE WITNESS: Yes.
- 17 MR. RESNICK: And for those
- 18 products, do you have to have audits done on
- 19 your farm?
- THE WITNESS: No.
- MR. RESNICK: Have you ever been
- 22 through an audit?

- 1 THE WITNESS: No.
- 2 MR. RESNICK: All right, thank
- 3 you, I have nothing further.
- 4 JUDGE HILLSON: Any other
- 5 questions? Thank you for testifying, Mr.
- 6 Finney. You may step down. We've already
- 7 accepted your written statement into evidence.
- 8 Is Mr. Zellers around? I'm going
- 9 to -- I'm going to make sure the numbers are
- 10 right. You can have a seat. I'm going to
- 11 mark your written testimony as Exhibit 65.
- 12 (Whereupon, Exhibit 65 was marked
- for identification.)
- 14 Whereupon,
- 15 JEFFREY ZELLERS
- having been first duly sworn, was
- 17 called as a witness herein, was examined and
- 18 testified as follows:
- 19 EXAMINATION DIRECT
- 20 JUDGE HILLSON: Could you please
- 21 state your name and spell it for the record?
- 22 THE WITNESS: Jeffrey Zellers. J-

- 1 E-F-F-R-E-Y. Last name, Zellers, Z-E-L-L-E-R-
- 2 S.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, and you --
- 4 that document that I marked as Exhibit 65 is
- 5 the statement you want to read into the
- 6 record. Is that correct?
- 7 THE WITNESS: Yes, I do, along
- 8 with some additional comments. And --
- 9 JUDGE HILLSON: Go right ahead.
- 10 THE WITNESS: Number one, thank
- 11 you for holding a hearing in Columbus.
- 12 Proximity is appreciated.
- I am president of K.W. Zellers &
- 14 Son Incorporated, a third-generation leafy
- 15 green grower in northeastern Ohio. I was not
- 16 here for the big beginning of the hearing,
- 17 some of my comments in my written statement
- 18 have been addressed and I have some other
- 19 comments that I would like to make also, so if
- 20 you would bear with me, I would like to go
- 21 ahead and read this for the record.
- To whom it may concern, Buurma

- 1 Farms, The Chef's Garden, K.W. Zellers and
- 2 Son, Michael Farms, and Wiers Farm,
- 3 Incorporated, are all major producers of leafy
- 4 greens vegetables seasonally in Ohio, and I
- 5 might add that Weirs and Buurmas are also
- 6 suppliers from other regions, seasonally.
- 7 These five companies distribute vegetables
- 8 throughout the eastern United States to major
- 9 retail, wholesale, processing, and food
- 10 service customers. The demands of our
- 11 customers warrant intensive management of food
- 12 safety standards by each of the producers both
- in the field and in packing facilities and are
- 14 audited as such. The above Ohio leafy green
- 15 vegetable growers have great concerns about
- 16 the proposed leafy greens marketing agreement.
- 17 History would indicate that adopting
- 18 regulation without metrics being agreed upon
- 19 is a recipe for disaster. We have no
- 20 confidence in the process once an agreement is
- 21 adopted that leaves the metrics out of her
- 22 control.

- 1 The cultural practices are very
- 2 different across the state of Ohio, let alone
- 3 a region that stretches from Georgia to
- 4 Wisconsin. One example of the difference
- 5 would be irrigation water, where it originates
- 6 from, how it is delivered to the crop, and
- 7 when during the life the crop it is actually
- 8 delivered.
- 9 The current leafy greens --
- 10 California leafy greens marketing agreement
- 11 has metrics that are geared towards production
- 12 practices in California and Arizona. It is
- our feeling that while the spinach E. coli
- 14 disaster certainly warranted proactive action
- 15 by the industry, the current agreement was a
- 16 knee-jerk reaction to this problem. We are
- 17 very concerned that some of the metrics in the
- 18 California agreement are not based upon
- 19 science -- sound science. It is very
- 20 difficult to push back on regulation once it
- 21 has been adopted even if the suggested change
- 22 is scientifically justified.

- 1 It is clear that -- it is clear to
- 2 all that California and Arizona produces a
- 3 significant amount of leafy greens in
- 4 question. And, yet, the proposed regions and
- 5 corresponding representation committee would
- 6 give these states significant ability to steer
- 7 how the industry is organized. Also, it is --
- 8 these regions are too large geographically to
- 9 allow for good representation and address
- 10 production practice differences. The above
- 11 growers in Ohio do not question the importance
- of food safety, so let's work on a food safety
- 13 accord and not a marketing agreement.
- 14 Too many have stated that signing
- 15 this marketing agreement would be a
- 16 competitive advantage over those that are not.
- 17 Are we, as an industry, trying to achieve a
- 18 competitive advantage with the agreement, or
- 19 a safety -- safer supply of leafy vegetables?
- 20 In closing, the above Ohio leafy
- 21 greens growers would like to be part of an
- 22 industry that develops a set of metrics that

- 1 are based on scientific data, take into
- 2 account differences in production practices.
- 3 Put these metrics into an agreement that takes
- 4 all of this into account and call it what it
- 5 is, a food safety agreement, however, in its
- 6 current form we are opposed to the adoption of
- 7 this agreement.
- 8 And, it signed by all of the above
- 9 -- aforementioned farms.
- Now, in reaction to a couple of
- 11 the comments, I would be enthused to hear more
- 12 about the metrics being looked upon and that
- 13 the regions would be different than the ones
- 14 proposed with the zones.
- 15 You've asked about volume. Our
- 16 own farm, we produce between 450 and 500 acres
- of leafy greens annually. We are audited,
- 18 both -- we have a third-party auditor that we
- 19 hire ourselves, we have two customers that
- 20 bring in their own outside auditors to outside
- 21 -- to audit our food, our inside packing
- 22 house, as well as field operations.

- 1 You asked about harvest season,
- 2 June 1 through October 15 to 20 is our
- 3 approximate harvest season.
- 4 My experience in the past in
- 5 working with regulation is, as I mentioned in
- 6 there, I'm very concerned about setting the
- 7 framework of the document up prior to having
- 8 the metrics for the document approved. I
- 9 don't think any of us -- in fact, I know all
- of us that's name is on this letter are very
- 11 concerned about food safety and, have
- 12 proactively taken many steps on our own farms,
- 13 but we're also concerned that once the
- 14 framework's in place that it's more of a
- 15 challenge to control those metrics. Thank
- 16 you.
- 17 JUDGE HILLSON: Thank you -- do
- 18 you want to give me --
- 19 THE WITNESS: Yes.
- 20 JUDGE HILLSON: -- the original
- 21 copy? I'm going to receive into evidence
- 22 Exhibit 65, which is Mr. Sellers written

- 1 statement.
- 2 (Whereupon, Exhibit 65 was
- 3 received into evidence.)
- 4 JUDGE HILLSON: And, I will ask
- 5 the USDA panel to ask questions of Mr.
- 6 Sellers. Ms. Schmaedick?
- 7 EXAMINATION BY USDA
- 8 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Melissa
- 9 Schmaedick, USDA. Thank you, Mr. Zellers, for
- 10 your testimony. Have you had the opportunity
- 11 to read the proposed agreement?
- 12 THE WITNESS: Yes, I have.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: And do you
- 14 believe that you have a fairly solid
- 15 understanding of what is being proposed?
- 16 THE WITNESS: Again, the framework
- of it, yes I do. The question that I have --
- 18 I -- as I understand it, there's a technical
- 19 review committee that would report to the
- 20 representative committee of the agreement. Is
- 21 that correct?
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: I actually can't

- 1 answer questions.
- JUDGE HILLSON: No, no --
- 3 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Is that your
- 4 belief?
- 5 THE WITNESS: I'm sorry, I
- 6 apologize. But yes, I guess I --
- JUDGE HILLSON: Assume what you
- 8 want to assume when you answer the question.
- 9 THE WITNESS: I do. I've read the
- 10 document several times yes.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay.
- 12 THE WITNESS: Do I have an in-
- 13 depth legal understanding of it? No.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay.
- 15 THE WITNESS: I'll take Mr.
- 16 Finney's, I'm a farmer.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay. Based on
- 18 your experience, you indicated that once
- 19 regulation is set that it's difficult to
- 20 change. Is that a fair statement?
- 21 THE WITNESS: Yes. Correct.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Are you familiar

- 1 with the practice called informal rulemaking -
- 2 or rulemaking?
- THE WITNESS: Yes.
- 4 MS. SCHMAEDICK: And, what is your
- 5 --
- 6 THE WITNESS: Well, let me -- I am
- 7 not a -- the difference between informal
- 8 rulemaking and rulemaking, no I'm not.
- 9 MS. SCHMAEDICK: You're not?
- 10 Okay. If the informal rulemaking process were
- 11 to be a shorter, more flexible process than
- 12 rulemaking, such as we are doing today, would
- 13 that lead you to believe that there might be
- 14 more flexibility and adaptability to make
- 15 changes?
- 16 THE WITNESS: Yes, at some level,
- 17 but again -- I guess my real concerns or
- 18 questions, if, as a grower, I sign on to this
- 19 and the metrics aren't in place informal or
- 20 not, the way the representation is currently
- 21 proposed, I have very little input or ability
- 22 to control and steer. Again, while to us it's

- 1 significant production, relative the industry,
- 2 it's not. But, our cultural practices are
- 3 unique to these areas and there are certain
- 4 pieces in here that are of concern, and our
- 5 concern would be that once there is a document
- 6 put in place, are we going to truly have the
- 7 ability to have significant input for our
- 8 relatively insignificant production in the
- 9 metrics process?
- 10 MS. SCHMAEDICK: So, if there were
- 11 an opportunity for you to participate, would
- 12 you participate?
- 13 THE WITNESS: Absolutely.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: You mentioned
- 15 that you -- you refer to yourself as a major
- 16 producer. Are you familiar with the SBA
- 17 definitions of large and small producer
- 18 entities?
- 19 THE WITNESS: I believe so, yes.
- 20 It -- are those the ones by dollar amount?
- 21 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Gross, yes. Are
- 22 you comfortable identifying yourself as a

- large or small producer?
- THE WITNESS: I would say large.
- 3 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Do you receive
- 4 product from other producers or just your own?
- 5 THE WITNESS: The only time that
- 6 we would have produce from other receive --
- 7 other producers would be when we have a
- 8 shortage and to maintain our consistency of
- 9 supply for our customers.
- 10 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Are you involved
- in any handling functions of the product? Do
- 12 you, for example, clean or package your
- 13 product?
- 14 THE WITNESS: We do not. The only
- value that we add would be the cooling and/or
- 16 washing that we do ourselves. We do not -- we
- 17 are not adding value beyond that, no.
- 18 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay. Those are
- 19 all the questions I have. Thank you.
- 20 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from
- 21 the panel? I don't see anything. Anything
- 22 else from --

- 1 MS. DESKINS: Oh, I did have
- 2 something.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Oh, sorry, didn't
- 4 see you.
- 5 MS. DESKINS: Sharlene Deskins,
- 6 USDA. Mr. Zellers, I just wanted to clarify
- 7 something. You have some names on the second
- 8 page of your statement. Are you here
- 9 representing their position on this?
- 10 THE WITNESS: No, I believe all of
- 11 those individual producers are going to
- 12 present a letter similar to that, however, as
- 13 the judge had stated that he did not
- 14 necessarily want the same statement written
- 15 over and over again, so I -- I don't know how
- 16 they'll go through that process, if they'll
- 17 have to do that to get it on the record, that
- 18 obviously, that's outside of mine.
- MS. DESKINS: Okay.
- 20 THE WITNESS: I believe most of
- 21 them have signed up to testify, though.
- MS. DESKINS: Okay, so you

- 1 anticipated them coming and saying whether
- 2 they agree with what you represented or not?
- 3 THE WITNESS: Correct. I think
- 4 all but one of them are currently sitting in
- 5 the room here.
- 6 MS. DESKINS: Okay, all right,
- 7 thank you.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Thank you. Are
- 9 there any questions from the audience? How
- 10 about the proponents?
- 11 EXAMINATION BY PROPONENTS
- 12 MR. STENZEL: If I may, Tom
- 13 Stenzel from United Fresh Produce. Mr.
- 14 Zellers, knowing something of your operation
- 15 and also the other farms that you mentioned,
- 16 it's clear that your commitment to food safety
- 17 is, you know, huge, and we respect that. A
- 18 couple of questions about the marketing
- 19 agreement and how you see that potentially
- 20 operating to benefit your company as opposed
- 21 to be harmed.
- 22 I understand the concern about the

- 1 metrics not been written yet. Do you have any
- 2 suggestions, in terms of timing, if there was
- 3 an opportunity to discuss the metrics,
- 4 regional differences, rather than just have to
- 5 assume to assume that it's based on the
- 6 California agreement, would that give you
- 7 greater comfort in looking ahead at a
- 8 potential agreement?
- 9 THE WITNESS: Yes.
- 10 MR. STENZEL: On the question of
- 11 regions as well, you mentioned that you felt
- 12 that even though you are a substantial
- 13 producer that you might still be outnumbered
- 14 by some of the others. Is there any
- 15 suggestion you have as to how that could be
- organized where you wouldn't be outnumbered,
- 17 so to speak?
- 18 THE WITNESS: Well, I think the
- 19 reality of it is that if the science -- the
- 20 metrics based on science were established,
- 21 that would it would be a lot easier to accept
- 22 the document or to be a signer of the document

- 1 going into it rather than simply having a
- 2 framework. And as I stated -- and then trying
- 3 to go forth and establish those metrics with
- 4 relatively small representation.
- 5 MR. STENZEL: One of the early
- 6 witnesses was talking, and it's been fairly
- 7 well established that the intent of the
- 8 agreement of the proponent group here at this
- 9 table is to incorporate those regional
- 10 differences and to allow for a very robust
- 11 discussion of metrics before anyone has to
- 12 sign on. Would you be willing to participate
- in that before being a signatory to the
- 14 agreement?
- 15 THE WITNESS: Yes.
- 16 MR. STENZEL: One other thing that
- 17 you mentioned a concern about, potentially
- 18 competitive advantages of those who sign or
- 19 not sign. One other thing that came up
- 20 earlier this morning, perhaps before you were
- 21 here was the question of not having a label on
- 22 a consumer package to promote differential --

- 1 my product is safer than yours, but --
- 2 strictly to have that as a recognition to
- 3 buyers on a bill of lading that this product
- 4 was grown according to the leafy greens
- 5 agreement. Would that alleviate some of the
- 6 concern about competitive marketing?
- 7 THE WITNESS: Potentially,
- 8 depending upon how was used. I think the real
- 9 key is that, you know, we do have smaller
- 10 growers of leafy greens in the region of Ohio
- 11 and Michigan, and and many times, those are
- 12 where some or all of those on the letter might
- 13 procure supplies supplies to fill the gaps in
- 14 ours, and much to Raymond Yoder and that
- 15 group, and Mr. Finney's, you know, when you
- 16 start spreading these costs over smaller
- 17 amounts of acreages and packages, there's a
- 18 concern that they fall by the wayside or they
- 19 choose not to participate, and then the way
- 20 the document currently is, we couldn't
- 21 purchase product from them to fill those
- 22 supplies. So in that case, we're at a

- 1 competitive disadvantage, because much like
- 2 all of our customers regardless of where we
- 3 supply from in the country, you know, if you
- 4 don't have it every day, it's unacceptable.
- 5 So, I mean, yes, but some concerns about --
- 6 MR. STENZEL: Sure.
- 7 THE WITNESS: -- some of the
- 8 shortfalls that could come with that, or the
- 9 unintended consequences.
- 10 MR. STENZEL: Let me ask you about
- 11 that. Today, when you're buying fill in
- 12 supplies, to buy only from growers who you
- 13 have confidence in?
- THE WITNESS: Yes.
- 15 MR. STENZEL: And do you require
- 16 them to have a GAP audit of some kind or --
- 17 THE WITNESS: The ones that --
- 18 only one outside of the ones on the -- again,
- 19 that have signed on the letter, and he
- 20 actually is a neighbor of ours, and we usually
- 21 are looking at that product prior to
- 22 purchasing it, and many times we're actually

- 1 harvesting it ourselves so that our practices,
- 2 carrying it forward in the handling process,
- 3 that we know that it is done properly.
- 4 MR. STENZEL: So, you're not going
- 5 to a wholesale market and buying leafy greens
- 6 that you don't know really how they were
- 7 grown.
- 8 THE WITNESS: That would be a very
- 9 uncommon practice.
- 10 MR. STENZEL: Okay. So, as a
- 11 handler, if you did choose to sign onto this
- 12 agreement, you would be bring to only buy
- 13 product from growers who had been GAP
- 14 certified under this agreement. Do you
- 15 understand that the grower does not have to
- 16 sign on as a signatory? You would simply be
- 17 making sure that the grower had GAP
- 18 certification under this agreement.
- 19 THE WITNESS: Okay, I was not
- 20 aware of that. So, they don't have to be a
- 21 signatory, they'd simply to be audited?
- 22 MR. STENZEL: That is correct.

- 1 THE WITNESS: GAP certified.
- 2 MR. STENZEL: That is correct. I
- 3 don't believe I -- hang on one second. And,
- 4 does that alleviate some of your concern about
- 5 buying on a fill-in basis?
- 6 THE WITNESS: It does some yes.
- 7 MR. STENZEL: I have no further
- 8 questions, thank you.
- 9 JUDGE HILLSON: Well, thanks for
- 10 testifying, Mr. Zellers, you may step down.
- 11 It's 1THE WITNESS: 30, Ms. Leeper
- 12 indicated she would be happy to testify after
- 13 lunch, so, we're going to take an hour for
- 14 lunch, Ms. Leeper's going to testify then.
- 15 It's just going to be all the
- 16 witnesses that Ms. Lovera wants to call. If
- 17 anyone else comes in and says they have to
- 18 testify, they are just going to have to go to
- 19 the end of the line until Ms. Lovera finishes
- 20 up her case.
- 21 Are there any issues -- let me ask
- 22 Ms. Carter, are there any issues of like, if

- 1 we run late, do we still have this place?
- 2 They're not going to, like, turn out the
- 3 lights and lock the doors, or anything like
- 4 that?
- 5 MS. CARTER: I think we'll be
- 6 okay, but I will verify that, Judge.
- 7 JUDGE HILLSON: That would be
- 8 good, okay.
- 9 MR. RESNICK: Your Honor, just a
- 10 question. We haven't seen a witness list.
- 11 How many witnesses to we anticipate Ms. Lovera
- 12 calling?
- JUDGE HILLSON: Eight witnesses,
- 14 she said.
- MR. RESNICK: And, has anyone --
- 16 eight left?
- 17 JUDGE HILLSON: She is eight more
- 18 witnesses, yes.
- 19 MR. RESNICK: Any others that have
- 20 not --
- 21 JUDGE HILLSON: I don't have any
- 22 others. I just accommodated the couple that

- 1 were on the list, and Ms. Leeper is not on the
- 2 list, but she did sign up this morning, and
- 3 then we'll have the eight witnesses that Ms.
- 4 Lovera was going to call, and we'll just go
- 5 until we're done. Okay, let's take a lunch.
- 6 Back in an hour.
- 7 (Off the record.)
- JUDGE HILLSON: We're back on the
- 9 record. Ms. Leeper? And, you don't have a
- 10 written statement. Right?
- MS. LEEPER: No, I do not.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Well, let me swear
- 13 you in.
- 14 Whereupon,
- 15 TIFFANY LEEPER
- 16 having been first duly sworn, was
- 17 called as a witness herein, was examined and
- 18 testified as follows:
- 19 EXAMINATION DIRECT
- THE WITNESS: My name is Tiffany
- 21 Leeper, that's T-I-F-F-A-N-Y L-E-E-P-E-R.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, and you may

- 1 testify.
- THE WITNESS: Thank you. I am
- 3 here today representing the North Union
- 4 Farmers Market. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit
- 5 organization based in Cleveland Ohio. Our
- 6 mission is to promote the local foods of
- 7 Northeast Ohio along with our economic,
- 8 environmental, and health benefits. And we do
- 9 this through a network of markets. Through
- 10 this network of markets we are able to sustain
- 11 many small family farms that would otherwise
- 12 lack an outlet for their products. North
- 13 Union Farmers Market began 15 years ago with
- 14 a single market and since then we've supported
- 15 over 200 small farms from all over Northeast
- 16 Ohio. We now operate eight farmers markets
- 17 and our farmers have told us that of the
- 18 markets are very important to their business.
- 19 We also hold a grower's conference each year,
- 20 talking about safe handling and safe
- 21 agricultural food practices.
- 22 Because many of our farmers see

- 1 their farming as their livelihood and they are
- 2 selling directly to the consumer, they are
- 3 especially careful about their handling and
- 4 agricultural practices. I just want to point
- 5 out at this moment that small farms really are
- 6 growing in number throughout the United States
- 7 but they are under a great burden. Many of
- 8 our farms are already dealing with local,
- 9 state, and national regulations and more
- 10 burdens would be detrimental to these very
- 11 marginal businesses. As sad as it seems, many
- 12 of our farmers are below the poverty line and
- 13 at North Union, and we must feel that we must
- 14 take on the excess burden of marketing and
- 15 promoting local foods so that farmers may
- 16 concentrate on producing the highest quality
- 17 and safest produce for the consumer.
- 18 Additionally, regulations take
- 19 away time and resources from diligent work in
- 20 the field. And, while we are not opposed to
- 21 any types of measures to ensure safe food
- 22 handling practices, we just want to make sure

- 1 that you simply take the interests of small
- 2 farms into consideration while debating this
- 3 agreement. Thank you.
- 4 JUDGE HILLSON: Thank you. Let me
- 5 ask the panel if they have any questions of
- 6 Ms. Leeper. Go ahead, Ms. Schmaedick?
- 7 EXAMINATION BY USDA
- 8 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Melissa
- 9 Schmaedick, USDA. Thank you, Ms. Leeper, for
- 10 your testimony, and good afternoon to you.
- 11 So, you are speaking on behalf of an
- 12 organization that oversees for nine farmers
- 13 markets? Is that correct?
- 14 THE WITNESS: This year, we are
- 15 operating eight farmers markets.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Eight, okay.
- 17 THE WITNESS: Yes. We are a small
- 18 nonprofit organization, we only have three
- 19 full-time staff, and basically our function is
- 20 to organize and promote and market the farmers
- 21 markets as well as local food.
- 22 MS. SCHMAEDICK: And that -- how

- 1 many farmers would you typically have at each
- 2 farmers market?
- 4 has around 40 to 50 farmers, and our smaller
- 5 ones will have maybe four or five.
- 6 MS. SCHMAEDICK: And, do you have
- 7 any type of requirements that a farmer has to
- 8 follow an order to sell at your market?
- 9 THE WITNESS: Yes, we are a
- 10 certified producer only market, that's our
- 11 first step. We visit each farm that we allow
- 12 to participate. This is mainly to ensure that
- 13 they are growing what they're selling. We
- 14 don't allow brokers or dealers into the
- 15 markets. But it also gives us an idea of how
- 16 -- what kind of practices the farmers are
- 17 using. Beyond that we ask them to sign a
- 18 contract that they comply with all ODA and all
- 19 state health department and county health
- 20 department regulations.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay, and you
- 22 used the acronym ODA. What does that stand

- 1 for?
- 2 THE WITNESS: Ohio Department of
- 3 Agriculture.
- 4 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Thank you. Would
- 5 any of those guidelines fall into the category
- 6 of good agricultural practices?
- 7 THE WITNESS: Yes, I believe they
- 8 would.
- 9 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay. And what
- 10 about good handling practices?
- 11 THE WITNESS: That is -- for the
- 12 most part, it is covered under the most part,
- 13 I believe, under the Ohio Department of
- 14 Agriculture practices. It's also covered
- 15 under state -- or I'm sorry, county health
- 16 department practices, which we make sure that
- 17 they abide by.
- 18 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay, and once a
- 19 farmer becomes a participant, do you have any
- 20 follow up visits to their operation?
- 21 THE WITNESS: We do, not anything
- 22 formal. But we do make random visits to farms

- 1 on occasion. If we hear of something unusual,
- 2 we may visit their farm again. And, quite
- 3 frankly, we'd sometimes just like to go to the
- 4 farm to see what they're doing and check up on
- 5 things.
- 6 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Is there a state
- 7 organization or network of farmers markets in
- 8 Ohio?
- 9 THE WITNESS: There is. There is
- 10 the Ohio Farmers Market Association -- I --
- 11 the Farmers Market Network, I believe it's
- 12 called, and it is in Ohio -- a statewide
- 13 project with the Ohio Department of
- 14 Agriculture.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: And, are you
- 16 aware of a national program of that kind?
- 17 THE WITNESS: Not that I know of.
- 18 I know that there are several nonprofit
- 19 organizations that gather information about
- 20 farmers markets, such as the North American
- 21 Farmers Market Association and things like
- 22 that. I don't know of any government

- 1 regulated associations, but there could be.
- 2 MS. SCHMAEDICK: And in your
- 3 opinion, would any of these organizations be
- 4 a good source of input or representation of
- 5 interests of farmers markets across the
- 6 country?
- 7 THE WITNESS: Yes. I think there
- 8 are quite a few large organizations that run
- 9 multiple markets. North Union is one of them,
- 10 the California Certified Farmers Markets is
- 11 actually a statewide program in California,
- 12 the New York Green Markets, a lot of these
- 13 large organizations can tell you more about
- 14 trends and things that are happening across
- 15 the country.
- 16 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay. That's all
- 17 the questions I had, thank you.
- 18 JUDGE HILLSON: Anyone else from
- 19 the panel have questions? Anyone else from
- 20 the audience? How about the proponents? Any
- 21 questions from the proponent side? Hearing
- 22 none, thank you very much for testifying.

- 1 And, Ms. Lovera, you may start calling your
- 2 witnesses.
- MS. LOVERA: First up, we're going
- 4 to have Chris Blanchard.
- 5 JUDGE HILLSON: Okay. I'm marking
- 6 Mr. Blanchard's written testimony as Exhibit
- 7 66.
- 8 (Whereupon, Exhibit 66 was marked
- 9 for identification.)
- 10 Whereupon,
- 11 CHRIS BLANCHARD
- having been first duly sworn, was
- 13 called as a witness herein, was examined and
- 14 testified as follows:
- 15 EXAMINATION DIRECT
- 16 JUDGE HILLSON: Could you please
- 17 state your name and spell the record?
- 18 THE WITNESS: Chris Blanchard, C-
- 19 H-R-I-S B-L-A-N-C-H-A-R-D.
- JUDGE HILLSON: And, you have a
- 21 statement that you want to read first, I take
- 22 it?

- 1 THE WITNESS: Yes, I do.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Go right ahead.
- 3 THE WITNESS: Thank you for the
- 4 opportunity to share my perspective on the
- 5 proposed National Leafy Greens Marketing
- 6 Agreement.
- 7 My name is Chris Blanchard, I've
- 8 been actively involved in organic vegetable
- 9 production, research, and education for 20
- 10 years in California, Washington, Maine,
- 11 Wisconsin and Iowa. I currently own and
- 12 operate Rock Spring Farm, a small certified
- 13 organic vegetable and herb farm near Decorah,
- 14 Iowa. We market our produce as well as
- 15 purchased herbs to subscription customers in
- 16 our community-supported agriculture program,
- 17 as well as to seven natural food stores and a
- 18 natural foods distributor in the Twin Cities
- 19 metro that's up in Minnesota, and in
- 20 Decorah.
- 21 Until last year, we also sold
- 22 vegetables and herbs through a large farmers

- 1 market near Rochester Minnesota. Rock Spring
- 2 Farm manages about 90 acres of land in two
- 3 locations, with about 35 acres in active crop
- 4 ground. We produce over 50 different crops
- 5 each year, rotating through all of our fields,
- 6 so the proposed LGMA would affect each of the
- 7 80 fields under our management.
- 8 With approximately \$300,000 each
- 9 year in sales, we are the largest vegetable
- 10 farm in northeast Iowa. We are among the
- 11 smallest of the major providers of organic
- 12 produce to the Twin Cities metro area.
- 13 Although I'm not formally charged with
- 14 representing other growers, the challenges
- 15 this agreement would present to Rock Spring
- 16 Farm would be shared by every other market
- 17 farm selling leafy greens into the Twin Cities
- 18 natural foods marketplace. I also wear a
- 19 couple of other relevant hats. In my role as
- 20 an educator and consultant I have provided
- 21 trainings to conventional and organic growers
- 22 in good post harvest handling practices. This

- 1 summer, we hosted over 60 participants at an
- 2 on farm food safety and post harvest handling
- 3 training sponsored by Iowa State University's
- 4 Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture.
- 5 This training, and a document I prepared as
- 6 part of a consulting project for ISU, provided
- 7 simple but effective guidance for the
- 8 implementation of basic post-harvest handling
- 9 food safety procedures.
- In addition, for 10 years I've
- 11 coordinated the presentations at the MOSES
- 12 Organic Farming Conference, which has put me
- in regular communication with a large
- 14 community of local and organic producers
- 15 across the upper Midwest, including regional
- 16 industry leaders. I have also served on the
- 17 board of the Midwest Organic and Sustainable
- 18 Education Service for the past 10 years. I
- 19 believe that food safety is not just a legal
- 20 responsibility, but a moral and ethical
- 21 obligation that producers and farmers have
- 22 with their customers. The proposed National

- 1 Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement is a flawed
- 2 iteration of a regulation that does not belong
- 3 in the control of the Agricultural Marketing
- 4 Service. The NLGMA should not be implemented
- 5 for the reasons I will outline below. If it
- 6 is implemented, the future of local and
- 7 regional food systems served by small and
- 8 midsized growers in an ecologically sound
- 9 manner will on the modification and
- 10 consideration of the issues addressed in the
- 11 following.
- 12 First, food safety is not a
- 13 marketing issue. Food safety, as it is
- 14 approached by the proposed NLGMA, is a process
- 15 and a set of production metrics. It does not
- 16 result in a measurable attribute of the end
- 17 product, as evidenced by the September 18 and
- 18 July 23 incidents of salmonella contamination
- 19 that have been in the news. The Agricultural
- 20 Marketing Service has its expertise in
- 21 economics and marketing, not in the science of
- 22 food safety. AMS administrator Rayne Pegg has

- 1 made it clear that AMS is not a food safety
- 2 agency. Food safety regulations, where they
- 3 are necessary, should be developed in an open
- 4 and transparent process with the food safety
- 5 agencies such as the Food and Drug
- 6 Administration taking the lead. Auditing
- 7 compliance with food safety metrics does not
- 8 provide the same level of public protection as
- 9 the development and enforcement of a
- 10 regulation under the auspices of the FDA.
- 11 Food safety is not, and should not
- 12 be considered to be, a marketing issue. It
- 13 certainly differs from traditional marketing
- 14 attributes such as size, color and firmness.
- 15 Produce marketing agreements have historically
- 16 been designed such that participation confers
- 17 an advantage in the marketplace. Choosing the
- 18 wrong brand should not result in an increased
- 19 risk of illness. In addition, for reasons I
- 20 will elaborate on later, the proposed NLGMA
- 21 will conflict with AMS's stated goals of
- 22 providing market access for medium and small

- 1 farms, or facilitating regional economic
- 2 development.
- Two, the proposed NLGMA will have
- 4 a negative environmental impact in exchange
- 5 for a negligible and possibly negative effect
- 6 on the food safety aspect of leafy greens
- 7 production. It seems fair to assume that the
- 8 NLGMA would follow the same general outline is
- 9 the California LGMA with regards to production
- 10 metrics. With many of the same players
- 11 promoting the NLGMA and considering scale and
- 12 production methodology biases inherent in the
- 13 structure of the administrative committee, I'm
- 14 skeptical of the idea that we might see a
- 15 dramatic departure from the California LGMA.
- 16 Because the standards will be created after
- 17 the USDA has given industry the power to
- 18 proceed, there are no metrics hear to discuss
- 19 or criticize, and we can only look to himthe
- 20 California NLGMA as a model for national
- 21 implementation.
- 22 Much of the criticism of the

- 1 California NLGMA has focused on the
- 2 destruction of field edges and semi-wild areas
- 3 around production areas. These grasslands and
- 4 hedgerows provide valuable ecological services
- 5 that offset the negative environmental effects
- 6 of even the most careful agricultural
- 7 practices. In the Midwest, these field
- 8 borders and inter-plantings help to mitigate
- 9 the effects of erosion and nitrogen leaching,
- 10 as well as absorbing and holding excess
- 11 rainfall. The ecological benefits of grass
- 12 and wetland areas bordering croplands include
- 13 reduced flooding, increased watershed health,
- 14 decreased groundwater pollution, and a
- 15 reduction of the Gulf of Mexico dead zone.
- 16 Sources of bacterial contamination
- 17 include fecal dust and overland water
- 18 movement, not just irrigation and direct
- 19 deposition of animal feces. UC Davis
- 20 researchers have demonstrated that grass and
- 21 wetlands can filter out up to 99% of E. coli
- 22 during rain events. Irrigation and rainfall

- 1 can cause sheeting of water across even
- 2 relatively flat landscapes. In dry weather,
- 3 dust can carry fecal dust -- I'm sorry, wind
- 4 can carry fecal dust for long distances.
- 5 Hedgerows and tree plantings reduce wind flow
- 6 and capture dust, minimizing movement of
- 7 potentially pathogenic dust. Hedgerows,
- 8 grasslands, and wetlands provide additional
- 9 benefits in the form of beneficial insect
- 10 habitat, reducing the need for toxic
- 11 pesticides.
- 12 The animals of significant risk
- 13 addressed in the California LGMA includes
- 14 deer, which are attracted to edge areas, and
- 15 which are endemic throughout the upper
- 16 Midwest. However, scientific studies in
- 17 California and Nebraska indicate very little
- 18 presence of E. coli 0157 in deer feces. On a
- 19 small farm such as mine, every field has a
- 20 significant amount of edge. No portion of any
- 21 field on my home farm is more than 100 feet
- 22 from grass areas, and, typical of farms in my

- 1 region, fields are scattered among woodlands
- 2 and grasslands. The per acre cost of total
- 3 exclusion and elimination of wildlife habitat
- 4 would be much higher on my farm, and those of
- 5 my fellow direct marketers in the upper
- 6 Midwest, then the numbers cited elsewhere. A
- 7 recent temporary three strand electric fence
- 8 erected for deer control around a three acre
- 9 field cost \$650 in materials alone. A 2007
- 10 survey of farmers conducted by the Monterey
- 11 County Resource Conservation District, and
- 12 cited in Jo Ann Baumgartner's testimony, noted
- 13 growers concerns about the conflict between
- 14 wildlife habitat and food safety audits, and
- 15 there is no reason to expect that the
- 16 experience would be different in other
- 17 environments.
- 18 Three, the NLGMA would have a
- 19 negative effect on small and local producers.
- 20 The NGLMA would have a negative effect on
- 21 small and local producers. Because the NLGMA
- 22 provides for marketing differentiation on the

- 1 basis of perceived safety, and by including
- 2 crops such as kale and cabbage, instead of
- 3 limiting the scope to the bagged product that
- 4 has been the primary source of E. coli
- 5 problems, the NLGMA would severely limit the
- 6 ability of small-market growers to make a
- 7 living, as well as the ability of local
- 8 producers to continue their work to impact
- 9 institutional and school meal programs.
- 10 According to the proposed rule,
- 11 proponents of the NLGMA state that the
- 12 proposed program would, quote, improve
- 13 customer confidence of fresh green leafy
- 14 vegetables and their products in the
- 15 marketplace, endquote. A market review board
- 16 would provide advice on, quote, retail, food
- 17 service, and consumer issues that should be
- 18 addressed to maximize consumer confidence
- 19 through market acceptance on recognition of
- the program, endquote.
- 21 The California LGMA seal is widely
- 22 evident on proponent stationery and websites.

- 1 In addition, section 970.75 of the proposed
- 2 rule makes provision for the establishment of
- 3 promotional activities to, quote, promote
- 4 acceptance of the agreement and of leafy green
- 5 vegetables or products handled by signatory
- 6 members, endquote. Ultimately, consumers
- 7 drive the business. Marketers look for any
- 8 edge they can find in the marketplace. The
- 9 proposed regulations do not specifically
- 10 exclude the potential for the seal to be used
- in the marketplace, and it seems naive to
- 12 expect retailers not to use the LGMA as the
- 13 marketing factor. The California LGMA website
- 14 goes so far as to say that produce buyers help
- 15 enforce the service mark when they only buy
- 16 from LGMA member companies. At a retail level
- 17 where labels and uncertainty proliferate along
- 18 with poor consumer understanding of food
- 19 safety issues, no serious retailer would
- 20 ignore the potential to market safer food. An
- 21 NLGMA controlled by large industry handlers is
- 22 unlikely to recognize, or to make allowance

- 1 for, the functional difference between large
- 2 producers and aggregators, and small producer
- 3 handlers such as my operation. Large-scale
- 4 operations using mechanical harvesters and
- 5 automatic baggars in the process of
- 6 distributing fresh-cut or ready-to-eat greens
- 7 in sealed bags present the greatest food
- 8 safety risk and should be subject to the
- 9 greatest food safety and regulatory scrutiny.
- The model used by the processed
- 11 and bagged industry takes small quantities of
- 12 contamination and amplifies them to a much
- 13 bigger audience. Through commingling,
- 14 packing, and widespread distribution, the
- 15 model is good at spreading risk through a lot
- 16 of product and over a wide geographical
- 17 distribution.
- 18 In addition, food safety is
- 19 clearly a litigious issue. Once a higher
- 20 standard is established and recognized at a
- 21 national regulatory level, buyers will
- 22 experience legal pressure to prove purchase

- 1 greens only from NLGMA signatories. Since the
- 2 definition of handle in 970.11, as elaborated
- on in 970.83.A.1, clearly includes farms like
- 4 mine, small scale, direct marketing growers
- 5 are likely to have the economically important
- 6 direct to retail outlet closed to us.
- 7 Four, I think. The process of
- 8 adopting the NLGMA and developing it's
- 9 standards may be public, but it is not open.
- 10 We only have to look at the timing and
- 11 location of these hearings for an
- 12 understanding that the NLGMA proposal is only
- 13 moderately open to participation by small, and
- 14 mid-sized farms.
- I probably ought to be home
- 16 cutting cabbage, escarole, and radicchio with
- 17 my crew, but it's raining. But, I am both
- 18 fortunate and unusual in the degree of
- 19 autonomy with which my crew is able to
- 20 operate. October is the time for the fall
- 21 harvest, and an extremely busy time on a small
- 22 farm. It's kind of like trying to regulate

- 1 CPA firms with hearings held in early April.
- 2 We don't have the luxury of lawyers and
- 3 experts to testify at hearings during the
- 4 height of the harvest season. In addition,
- 5 these hearings are located far from the most
- 6 vigorous center of organic vegetable
- 7 production in the Midwest, which is centered
- 8 on the La Crosse, Wisconsin, and Twin Cities,
- 9 Minnesota, area. The zones established for
- 10 the appointment of administrative committee
- 11 members appear to be designed more to
- 12 facilitate the domination of the committee by
- 13 large growers in industrial production areas,
- 14 rather than being organized by geographical
- 15 production similarities. Are the marketing
- 16 and product production and marketing
- 17 conditions in Minnesota and Iowa so different
- 18 from those in Wisconsin, while being so
- 19 similar to those in Louisiana?
- 20 Providing the opportunity for
- 21 public comment is not the same as a
- 22 transparent, open, and public process. This

- 1 process will start with an industry controlled
- 2 committee that writes standards with advice
- 3 from a technical review board appointed by the
- 4 same industry controlled committee, with only
- 5 one opportunity for public comment. After
- 6 that, the administrative committee self-
- 7 perpetuates, almost guaranteeing a bias
- 8 towards the large-scale monoculture production
- 9 perspective.
- 10 In conclusion, if a grower,
- 11 handler, or any other group wants to use food
- 12 safety metrics as a marketing tool, that is
- 13 clearly within their rights; however, the
- 14 government's involvement in of pseudo-
- 15 regulatory marketing program dealing with food
- 16 safety will create a public perception bias
- 17 against nonparticipants, no matter their food
- 18 safety history. This will present a serious
- 19 market barrier to small and midsize
- 20 diversified farms, both conventional and
- 21 organic.
- 22 Food safety, as outlined in the

- 1 proposed NLGMA, is not a measurable attribute
- of the end product, and should not be
- 3 considered as a marketing issue. A marketing
- 4 agreement is inappropriate, ineffective, and
- 5 biased way to implement food safety
- 6 regulations. The proposed NLGMA is likely to
- 7 have a negative environmental impact in
- 8 exchange for a negligible and possibly
- 9 negative effect on the safety of our
- 10 vegetables, undoing much of the environmental
- 11 progress made in recent years on farms across
- 12 the country. By holding some farms and brands
- 13 up as safer based on dubious science and
- 14 likely retail marketing, the NLGMA will
- 15 continue the promotion of the production and
- 16 marketing model that amplifies the effects of
- 17 small quantities of contamination at the
- 18 expense of local production throughout the
- 19 country.
- 20 Finally, the process of adopting
- 21 the NLGMA and developing its standards is not
- 22 truly a transparent, open, and public process.

- 1 For all these reasons, I find that the concept
- 2 of a National Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement
- 3 to be inherently flawed in its inception and
- 4 counterproductive in its means and goals. I
- 5 do not support it.
- 6 Can I add some --
- 7 JUDGE HILLSON: You are
- 8 testifying, go right ahead.
- 9 THE WITNESS: Okay. The
- 10 proponents have repeatedly stated a desire to
- 11 tailor the metrics and best practices to
- 12 differing scales and practices. I think it's
- 13 worth looking at the breakdown of
- 14 representatives by zone as it's addressed in
- 15 970.40.
- 16 The administrative committee, I
- 17 think it's 23 members total, four are outside
- of the handler-producer category, but 10
- 19 members of that administrative committee will
- 20 be appointed from the count -- from zones one
- 21 and two, which include California and Arizona.
- 22 Only nine members from the rest of the zones,

- 1 which gives de facto majority control to the
- 2 California and Arizona producers.
- 3 It's been repeatedly stated this
- 4 morning that this has been -- that the
- 5 proponents have engaged or attempted to engage
- 6 the organic and local food movements, but you
- 7 know, I'm really involved in these and I
- 8 wasn't aware of any efforts to engage in that.
- 9 I'm involved with a wide number of groups
- 10 throughout the upper Midwest. I would be
- 11 really interested, at some point, to hear in
- 12 what way the proponents engaged or attempted
- 13 to engage the organic and local food
- 14 movements.
- 15 Finally, I feel that this proposed
- 16 rule goes far beyond allowing a voluntary
- 17 agreement as stated by the proponents this
- 18 morning. The USDA would be facilitating and
- 19 endorsing this agreement, which fundamentally
- 20 changes the nature of the agreement.
- 21 I also want to note that I nursed
- 22 my son through a probable E. coli infection

- 1 back in 2002 that was the result of an
- 2 incident -- it was timed with a Red Lobster
- 3 outbreak, and it was never fully diagnosed as
- 4 E. coli, but, I mean, I've been there and I've
- 5 done that, and I have a real interest in food
- 6 safety. Seeing my son in that kind of pain
- 7 was traumatic, and it's still something that
- 8 haunts me. I do not take this lightly.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, thank you,
- 10 Mr. Blanchard. I'm going to receive your
- 11 written testimony and evidence as Exhibit 66.
- 12 (Whereupon, Exhibit 66 was
- 13 received into evidence.)
- 14 JUDGE HILLSON: And, I will ask
- 15 the panel if they have any questions. Go
- 16 ahead and Schmaedick.
- 17 EXAMINATION BY USDA
- 18 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Melissa
- 19 Schmaedick, USDA. Good afternoon, Mr.
- 20 Blanchard. Thank you for your testimony. So,
- 21 let's see here. You're representing Rock
- 22 Spring Farm, which is a grower, correct?

- 1 THE WITNESS: It's me.
- 2 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Yes.
- THE WITNESS: I am Rock Spring
- 4 Farm.
- 5 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay.
- 6 THE WITNESS: It's a sole
- 7 proprietorship, I own and operate it.
- 8 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay. And do you
- 9 also function as a handler and a processor?
- 10 THE WITNESS: Under the
- 11 definitions of handle in this document, I do
- 12 believe that Ifunction is handler, yes.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay.
- 14 THE WITNESS: We do repackage
- 15 parsley and cilantro on our farm, but -- you
- 16 know, really, any grower on my scale and -- I
- 17 don't -- I must be kind of sketchy on exactly
- 18 how things work in California, and I don't
- 19 mean that as a slight, but around here, when
- 20 you grow a vegetable, you're -- I mean, if
- 21 you're a small scale grower like me, you're
- 22 growing it, packing, and selling it. And,

- 1 handle is defined here as receiving or
- 2 acquiring, selling, processing, shipping,
- 3 distributing, or importing leafy green
- 4 vegetables.
- I mean, I -- everybody in my
- 6 industry, in the small scale local organic
- 7 food industry, is a handler. Okay, we
- 8 distribute, we ship, we process, which is a
- 9 pretty vague -- process is pretty vague term,
- 10 but we're -- yeah, were engaged in those
- 11 processes.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: And, you state
- 13 that your product goes to seven natural food
- 14 stores and a natural food distributor? Is
- 15 that correct?
- 16 THE WITNESS: That is correct.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: So, do those
- 18 customers have any quidelines or requirements
- or requirements that they're looking for when
- 20 they're purchasing product?
- 21 THE WITNESS: Not that have been
- 22 discussed with me.

- 1 MS. SCHMAEDICK: So they don't
- 2 require any type of certification or any type
- 3 of documentation at all?
- 4 THE WITNESS: As far as food
- 5 safety certification or documentation? They
- 6 have not -- none of my buyers have approached
- 7 me about food safety certification or
- 8 documentation. I am a certified organic
- 9 grower, I do provide them with a copy of my
- 10 organic certification certificate each year.
- 11 MS. SCHMAEDICK: And what about
- 12 good agricultural practices?
- 13 THE WITNESS: It has never been an
- issue between me and my buyers.
- 15 MS. SCHMAEDICK: You mentioned
- 16 Iowa State University's Leopold Center.
- 17 THE WITNESS: Yes.
- 18 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Is that a land
- 19 grant university?
- 20 THE WITNESS: Iowa State
- 21 University is a land grant university, yes.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: So what is your

- 1 opinion of including a representative, or more
- 2 than one representative, of land grant
- 3 universities on the technical review board?
- 4 Do you think that's a good idea?
- 5 THE WITNESS: I think that it's a
- 6 fine idea. I don't know that I'd so far as to
- 7 say it's a good idea, but it's a fine idea.
- 8 I mean, I don't have a problem with it. I
- 9 work with the food safety extension agent at
- 10 Iowa State University as part of my work with
- 11 the Leopold Center and appreciate very much
- 12 his comments and sensitivity to the issues
- 13 that we face on the farm. He has certainly
- 14 helped us to upgrade our own operation, which
- 15 I do genuinely appreciate.
- 16 As far as the appropriateness of
- 17 having somebody in that realm on the
- 18 committee, I don't know how to speak to that.
- 19 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Well I quess my
- 20 question is, you stated that you feel that
- 21 there isn't a venue for certain interests to
- 22 be represented in the way that this proposal

- 1 has been put forward, and I'm just wondering
- 2 if -- and then you mentioned, the Leopold
- 3 Center.
- 4 THE WITNESS: Right.
- 5 MS. SCHMAEDICK: So, if the
- 6 Leopold Center were able to participate, would
- 7 they be a good. I guess ambassador of your
- 8 concerns?
- 9 THE WITNESS: Yes, I think that I
- 10 believe that if Sam Beattie from the Iowa
- 11 State University was the person that you
- 12 selected to do that then yes, in that
- 13 particular instance, with that particular
- 14 individual, that he would be a good ambassador
- of the concerns that I and my fellow small
- 16 organic farmers have. However, I don't see --
- it's -- you use a good term, ambassador in --
- 18 that is all he is. When you've got 23 people
- on a committee, and 10 of those people are
- 20 from the two states that have the most
- 21 interest and the most industrial methods of
- leafy greens production, then having one

- 1 ambassador there is not going to make a whole
- 2 lot of difference in -- and yeah, you get a
- 3 chance to have your voice heard, but that's
- 4 it.
- 5 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Is 10 the
- 6 majority of 23?
- 7 THE WITNESS: No, ten is not the
- 8 majority of 23, but as I noted in my
- 9 testimony, ten is a majority of the handlers
- 10 and producers. In other words, the industry
- 11 representatives on this committee. I mean, I
- 12 see -- you know, I have been involved in
- 13 constructing bylaws for organizations that
- 14 have sought to have representatives from
- 15 different realms, and I understand the
- 16 challenge that you're up against here, and
- 17 you're right, it's not. But, I still don't
- 18 think that I -- I do think that this gives the
- 19 majority of the political power within --
- 20 political within the context of the committee,
- 21 it gives the majority of the political power
- 22 to those regions that have the most industrial

- 1 base of production.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Do you have any
- 3 recommendations that you would support as
- 4 being a fairer representation?
- 5 THE WITNESS: I think I -- no, I
- 6 don't. And, I don't because I think that
- 7 really you're asking industry to be in the
- 8 position here of regulating themselves and, I
- 9 think that one of the reasons that we take
- 10 regulation out of the hands of the industry is
- in it is an attempt to avoid the biases that
- 12 come from having -- no insult, but having
- 13 forces that can afford to hire attorneys, who
- 14 can spend weeks on this stuff instead of
- 15 trying to cram it in in the evenings after
- 16 they've read bedtime stories to their kids.
- 17 You know, that you are dealing with an
- 18 entirely different structure there. So I --
- 19 I mean, I don't think that changing the
- 20 committee structure is going to address what
- 21 I feel is the inherent flaw of having an
- 22 industry driven regulatory body.

- 1 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Based on your
- 2 understanding of the proposal, who -- what
- 3 body would ultimately decide if metrics were
- 4 implemented?
- 5 THE WITNESS: My understanding of
- 6 the proposal is that the administrative
- 7 committee, the National Leafy Green Vegetable
- 8 Administrative Committee, would be the body
- 9 that would ultimately have control of the
- 10 metrics that are implemented.
- 11 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Do you have a
- 12 copy of the proposal in front of you?
- 13 THE WITNESS: I do.
- 14 MS. SCHMAEDICK: I would like to
- 15 direct your attention to 970.67.
- 16 THE WITNESS: Okay.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Could you read
- 18 that first sentence please?
- 19 THE WITNESS: Audit metrics shall
- 20 be recommended by the committee to USDA for
- 21 approval after consultation with the technical
- 22 review board.

- 1 Are you asking me to comment on
- 2 that as well?
- JUDGE HILLSON: I don't think she
- 4 asked you anything other than what you did, so
- 5 --
- 6 THE WITNESS: Okay.
- 7 JUDGE HILLSON: -- I was waiting
- 8 for another question.
- 9 MS. SCHMAEDICK: So, based on your
- 10 reading of that sentence, does the committee
- 11 have ultimate approval of the metrics?
- 12 THE WITNESS: If you're looking
- for a simple yes or no answer, then the answer
- 14 would be no.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Were you present
- 16 earlier this morning?
- 17 THE WITNESS: Yeah, I've been here
- 18 all day.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay. So, on
- 20 page two of your testimony, you state it seems
- 21 fair to assume that the NLGMA would follow the
- 22 same general outline as the California NLGMA

- 1 with regard to production metrics. Can you
- 2 explain to me why it would seem fair to make
- 3 that assumption?
- 4 THE WITNESS: Because the
- 5 committee that a majority of the producers and
- 6 handlers on the committee that makes a
- 7 recommendation to the USDA is going to be made
- 8 up of people from the two zones that have --
- 9 within which the California and Arizona LGMA
- 10 is -- existed -- I'm sorry, I didn't -- I
- 11 don't want to diagram that sentence.
- I -- and, that seems to be the
- 13 model that were working from. I mean, the
- 14 proponents are the California and Arizona
- 15 leafy greens marketing groups. I mean,
- 16 they're the same folks that were behind that.
- 17 So, I think in absence anything else, and I
- 18 appreciated the testimony, and I really
- 19 appreciate the statements that were made by
- 20 the proponents this morning, about their
- 21 intentions to have this be an open process,
- 22 that does foster and recognize regional

- 1 differences, but I still think that it seems
- 2 likely that it's not going to -- that actually
- 3 implementing that, given the structures that
- 4 are here, and given the players who are
- 5 involved, it just doesn't seem likely that it
- 6 would be any different.
- 7 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Is there anything
- 8 in the proposed agreement language that would
- 9 prevent grass or wetland buffers?
- 10 THE WITNESS: There are no
- 11 production metrics, I think it's fair to say,
- 12 to discuss in the proposed agreements.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: So, is it
- 14 possible that metrics that would allow for
- 15 vegetated buffer zones be created?
- 16 THE WITNESS: It's absolutely
- 17 possible that that would happen. I actually
- 18 think one of the proponents discussed that
- 19 this morning. I was heartened to hear that.
- 20 THE WITNESS: You state that the
- 21 NLGMA provides for market differentiation on
- 22 the basis of perceived safety. Can you

- 1 explain how the NLGMA provides for market
- 2 differentiation?
- 3 It's on page three of your
- 4 testimony. It's the first paragraph under the
- 5 heading, the NLGMA would have a negative
- 6 effect on small and local producers.
- 7 THE WITNESS: Thank you. The
- 8 NLGMA provides for market differentiation by
- 9 stating that -- the NLGMA, in section 970.75,
- 10 makes provision for the establishment of
- 11 promotional activities to promote the
- 12 acceptance of the agreement, and of leafy
- 13 green vegetables or products handled by
- 14 signatory members.
- So, basically, you're creating two
- 16 classes of product in that situation. There's
- 17 a class of product that is handled by
- 18 signatory members and there's a class of
- 19 product that is not handled by signatory
- 20 members. So, right there, you have a form of
- 21 market differentiation. You wouldn't have a
- 22 marketing agreement if you didn't want market

- 1 marketing differentiation.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: You further state
- 3 that farms like yours, small-scale direct
- 4 marketing growers, are likely to have the
- 5 economically important direct to retail outlet
- 6 closed to you. What in the proposed language
- 7 leads you to that conclusion?
- 8 THE WITNESS: Because the NLGMA
- 9 seeks to differentiate signatory products from
- 10 non-signatory products, if a small-scale
- 11 direct marketing grower who as part of their
- 12 strategy markets direct to retail outlets or
- 13 direct to wholesale distributors, suffers a
- 14 marketing -- market disadvantage by not
- 15 participating in the program, then that avenue
- 16 could well be closed to them.
- 17 The website for the California
- 18 NLGMA makes reference to the fact that -- the
- 19 California NLGMA website makes reference to
- 20 the idea that market -- that produce buyers
- 21 support the seal and support the LGMA by not
- 22 buying from non-signatory parties. Okay, so

- 1 it has, again, assuming that the same
- 2 marketing strategy would be followed and given
- 3 the marketing committees that are set up
- 4 within the proposed rule, I would -- I mean,
- 5 you would be -- it would be ludicrous for
- 6 somebody who was promoting the NLGMA not to
- 7 say to the wholesale distributors that
- 8 signatory members are selling to, hey, you
- 9 guys should only be buying from us, because if
- 10 you buy from these other guys, then you're not
- 11 supporting these food safety standards. And
- 12 so right there, I mean, that -- you're
- 13 starting to close doors.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Under the
- 15 proposed language are -- would retailers
- 16 allowed to be signatory handlers?
- 17 THE WITNESS: No, and I don't
- 18 believe that's what I said.
- 19 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Well, if you
- 20 state that you would have your direct to
- 21 retail outlets closed to you, --
- 22 THE WITNESS: Okay, if I'm -- I'm

- 1 sorry. Did I just interrupt you?
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Well, I'm just
- 3 trying to understand. If retailers -- if I
- 4 understand the proposal correctly, retailers
- 5 could not be signatories. So, then, the
- 6 buyer/seller relationship is between you and
- 7 your customer, and if they're not a signatory
- 8 handler, then how -- how does that impact you?
- 9 THE WITNESS: Because if my
- 10 customer has made a decision only to, for
- 11 legal or other -- legal or marketing reasons,
- 12 to only purchase leafy greens from NLGMA
- 13 signatories and I'm not an NLGMA signatory,
- 14 then they aren't going to purchase greens from
- 15 me. So, that does have an effect on my
- 16 relationship with a retailer.
- 17 And I -- I feel like maybe I'm not
- 18 being clear about that. It seems -- it just
- 19 seems -- I mean, it just seems really obvious
- 20 to me, but maybe I'm -- maybe it's that you
- 21 and I disagree about it, but it's just -- I
- 22 seem like I'm missing something in your line

- 1 of questioning .
- JUDGE HILLSON: Well, you just
- 3 answer them as best you can.
- 4 THE WITNESS: Okay.
- JUDGE HILLSON: And, she'll ask
- 6 them and that's what we do here.
- 7 THE WITNESS: Okay.
- 8 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay. I'm just -
- 9 I'm curious. In your opinion, is the
- 10 National Organic Program a marketing program?
- 11 THE WITNESS: Yes.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: So, all of the
- 13 practices that are outlined under the NOP are
- 14 for marketing purposes and not for other
- 15 purposes, production, handling guidelines?
- 16 THE WITNESS: I'm afraid I don't
- 17 understand the question.
- 18 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay, thank you.
- 19 No further questions.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from
- 21 the USDA panel? Ms. Deskins, go ahead.
- MS. DESKINS: Sharlene Deskins,

- 1 Office of General Counsel. I just wanted to
- 2 clarify the type of leafy greens that you
- 3 grow. You mentioned that you grow herbs,
- 4 cilantro and parsley. Is there anything else
- 5 in the definition that you grow? The
- 6 definition is on -- it's 970.15.
- 7 THE WITNESS: Yep. Yeah, I grow
- 8 arugula, cabbage, red, green, and savoy,
- 9 chard, cilantro, endive, escarole, kale,
- 10 lettuce, leaf, butter, head, and romain,
- 11 parsley, radicchio, spinach, spring mix. And,
- 12 I actually think I grow almost everything that
- 13 you guys have listed in the spring mix except
- 14 for the endigia.
- MS. DESKINS: Okay, thank you.
- 16 THE WITNESS: Thanks. Thanks for
- 17 asking.
- 18 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from
- 19 the USDA panel? Ms. Dash?
- 20 MS. DASH: Suzanne Dash. I may be
- 21 making you repeat something, but I just wanted
- 22 to ask, if there is a national agreement, do

- 1 you believe that your current buyers will say
- 2 that they only want to buy from growers or
- 3 handlers that are covered under the agreement?
- 4 THE WITNESS: I am concerned that
- 5 they would feel a legal pressure, because food
- 6 safety is a litigious issue, to only buy --
- 7 and once it's instituted as a -- in a quasi-
- 8 regulatory framework such as this, that they
- 9 would feel pressured to only buy from
- 10 signatory farms.
- MS. DASH: And, is that why you
- 12 said that the agreement would limit the
- 13 ability of small-market growers to make a
- 14 living?
- THE WITNESS: Yes.
- MS. DASH: Thank you, that's all I
- 17 had.
- 18 THE WITNESS: Thanks.
- 19 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from
- 20 the panel? Are there any questions from out
- 21 here in the audience? Do you have a question
- 22 or comment? Any comments are made over here,

- 1 under oath, okay? What about from the
- 2 proponent table?
- 3 EXAMINATION BY PROPONENTS
- 4 MR. STENZEL: One quick question.
- 5 Thank you very much for being here, I
- 6 appreciate your testimony.
- 7 JUDGE HILLSON: Would you kindly -
- 8 I know who you are.
- 9 MR. STENZEL: I'm sorry. Tom
- 10 Stenzel, United Fresh Produce Association.
- 11 When it comes to food safety, you said FDA
- 12 really is the proper agency to enforce food
- 13 safety regulations. Is that correct?
- 14 THE WITNESS: That is what I said,
- 15 yes.
- 16 MR. STENZEL: Okay. Do you feel
- 17 that a consistent, across the board, mandatory
- 18 approach from FDA would be in the best
- 19 interest of small producers?
- 20 THE WITNESS: It depends on what
- 21 is encompassed in that consistent approach.
- 22 I think that there are -- there would be ways

- 1 to structure a regulation in order to provide
- 2 for that, yes.
- 3 MR. STENZEL: And, you're
- 4 concerned about a marketing agreement as that
- 5 some participate and some don't, and
- 6 therefore, it creates kind-of a two-tiered
- 7 relationship. Is that --
- 8 THE WITNESS: That's correct.
- 9 MR. STENZEL: Okay.
- 10 THE WITNESS: And that it's -- and
- 11 that -- unlike organic, it's making a claim
- 12 about an outcome, okay? The LGMA is about
- 13 food safety. It's about an outcome. So, it's
- 14 making a -- it's inherently making a claim
- 15 that this is a safer product than something
- 16 that is not LG -- that is not produced or
- 17 handled by an LGMA signatory.
- 18 MR. STENZEL: Let me ask you a
- 19 hypothetical question. If we're all in this
- 20 together, we're all trying to show the highest
- 21 level of food safety, which I believe we are,
- 22 how would you go about implementing a

- 1 consistent, nationwide framework that
- 2 everybody complies with, with regional
- 3 differences in the things that we've already
- 4 talked about, but something that the consumer
- 5 could trust all of our products?
- 6 THE WITNESS: I think that having
- 7 a system that was based on outcomes, and --
- 8 yeah, I think that a system that was based on
- 9 outcomes would provide more confidence and
- 10 more flexibility than than something that was
- 11 based on -- that is process oriented.
- I mean, obviously there are
- 13 fundamental processes, you've got to wash your
- hands, you've got to have bathrooms for your
- 15 employees, okay, I think that if you were to
- 16 base things on outcomes, is the product safe?
- 17 Have you taken the sorts of steps to -- and I
- 18 -- okay, I'm going to admit to being a little
- 19 fuzzy on the CITA (phonetic spelling)
- 20 regulations that went through, maybe 10 or 12
- 21 years ago, but they basically set up a system
- 22 where they said, you know, you have to take

- 1 certain steps to reduce the pathogen load, and
- 2 there were -- and you could pick and choose,
- 3 you know -- every situation is unique, but
- 4 have you taken steps to reduce the pathogen
- 5 load down to an acceptable level? I mean
- 6 we're always going to have pathogens in our
- 7 food, unless, you guys are certainly aren't
- 8 out there promoting, like, hydroponics and
- 9 enclosed atmosphere-controlled greenhouses
- 10 just yet, and, just so -- so, I think that we
- 11 are going to be dealing with pathogens in the
- 12 environment, and the question is, how to
- 13 reduce those and I think that there are
- 14 different approaches to that that aren't
- 15 necessarily based on region or scale or
- 16 production methods. I mean, it seems like
- 17 were kind of missing something when we get all
- 18 caught up in just those ideas.
- 19 MR. STENZEL: Are you familiar
- 20 with FDA's guidance document on leafy greens
- 21 or even their good agricultural practices from
- 22 the 1998 --

- 1 THE WITNESS: Yeah, I'm --
- 2 familiar with would be the right term.
- 3 MR. STENZEL: If they go to make
- 4 that type of process that FDA has already
- 5 issued become, kind of, the nationwide
- 6 consistent approach, would you support that?
- 7 THE WITNESS: I don't know the
- 8 answer to the question. I haven't taken the
- 9 opportunity to study that closely enough.
- 10 Thank you for asking.
- 11 MR. STENZEL: And one last
- 12 question, you referred to the marketing
- 13 agreement as an industry self regulation, and
- 14 I know that's a concern that has been
- 15 expressed. But, are you aware that the
- 16 proposal, itself, says it would recognize
- 17 FDA's authority to set the standard as a
- 18 public health agency for the US government,
- 19 and that the agreement would have to recognize
- 20 and enforce those standards, not determine its
- 21 own?
- 22 THE WITNESS: Yes, I'm aware that

- 1 it says that. And, you know, which case I --
- 2 on reading that, had a question about those --
- 3 if the implementation of regulations is
- 4 imminent, which was -- which seemed to be a
- 5 thrust of what the proponents were saying this
- 6 morning, it, I guess to me, calls into further
- 7 question, what's the need for an NLGMA and
- 8 does that just muddy the waters instead of
- 9 making it more clear?
- 10 MR. STENZEL: Have you seen any of
- 11 the comments from the FDA regarding of how
- 12 they might look at a marketing agreement as
- 13 providing an extra means for assurance or
- 14 compliance auditing?
- 15 THE WITNESS: I have not.
- MR. STENZEL: Thank you.
- 17 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
- 18 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from
- 19 the panel? Mr. Giclas?
- 20 MR. GICLAS: Mr. Blanchard, thank
- 21 you for your testimony today. I just had a
- 22 couple of questions.

1 First of all, do you believe that

- 2 organic program requirements and food safety
- 3 requirements are difficult to reconcile in the
- 4 same operation?
- 5 THE WITNESS: No.
- 6 MR. GICLAS: Okay. Are you aware
- 7 -- you talked a little bit about the
- 8 California agreement. Are you aware of the
- 9 fact that in the California marketing
- 10 agreement, approximately 20% of their board is
- 11 actually organic producers as well as
- 12 conventional producers?
- 13 THE WITNESS: I wouldn't have any
- 14 problem believing that.
- 15 MR. GICLAS: I'm curious about
- 16 some of the -- you know, some of the citations
- in your testimony that kind of referred to the
- 18 practices associated with the California
- 19 agreement as, I think, being the potential
- 20 starting point for the national agreement. Do
- 21 you think that the national agreement and it's
- 22 proposed process for metrics development

- 1 presents an opportunity to go back and, you
- 2 know, sort of -- you know, refine those food
- 3 safety metrics and audit metrics?
- 4 THE WITNESS: I would certainly
- 5 hope that if the NLGMA gets approved and goes
- 6 forward, that it would provide that
- 7 opportunity and that the sorts of things that
- 8 the proponents said this morning about the
- 9 intention to include a diversity of voices in
- 10 the process would be taken seriously.
- 11 MR. GICLAS: In areas where
- 12 industry doesn't know the precise, you know,
- 13 risk that might be attributable to, say,
- 14 wildlife, for the sake of argument, would you
- 15 encourage the industry to act with a
- 16 precautionary approach, or would you encourage
- 17 them rather not to act until they have
- 18 definitive information?
- 19 THE WITNESS: You know, it's
- 20 funny, because you can -- the precautionary
- 21 approach or the precautionary principle can be
- 22 in conflict, depending on what goals you are

- 1 applying it to. I guess I would need to give
- 2 that some more serious thought. I think
- 3 there's certainly room for making some
- 4 scientific conjecture, if you will, to say
- 5 that, gee, you know if you were to -- if that
- 6 were the case that mice carry E. coli 0157,
- 7 that maybe that means that rats are likely to,
- 8 too. That might be a logical sort of a
- 9 connection to make. I think that identifying
- 10 the areas where research needs to be carried
- 11 out, and again, making sure that there is a
- 12 serious process for revisiting the metrics on
- 13 a periodic basis, would be an important
- 14 element if this is approved.
- 15 MR. GICLAS: So, in an area where
- 16 we might know there's a small amount of risk
- 17 but we don't know, you know, whether that
- 18 right level of risk is acceptable or not, you
- 19 wouldn't necessary necessarily discourage the
- 20 industry from acting out of an abundance of
- 21 caution in those areas.
- 22 THE WITNESS: Yeah. You know, I'm

- 1 just not sure answer that one.
- MR. GICLAS: Yeah, well, and I can
- 3 see you struggling with that one. So, let me
- 4 try to make it -- rephrase my question or make
- 5 it clearer.
- 6 THE WITNESS: Thanks.
- 7 MR. GICLAS: Let's talk about
- 8 deer, there's a variety of research that's
- 9 associated with deer. I think the risk can
- 10 be, depending on what study that you look at,
- 11 can range anywhere from, you know, one half of
- one percent up to 2.4, 3%. So I guess my
- 13 question is, knowing that there is some risk,
- 14 knowing that that's a small amount of risk,
- 15 what's the acceptable level of risk at which
- 16 you draw the line and not have to address that
- 17 concern?
- 18 THE WITNESS: I'll be honest,
- 19 that's the sort of question that keeps me up
- 20 at night. As a producer, I mean, it makes me
- 21 sick to my stomach to have to think about what
- 22 is an acceptable level of risk. Okay, but we

- 1 also grow in the environment and the actions
- 2 that we take in the interest of, perhaps,
- 3 eliminating all pathogens from our food might
- 4 have impacts downstream that are far more
- 5 devastating.
- 6 So, I find it to be, frankly, a
- 7 morally confusing issue and one that I think
- 8 bears serious thought and consideration not
- 9 only at an industry level, but as a society
- 10 level where we're not likely to get it.
- 11 Sorry, I can't give you a good answer to that
- 12 one.
- MR. GICLAS: No, I appreciate the
- 14 answer that you gave and I don't have another
- 15 question, so thank you very much.
- 16 JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, Mr. Resnick?
- 17 MR. RESNICK: Thank you. Jason
- 18 Resnick, Western Growers. Mr. Blanchard,
- 19 thank you very much for your testimony today.
- 20 I also want to thank you for sharing the
- 21 anecdote about your son. I'm sorry that your
- 22 son had to go through that, and you understand

- 1 food safety from a very personal perspective,
- 2 and I think that's what we're all trying to
- 3 avoid, anyone getting sick. So, I appreciate
- 4 you sharing that.
- I wanted to ask you about some of
- 6 your references to the California NLGMA and I
- 7 was wondering if it's your belief that, for
- 8 example, hedgerows or grasslands or wetlands
- 9 are required to be removed pursuant to the
- 10 California NLGMA?
- 11 THE WITNESS: Based on the
- 12 readings that I did in preparation for this
- 13 opportunity, as well as the testimony that was
- 14 given by the proponents this morning, I have
- 15 to say that it's not really clear. The
- 16 sequence, and -- of events and processes that
- 17 were followed following the 2006 spinach
- 18 outbreak, it just looks murky out there. And,
- 19 it's hard to tell, you know, what was
- 20 California, what was the super metrics, what
- 21 was -- you know, what was just people getting
- 22 wild here. I don't know. I honestly don't

- 1 know.
- 2 MR. RESNICK: Have you read the
- 3 California NLGMA metrics?
- 4 THE WITNESS: I tried to get
- 5 through those those before I came out here,
- 6 you know, unfortunately, this is an extremely
- 7 busy time of year. I only found out that I
- 8 was going to be coming to this event three
- 9 weeks ago, and have been trying to make the
- 10 most of it. So, I've scanned them, but to say
- 11 that I have read them, it would be like my son
- 12 saying that he did his math homework.
- MR. RESNICK: We should not
- 14 believe you?
- 15 THE WITNESS: You should not
- 16 believe it.
- 17 MR. RESNICK: Okay. You heard Mr.
- 18 Giclas' testimony earlier that the California
- 19 LGMA, for example, does not require the
- 20 removal of habitat or wetlands, grasslands,
- 21 hedgerows, and things like that.
- 22 THE WITNESS: Yes, I did hear that

- 1 testimony.
- 2 MR. RESNICK: You wouldn't
- 3 disagree with that testimony, would you?
- 4 THE WITNESS: I wouldn't have a
- 5 basis for disagreeing. I would approach it
- 6 with a certain amount of skepticism without
- 7 questioning Mr. Giclas' integrity.
- 8 MR. RESNICK: Fair enough. You --
- 9 did you read Jo Ann Baumgartner's survey of
- 10 farmers by the Monterey Resource Conservation
- 11 District?
- 12 THE WITNESS: Yeah, I believe
- 13 you're asking if I read that part of her
- 14 testimony?
- MR. RESNICK: If you actually read
- 16 the survey.
- 17 THE WITNESS: I did not actually
- 18 read the survey, no.
- 19 MR. RESNICK: You read Ms.
- 20 Baumgartner's testimony?
- 21 THE WITNESS: That's correct.
- MR. RESNICK: Are you able to

- 1 distinguish from that testimony, what
- 2 contributed to the allegations of removal of
- 3 habitat and things like that, if those were
- 4 required by the California LGMA or if those
- 5 were required by suppliers -- excuse me, by
- 6 receivers and buyers, so-called super metrics?
- 7 THE WITNESS: Without reading
- 8 those upon being asked the question, I don't
- 9 feel like I can really answer the question.
- 10 It's been several years days and a whole lot
- 11 of LGMA terminology since I had a careful look
- 12 at that.
- MR. RESNICK: Understand, are you
- 14 aware of the term that's been used in other
- 15 testimony, super metrics?
- 16 THE WITNESS: Yes, I am.
- 17 MR. RESNICK: What's your
- 18 understanding of that term?
- 19 THE WITNESS: My understanding is
- 20 that the super metrics are metrics that go
- 21 above and beyond those required by the LGMA,
- 22 or perhaps, in place before the California

- 1 LGMA came into place, that are more severe in
- 2 how they deal with a severe -- severe is the
- 3 wrong term -- they are more strict in how they
- 4 deal with the food safety issues, or maybe err
- 5 more towards the precautionary side of things
- 6 with less regard in general to other
- 7 mitigating circumstances, like environmental
- 8 concerns.
- 9 MR. RESNICK: And do you believe
- 10 that a food safety approach should have --
- 11 should balance environmental and habitat
- 12 concerns?
- 13 THE WITNESS: Yes.
- MR. RESNICK: As well as food
- 15 safety?
- 16 THE WITNESS: As I said in
- 17 response to questions from Mr. Giclas, yeah.
- 18 I mean, again, that's the tension that keeps
- 19 me awake at night. You know, it's -- we can't
- 20 disregard the natural environment that we're
- 21 in, because we're in it. You know, we live
- 22 with it, and other people have to live with it

- 1 too. But, other people have to live with the
- 2 food we produce. That's a -- yeah, you have
- 3 to balance those things out. I don't know
- 4 where the line is.
- 5 MR. RESNICK: If the national LGMA
- 6 were to be adopted and implemented, and it had
- 7 the effect of reducing the number of so-called
- 8 super metrics, and showed -- and demonstrated
- 9 more balance with the environment and managing
- 10 those concerns, would that be an improvement
- 11 of the over the status quo?
- 12 THE WITNESS: Sorry, I believe
- that the only thing you're asking about was
- 14 whether it reduced the effect of the super
- 15 metrics. Is that right?
- 16 MR. RESNICK: If that were the
- 17 effect -- if that were one of the effects --
- 18 THE WITNESS: Okay.
- 19 MR. RESNICK: -- of the national
- 20 NLGMA, would that be better than what we have
- 21 now?
- 22 THE WITNESS: I don't know. There

- 1 are so many factors that go into that, I don't
- 2 know how to answer that question, just based
- 3 on the -- that one metric, if you will.
- 4 MR. RESNICK: Would a reduction in
- 5 buyer or receiver standards that go beyond
- 6 mere co-management of food safety and other
- 7 biological and environmental concerns, would
- 8 that be a good thing?
- 9 THE WITNESS: Yeah, on the face of
- 10 that, that would seem to be a good thing.
- 11 MR. RESNICK: If you had the
- 12 opportunity to provide input into the national
- 13 LGMA process after assuming it were to be
- 14 adopted, after its adoption, would you be
- 15 willing to provide input into that process?
- 16 Into the development of metrics?
- 17 THE WITNESS: Insofar as the
- 18 limitations on my time as a single father, as
- 19 a educator, as an activist already, as a
- 20 farmer were to allow, but I mean, frankly, if
- 21 the opportunity to do but is on October 6 of
- 22 next year, I'm going to be hard-pressed to

- leave the farm, and I -- you know, my field
- 2 assistant is going to kill me if I do this
- 3 again.
- 4 MR. RESNICK: There may be other
- 5 times that may be more available to you?
- 6 THE WITNESS: Yeah, and I also
- 7 understand, I mean, you know, my high season
- 8 is not necessarily the high season of the
- 9 people that you are representing, and so, I
- 10 think that's a challenge. But yeah, I mean,
- 11 if this goes through, then obviously I have an
- 12 interest in making sure, at that point, that
- it does the best possible job, but until that
- 14 time, I'm going to hope that it doesn't.
- MR. RESNICK: I appreciate that.
- 16 Thank you very much. I have nothing further.
- 17 JUDGE HILLSON: Let me just ask
- 18 once again, if there are any more questions
- 19 from anyone here? Thank you, Mr. Blanchard,
- 20 you may step down.
- 21 THE WITNESS: Thank you for the
- 22 opportunity to speak today.

- 1 JUDGE HILLSON: Oh, do you have a
- 2 question? Hang on a --
- THE WITNESS: Okay.
- 4 JUDGE HILLSON: Could you identify
- 5 yourself please?
- 6 EXAMINATION BY THE PUBLIC
- 7 MR. DUNCANSON: My name is Bruce
- 8 Duncanson, D-U-N-C-A-N-S-O-N,B B-R-U-C-E.
- 9 currently, your farm operations are managed by
- 10 the FDA, your rules and regulations, your best
- 11 practices, the EPA, USDA, there's 3 government
- 12 agencies that --
- 13 THE WITNESS: There's probably a
- 14 good mishmash of people that are telling you
- 15 what I should and shouldn't be doing on the
- 16 farm, yes.
- MR. DUNCANSON: And, they're
- 18 already in place and we're paying for them and
- 19 so -- basically, all consumers sure that cost?
- 20 As taxpayers?
- 21 THE WITNESS: I think that's
- 22 probably a fair assessment of the situation.

- 1 MR. DUNCANSON: Do you have any
- 2 idea how much extra consumers would have to
- 3 pay to man, staff, regulate this NLGMA thing
- 4 that I believe vegetable washing could take
- 5 care of? How much would that be?
- 6 THE WITNESS: Well, what did you
- 7 guys -- well, you guys had a price per case on
- 8 there.
- 9 JUDGE HILLSON: He's asking you a
- 10 question.
- 11 THE WITNESS: I think it's
- 12 something like --
- 13 JUDGE HILLSON: Please answer his
- 14 --
- 15 THE WITNESS: -- \$.02 a case. I
- 16 don't think it would add -- frankly, I don't
- 17 think it would have that much. To the -- to
- 18 what consumers would be paying. That doesn't
- 19 seem to be the primary issue here. And on --
- 20 I also think it's worth noting, washing
- 21 produce doesn't do any good for getting
- 22 contamination out of the produce. I mean,

- 1 once you get poop on your food, you've got
- 2 poop in the food. And rinsing it off,
- 3 actually, frankly, just doesn't do a whole lot
- 4 of good.
- 5 It gets right into the crevices that are there
- 6 on a microscopic level, I mean, you've got to
- 7 be keep the poop off the food first.
- 8 MR. DUNCANSON: Uh-huh. Excuse
- 9 me, I didn't know that.
- 10 THE WITNESS: Yeah. I mean,
- 11 that's something a lot of people don't
- 12 realize. I mean, that's -- it's -- you know,
- 13 and I hate to be so blunt about it, but that's
- 14 what boils down to.
- 15 MR. DUNCANSON: How many cases of
- 16 food are produced?
- 17 THE WITNESS: On my farm?
- MR. DUNCANSON: Well, \$.02 a case,
- 19 these gentlemen are here from out of town, it
- 20 must be a lot of cases of food that this
- 21 country produces.
- THE WITNESS: Yeah, I would assume

- 1 that it's a lot.
- 2 MR. DUNCANSON: Thanks.
- 3 THE WITNESS: You bet.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Thanks, Mr.
- 5 Blanchard. Thank you very much for
- 6 testifying.
- 7 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
- JUDGE HILLSON: And, Ms. Lovera,
- 9 call your next witness?
- 10 MS. LOVERA: Brian Snyder.
- JUDGE HILLSON: I'm marking Mr.
- 12 Snyder's written testimony as Exhibit 67.
- 13 (Whereupon, Exhibit 67 was marked
- for identification.)
- 15 Whereupon,
- 16 BRIAN SNYDER
- 17 having been first duly sworn, was
- 18 called as a witness herein, was examined and
- 19 testified as follows:
- 20 EXAMINATION DIRECT
- 21 JUDGE HILLSON: Could you please
- 22 state your name and spell it for the record?

- 1 THE WITNESS: My name is Brian
- 2 Snyder, it's spelled B-R-I-A-N S-N-Y-D-E-R.
- JUDGE HILLSON: And, you want to
- 4 read a written statement, I take it?
- 5 THE WITNESS: Yes I do.
- 6 JUDGE HILLSON: Go right ahead.
- 7 THE WITNESS: My name is Brian
- 8 Snyder, and I am executive director of the
- 9 Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable
- 10 Agriculture, better known as PASA. Our
- 11 organization, chartered in 1992, represents
- 12 nearly 6000 people, the majority of whom are
- 13 farmers, mostly distributed throughout the
- 14 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and in
- 15 surrounding states, including here in Ohio.
- 16 Our programs include educational workshops
- 17 featuring farmer -to-farmer exchange of
- 18 information and marketing activities focused
- 19 on the regions we serve within Pennsylvania.
- 20 However, PASA is best known for our annual
- 21 conference, held in State College each
- 22 February and drawing 2000 participants from

- 1 across the United States and several foreign
- 2 countries. In fact, we recently had 40 states
- 3 represented in our annual conference, so it
- 4 gives you an idea of how many people do come
- 5 from across the country.
- 6 About half of PASA's farmers
- 7 members are involved in raising leafy green
- 8 vegetables and other vegetables as a component
- 9 of diversified production systems aimed at
- 10 local and regional markets. Most of those
- 11 sales are direct to consumer, though farmers
- 12 markets, restaurants and community supported
- 13 agricultural programs. In fact, a small but
- 14 increasing number of our CSA farms sell over
- 15 1000 shares of the harvest, some as much as
- 16 2000 or more, each year to their eager
- 17 customers, showing how popular that model has
- 18 become in recent times. With shares running
- in the \$500 to \$700 per share range, you can
- 20 see that there have been a lot of questions
- 21 about the small farm definition, based on the
- 22 small business definition, and you can see

- 1 that a number of these farms are actually
- 2 larger farms. But an increasing number of
- 3 these and other smaller farms balance their
- 4 direct sales with other market venues through
- 5 handlers as they have been defined in the
- 6 notice of this hearing. Such sales allow for
- 7 expansion of farming operations, but more
- 8 importantly, for diversification of markets as
- 9 part of an overall strategy to manage risk on
- 10 the farm. We anticipate this trend continuing
- in the immediate future as more and more
- 12 retailers and distributors consider strategies
- 13 for aggregating fresh products from a broad
- 14 array of locally and regionally-based farms.
- 15 Other efforts to maximize revenue
- 16 while minimizing risk in the marketing of
- 17 fresh products from our members' farms include
- 18 certification programs of various kinds,
- 19 predominantly but not exclusively organic, and
- 20 the employment of specialized methods and
- 21 techniques that are meant to protect the
- 22 environment or better serve communities while

- 1 also keeping the farms viable. A common
- 2 factor in nearly all these strategies,
- 3 however, is that the identity of the farm and
- 4 the farmer involved is maintained and reported
- 5 to consumers who buy these products. This is
- 6 a practice that guarantees traceability of the
- 7 food being sold even as it increases consumer
- 8 confidence in less tangible ways. So much is
- 9 said that these days about modern consumers
- 10 being out of touch with the sources of their
- 11 food, almost everything our members do in
- 12 terms of marketing is intended to directly
- 13 address and rectify that problem.
- To come right out with it, PASA is
- 15 opposed to the leafy greens marketing
- 16 agreement as posted in the Federal Register on
- 17 September 3, 2009, and being discussed at this
- 18 hearing today. We derive very little comfort
- 19 from the statement that the proposal was
- 20 submitted by a group of representatives, or
- 21 proponents, of a cross-section of producer and
- 22 handler members of the fresh produce industry

- 1 that claims, quote, to represent the majority
- 2 of the volume of leafy green vegetables
- 3 produced for the US fresh market, unquote,
- 4 stated as though the vegetables themselves
- 5 were being asked to vote on the matter. I
- 6 think -- you know, as I reflect on this, and
- 7 I've been here all day, and listening, and
- 8 I've found it very interesting in thinking the
- 9 conversations like this are going to get us
- 10 places that we haven't been able to get so
- 11 far. But, one of the things that I wouild
- 12 think the Agricultural Marketing Service would
- 13 be alarmed by is the news that 90% of the
- 14 leafy greens in this country come from two
- 15 states. It seems to me like that might be a
- 16 situation of risk that we should be trying to
- 17 address as part of this overall strategy. We
- 18 need to diversify the sources of these
- 19 products. The list of proponents does not
- 20 look representative at all, to us, whether
- 21 assessed from the perspective of geography,
- 22 market segmentation, or consumer preferences.

- 1 We all know and appreciate the
- 2 role of the United States Department of
- 3 Agriculture in supporting the agricultural
- 4 community as broadly as possible. To that
- 5 end, it often ends up that the status quo,
- 6 quote-unquote, majority -- I realize, majority
- 7 is being used in many different ways here today
- 8 -- in this community gets supported to the
- 9 detriment of some of its most innovative
- 10 members who happen to be in the minority, that
- 11 is, if you're counting the vegetables. I
- 12 submit that it is not only the responsibility
- of USDA to support the way things are in
- 14 agriculture, but more importantly, the way
- 15 things could or ought to be in the future,
- 16 especially as we work together to assure the
- 17 safety of food for public consumption.
- 18 Consumers increasingly understand that the
- 19 safety of their food supply is indelibly
- 20 linked to an understanding of the sources of
- 21 that food, most particularly involving the
- 22 ways in which food is produced, handled,

- 1 packaged, and shipped to their local market
- 2 outlets. Following both the science and
- 3 common sense involved, and I think I heard one
- 4 of the Amish farmers mention common sense
- 5 today, it's not a bad term to be using here --
- 6 these consumers are asking for more
- 7 diversified food systems that are locally
- 8 and/or regionally based, emphasizing thorough
- 9 and reliable information, which enables
- 10 average people can make wise choices on behalf
- 11 of their families.
- 12 Simply put, we believe the
- 13 proposed agreement has been presented on
- 14 behalf of a predominantly consolidated
- 15 industry in the interest of increasing and
- 16 solidifying that consolidation for the longer-
- 17 term future. Once a handler becomes a
- 18 signatory to this agreement, and the pressure
- 19 to do so will likely seem nothing like a
- 20 voluntary process, they will become part of
- 21 the system and forbidden to deal with
- 22 producers and other handlers who are not, and

- 1 that is stated in the -- in what was published
- 2 in the Federal Register. The handler may have
- 3 some limited choice in signing on, but
- 4 producers who wish to access the markets
- 5 represented by that handler will not, they
- 6 will lose their choice. This will almost
- 7 necessarily decrease consumer choice as well,
- 8 and more significantly, move the whole system
- 9 away from that place our collective conscience
- 10 would direct us, that is, to a more widely
- 11 diversified and dispersed arrangement that
- 12 minimizes risk for everyone involved, whether
- 13 we're talking about food safety or economic
- 14 security, which is something I would think we
- 15 would be talking about here today, with the
- 16 Agricultural Marketing Service.
- 17 The AMS is intended to serve the
- 18 marketing needs of the agricultural community
- 19 in this country. Their own administration has
- 20 stated that AMS is not a food safety agency.
- 21 But, I submit that while it may might serve
- 22 the immediate marketing needs of the largest

- 1 producers, and most vegetables, as the hearing
- 2 notice makes clear, the current proposal would
- 3 in fact fail to support the majority of
- 4 growers who now produce leafy greens on a
- 5 variety of scales. Of course that majority of
- 6 growers might well become the minority soon
- 7 enough because the LGMA will likely force them
- 8 to comply or step aside altogether, and I've
- 9 heard this from farmers in our state that are
- 10 worried that, as you've heard some today, that
- 11 this is going to be the end of their attempt
- 12 to stay in the business. From a marketing
- 13 point of view, the last thing most smaller
- 14 sized independent farmers need right now,
- 15 whether we're talking about leafy greens,
- 16 dairy products or other commodityOspecific
- 17 group is a government-sponsored, vertically
- 18 integrated, market syndicate against which
- 19 they must compete.
- 20 Besides this underlying potential
- 21 reality to which we are firmly opposed, PASA
- 22 also has the following specific points to make

- 1 with respect to the LGMA proposal as
- 2 published.
- 3 There are no protections built
- 4 into the current proposal for producers who
- 5 might need to meet multiple inspection
- 6 regimens including especially the requirements
- 7 of organic certification in order to market
- 8 their products. Many of these producers are
- 9 also facing requirements imposed by specific
- 10 market outlets, for example, supermarkets, you
- 11 all know this, and it seems that new FDA
- 12 regulations and compliance procedures may be
- in the pipeline as well. And, I'm not as
- 14 excited about the FDA option as, maybe, some
- 15 other speakers have been.
- 16 For a program that offers multiple
- 17 assurances of relying on science-based
- information, the design of the proposed zones
- 19 that would subdivide the production area is
- 20 decidedly unscientific. Meaningful
- 21 subdivisions would be possible based on a
- 22 variety of criteria including climate zones,

- 1 soil types, the overlap of population and
- 2 production potential, transportation routes,
- 3 et cetera. In fact, one that I would like to
- 4 draw your attention to that just didn't come
- 5 to mind when I was typing this up is, I'm
- 6 aware that the National Ag Statistics Service,
- 7 for the first time in the 2007 census, has
- 8 reported national statistics based on
- 9 watershed. And so, this is almost an
- 10 impossible nightmare, I'm sure,
- 11 administratively to think about using
- 12 watersheds instead of state boundaries to
- 13 establish these zones. But we're not here to
- 14 do the easy thing are we? You know, it may be
- 15 hard thing, but if we're going to be trying to
- 16 develop metrics that where we can actually
- 17 measure what's going on in a particular zone,
- 18 why not align it with major watersheds and let
- 19 the states fall where they may? But the zones
- 20 as proposed could have been designed by the
- 21 collective efforts of most any first grade
- 22 geography class. Now, I realize that's kind

- 1 of harsh, but what I meant by that is that
- 2 they seem arbitrary. They seem like stripes
- 3 up and down the country and it's like let's
- 4 put those people up there and those over
- 5 there, and -- I mean, let's be science-based.
- 6 If were going to be science-based, then let's
- 7 use the science to develop zones that make
- 8 sense. This is to say nothing yet of the very
- 9 odd and as yet unspecified methods have been
- 10 employed for distributing the proposed
- 11 national leafy green vegetable administrative
- 12 committee membership.
- 13 And I think, what I'd like to add
- 14 to that is that it's very clear that a lot of
- 15 the disputes that were sort of back-and-forth
- 16 with here today is, where should the power in
- 17 the industry reside? Should it reside with
- 18 where the greatest amount of production is, or
- 19 where the greatest number of farmers are?
- 20 And, going back to previous point I made, I'm
- 21 also always thinking, since you know, I said,
- 22 a little over half of our members are farmers,

- 1 I can tell you that the rest of them all want
- 2 to farm, and are determined to farm, and
- 3 probably will farm. So, I think, USDA, and
- 4 there's been wondered wonderful indications
- 5 under Tom Vilsack that there's going to be a
- 6 lot of attention to helping new farmers get
- 7 started. We need to be thinking of the
- 8 farmers who can come into this business and
- 9 actually participate in spreading out the
- 10 production across the country.
- 11 Since it has been asserted that
- 12 the proponent group states that the proposed
- 13 agreement has been discussed with leafy green
- 14 vegetable growers, handlers, including those
- importing leafy greens, trade associations,
- 16 and other industry stakeholders, for more than
- 17 a year, we might be entitled to expect that
- 18 the largest sustainable sustainable ag group
- in the mid-Atlantic region, PASA, would have
- 20 been consulted as well, but to date our
- 21 opinion has not been directly solicited. Our
- 22 producers and handlers may not match very well

- 1 the model represented by proponents of the
- 2 LGMA, but as a potential USDA program, such as
- 3 a such a project would need to serve the needs
- 4 of more than just the largest production units
- 5 that are out there.
- 6 In conclusion, we'd like to make
- 7 clear PASA's support for improve food quality
- 8 and safety throughout the food system in the
- 9 United States in the world. And I think,
- 10 everybody here probably shares that
- 11 commitment. That's what we got up in the
- 12 morning or drove as far as we did, or flew, in
- 13 many cases, to get your for this hearing. We
- 14 believe, however, that the most important
- 15 factors in achieving that objective are to
- 16 promote more in-depth information, meaningful
- 17 choices and positive involvement on the part
- 18 of consumers in engaging with the folks who
- 19 produce, handle, market, and prepare their
- 20 food. Such factors result from a system that
- 21 is as widely dispersed and diversified as
- 22 possible -- as common sense tells us, putting

- 1 all one's eggs in a single basket is a bad
- 2 strategy for producer and consumer alike. The
- 3 proposed LGMA would take us further away from
- 4 the food safety solution we need, even as it
- 5 threatens the livelihood of many of the farms
- 6 we will need to get there.
- 7 Thank you very much for the
- 8 opportunity to present our views on this
- 9 important matter.
- 10 JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, Mr. Snyder,
- 11 I'm receiving your written testimony as
- 12 Exhibit 67.
- 13 (Whereupon, Exhibit 67 was
- 14 received into evidence.)
- 15 JUDGE HILLSON: And, I will ask
- 16 the USDA panel if they have any questions of
- 17 Mr. Snyder. Ms. Schmaedick?
- 18 EXAMINATION BY USDA
- 19 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Melissa
- 20 Schmaedick, USDA. Good afternoon. And thank
- 21 you, Mr. Snyder, for your comments.
- How long have you been aware of

- 1 this proposal for a national marketing
- 2 agreement?
- THE WITNESS: I've been aware of
- 4 it since early this year. To be frank, a kind
- 5 of came in the middle of a flurry of activity
- 6 around food safety legislation that was
- 7 moving through the house, and that drew a lot
- 8 of the attention earlier in the year, but the
- 9 leafy greens and food safety bill has been,
- 10 basically, in a parallel processes as far as
- 11 our awareness goes.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: And, you are --
- 13 just to clarify, you are here speaking on
- 14 behalf of the Pennsylvania Association for
- 15 Sustainable Agriculture?
- 16 THE WITNESS: Yes, I am, and our
- 17 members.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay.
- 19 THE WITNESS: At any point did you
- 20 seek to provide input into the process?
- 21 I was not aware that this was a process where
- 22 I've needed to contact the people that were

- 1 doing this in order to have input. I mean, as
- 2 far as I'm concerned, this is the first
- 3 opportunity that I've had to have input. You
- 4 know, there may have been other opportunities,
- 5 but this is the first one that I was aware of.
- 6 MS. SCHMAEDICK: In your
- 7 statement, you -- on the first page you say
- 8 that the efforts of your organization include
- 9 certification programs of various kinds. What
- 10 kind of certification programs do you work
- 11 with?
- 12 THE WITNESS: Well, I'm saying
- 13 that our members use various kinds of
- 14 certification programs, organic is the most
- 15 prevalent, but also Certified Naturally Grown,
- in terms of livestock, Certified Humane, but
- 17 one that we are taking a bigger role in his --
- 18 PASA is partnering with the Food Alliance of
- 19 Portland, Oregon that has been doing
- 20 sustainable certification for about 12 years
- 21 now. And, we are actually going to be
- 22 sponsoring that certification in the mid-

- 1 Atlantic region on their behalf, for which we
- 2 have recently received a federal grant to
- 3 support. So, we're very interested in seeing
- 4 the ways in which that sustainable
- 5 certification through the food alliance might
- 6 overlap with the food safety needs of our
- 7 members.
- 8 MS. SCHMAEDICK: So, you mentioned
- 9 that you've been here for this whole day?
- 10 THE WITNESS: Yeah, yeah. Uh-huh.
- 11 MS. SCHMAEDICK: And, your
- 12 comments on the definition of zones. I'm just
- 13 curious, you understand those zones to be the
- 14 limitations or definitions under which metrics
- 15 would be developed?
- 16 THE WITNESS: Well, I understand,
- 17 because of your explanation to an earlier
- 18 person who was testifying, that the zones
- 19 reported for administrative reasons might be
- 20 different than the zones that are developed
- 21 for metrics. I did not understand that before
- 22 I heard you say that earlier today. However,

- 1 I would nonetheless question why there would
- 2 be any advantage in having two sets of zones,
- 3 one for administrative purposes and one for
- 4 the purpose of metrics. I really think it
- 5 would be quite important to keep this pretty
- 6 close in line.
- 7 MS. SCHMAEDICK: So, do you have
- 8 any suggestions, any modifications to offer?
- 9 THE WITNESS: Well, how long do
- 10 you have? I'm actually a person who is
- 11 intrigued by the idea of developing zones for
- 12 the sake of regionalizing agriculture in this
- 13 country. I think that we're all witnessing
- 14 quite a change in our society this year that
- 15 we probably couldn't have anticipated, and
- 16 that is that states are losing the ability to
- 17 actually govern the kinds of things that we
- 18 may need them to do with food safety,
- 19 agriculture, with health care, with everything
- 20 else. And, were all very much aware of how
- 21 little trust there is in the federal
- 22 government as a whole, and I don't mean any

- 1 offense to USDA personnel, but it's very clear
- 2 that across the country, there is a very
- 3 widespread suspicion of what the federal
- 4 government is up to all the time. So, what's
- 5 in between? I mean, I come from a state that
- 6 has the distinction -- the unfortunate
- 7 distinction of being the last state in this
- 8 country that still does not have a budget for
- 9 the current year. And the result has been
- 10 that they have had to lay off a lot of
- 11 Department of Agriculture employees, they've
- 12 had to mothball a lot of programs, and
- 13 Pennsylvania has a very strong reputation for
- 14 managing the food system through the
- 15 Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.
- 16 But, you look ahead, and say, are
- 17 states really going to be able to do this?
- 18 And we really don't want the federal
- 19 government, and I have as many questions about
- 20 the FDA regulations as I would about this, so
- 21 what are we going to do? And I'm sorry, this
- 22 is a very long answer. But, you asked.

- 1 And, I think that it makes sense
- 2 that we start thinking in terms of regions.
- 3 I think it makes sense that we think in terms
- 4 of regions as scientifically as possible using
- 5 the factors that I've listed, and adding into
- 6 that, and maybe as a starting point, watershed
- 7 definitions. And that we start thinking about
- 8 developing regional authorities to look at
- 9 everything from food safety to animal welfare,
- 10 to environmental protection. I mean, in this
- 11 part of the country, that's almost happening
- 12 de facto because of all of the emphasis being
- 13 put on saving the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
- 14 So, that affects, necessarily, a multiple
- 15 state area and forces us, from New York,
- 16 Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, and
- 17 Virginia, Delaware, all to work together
- 18 somehow to achieve that goal. And, I think
- 19 that there is probably some positive stuff
- 20 that can come out of that. So, why not look
- 21 at that as a possible model for dealing with
- 22 this issue as well?

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So, I'm not opposed to the idea of
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- 2 developing zones, I wouldn't have different
- 3 administrative zones, from metric zones, and
- 4 I wouldn't use state lines to define them, as
- 5 difficult as it might be to define the
- 6 authorities without being able to use the
- 7 state government to fall back on.
- 8 So that -- I mean, I think that
- 9 that is fundamentally a good way to start. I
- 10 would emphasize, even before food safety, I'd
- 11 be emphasizing food security, which is a
- 12 broader category and one that I submit the AMS
- 13 needs to be very much focused on. Like I
- 14 said, we all want food safety, we also want
- 15 food security because they are indelibly tied.
- 16 And, having 90% of the production of leafy
- 17 greens coming from two states is a threat to
- 18 both of those things, I believe.
- 19 MS. SCHMAEDICK: On the subject of
- 20 representation, how would you go about
- 21 building adequate representation for some sort
- 22 of administrative committee?

- 1 THE WITNESS: Well, I would have
- 2 it be as democratic as possible, democracy
- 3 seems to work, and it has its flaws, and I
- 4 realize that even in democratic systems, you
- 5 end up having situations where people buy
- 6 influence, and it's really hard to avoid that,
- 7 but I think that it's got to be democratic,
- 8 and from the bottom up, not from the top down,
- 9 and I think that if we were to have regions --
- 10 regional authorities dealing with some of the
- 11 issues that I mentioned, that they would have
- 12 to have some independence from each other,
- 13 much as states currently have. A measure of
- 14 independence, and could have slightly
- 15 different regulations for all kinds of
- 16 agricultural issues.
- 17 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Just one last
- 18 question, based on your understanding of the
- 19 Agricultural Marketing Service, are all of the
- 20 activities of the agency limited to marketing?
- 21 THE WITNESS: My understanding
- 22 would not be deep enough to be able to comment

- 1 on that, but, you know -- my main awareness is
- 2 reading various bulletins that are published
- 3 by the AMS, but you know, certainly, the
- 4 National Organic Program is something that I'm
- 5 very much aware of, and that I have a lot of
- 6 respect for, and yes, I do think that's a
- 7 marketing program.
- 8 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Thank you.
- 9 THE WITNESS: You asked that to
- 10 another speaker, so I thought I would answer
- 11 that.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Thank you.
- 13 THE WITNESS: Uh-huh.
- 14 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from
- 15 the panel? Seeing nothing, anything else from
- 16 --
- 17 THE WITNESS: There was a hand.
- 18 JUDGE HILLSON: Oh, there was a
- 19 hand? Was it a --
- 20 THE WITNESS: He was --
- JUDGE HILLSON: Oh.
- 22 THE WITNESS: -- late.

- 1 JUDGE HILLSON: Go ahead, Mr.
- 2 Souza.
- 3 MR. SOUZA: Thank you. Anthony
- 4 Souza, USDA. Just one quick question. In
- 5 your conclusion, you state that you would like
- 6 to make clear that PASA supports for improve
- 7 food quality and safety throughout the food
- 8 system in the United States and the world. If
- 9 you don't support regulation through FDA in a
- 10 national agreement such as this, what would
- 11 you support, or what would you recommend?
- 12 THE WITNESS: Well, I don't think
- 13 the two options that you just mentioned
- 14 exhaust all the possibilities. I'm concerned
- 15 about the FDA and regulations that they are
- 16 promulgating, I'm concerned about this
- 17 particular proposal, and I think I've been
- 18 clear about why. It's not necessarily the
- 19 USDA involvement in it, it's the combination
- 20 of USDA with the consolidated industry -- you
- 21 know, basically opening themselves up to say,
- 22 you know, anyone that wants in and can come

- 1 in. But, I don't think -- and there's
- 2 fundamental disagreement in the room about
- 3 this. You know, some of us are not easily
- 4 going to trust that alignment. So, I -- what
- 5 I just answered to Ms. Schmaedick is that, you
- 6 know, a democratic system based on
- 7 regionalism, that uses scientific criteria for
- 8 determining what those regions are, is
- 9 something that we ought to be looking at. So,
- 10 I think that that's fundamentally different
- 11 than either the FDA or USDA industry
- 12 collaboration.
- MR. SOUZA: What type of form
- 14 would you recommend to develop such?
- THE WITNESS: Well, I mean, I said
- it wouldn't be states, so it's something that
- 17 goes beyond states, but it's not -- it's also
- 18 not a national anything. So, I think -- you
- 19 know, if I -- I don't know that we have
- 20 something as a precedent to use to say this is
- 21 how we could be doing this, but I think,
- 22 certainly, using a model that might employ

- 1 some elements of -- you know, cooperative
- 2 development and structure that at the same
- 3 time that it quarantees Democratic
- 4 participation on the basis of producers, and
- 5 handlers, and consumers, I mean, let's not
- 6 forget that while we're talking about
- 7 majorities, that producers, themselves, are an
- 8 extreme minority of the population.
- 9 Certainly, consumers have a lot to say about
- 10 food safety. So, I don't have something I can
- 11 pull out of my pocket and say here's what I
- 12 suggest. I'm saying that I think zones based
- 13 on regional structures that are science-based
- 14 and democratic in origin is a pretty good
- 15 place to start thinking about it.
- 16 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
- 17 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from
- 18 the panel? Anything from outside in the
- 19 audience? What about the proponents? Any
- 20 questions?
- 21 JUDGE HILLSON: Thank you for your
- 22 testimony.

- 1 THE WITNESS: I've left you guys
- 2 speechless?
- JUDGE HILLSON: You may step down,
- 4 Mr. Snyder. Thank you for your testimony.
- 5 And, let's do another witness.
- 6 MS. LOVERA: Carl Kolb.
- 7 JUDGE HILLSON: I take it you
- 8 don't have a written statement?
- 9 MR. KOLB: No, sir, I do not.
- 10 JUDGE HILLSON: That's not a
- 11 problem.
- 12 Whereupon,
- 13 KARL KOLB
- having been first duly sworn, was
- 15 called as a witness herein, was examined and
- 16 testified as follows:
- 17 EXAMINATION DIRECT
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, could you
- 19 please state your name and spell for the
- 20 record?
- 21 THE WITNESS: Yes. I'm Dr. Karl,
- 22 K-A-R-L, Kolb, K-O-L-B, as in boy.

- 1 Your Honor?
- JUDGE HILLSON: Go ahead.
- 3 THE WITNESS: Distinguished
- 4 representatives from both sides of the aisle,
- 5 and my colleagues, I am representing OPGMA
- 6 today, the Ohio Produce Growers Marketing
- 7 Association. And, I am also a third-party
- 8 certifier in another position. And so, my
- 9 comments today will address those issues that
- 10 have not been surfaced today, because to
- 11 restate the eloquence of those who have spoken
- 12 before me today would only diminish their
- 13 effect and I can only state that I fully
- 14 support those comments and agree with them
- 15 from the beginning.
- 16 As the senior project manager for
- 17 the Ohio Fresh Produce Food Safety Initiative,
- 18 as funded by ODA, the Ohio Department of
- 19 Agriculture, and supported by more than seven
- 20 associations within Ohio, the Ohio Apple
- 21 Growers Marketing Association, the Ohio
- 22 Ecological Food and Farm Association,

- 1 Independent Farmers Association, Ohio State
- 2 University, and of course, the Ohio Department
- 3 of Agriculture, I have had the opportunity
- 4 over the past several months to spend a
- 5 significant amount of time in Ohio speaking
- 6 with farmers, growers, advocates and a number
- 7 of other folks about the need for a marketing
- 8 agreement or some such instrument to promote
- 9 and protect Ohio agriculture. I'm not here
- 10 today to talk about that.
- But, it has given me an indication
- 12 with good supporting material about the
- 13 national leafy green effort. I would like to
- 14 begin by saying that I was part of the initial
- 15 effort for the California Leafy Green
- 16 Marketing Agreement and sat on a number of
- 17 committees to help put that agreement
- 18 together. And, I will state for the record
- 19 that it was the right idea at the right time,
- 20 and it brought the California produce industry
- 21 back on track during a very severe crisis. I
- 22 think people like Joe Pezzini, Hank Giclas,

- 1 Jim Gorney, are truly heroes for being able to
- 2 put this together and bring it to existence in
- 3 a very short period of time, to reassure the
- 4 growers -- excuse me, the buyers, that the
- 5 produce they were purchasing was safe within
- 6 the boundaries of fresh produce. And so, in
- 7 speaking to that, I would say that the
- 8 California Leafy Green Marketing Agreement was
- 9 exactly the right vehicle for California.
- 10 Which brings me to my point, and I want to
- 11 elaborate on this today, that that worked for
- 12 California, I believe, from my point of view
- 13 with OPGMA, that a similar vehicle would work
- 14 very well for Ohio.
- 15 Let me address the National Leafy
- 16 Green Mmarketing Agreement from the point of
- 17 a problem with the foundation of how this came
- 18 together and what it proposes to do. I want
- 19 to applaud the efforts of Tom and Hank and
- 20 John for moving this forward, it's not easy to
- 21 do. But, there is a basic flaw in the -- in
- 22 this vehicle. And that is that it's all

- 1 inclusive. It only addresses a certain amount
- 2 of commodities, and doesn't address all
- 3 commodities, and because of this inherent
- 4 flaw, what we have is a problem supporting
- 5 what we hope to be a robust standard.
- 6 And, let me talk for just a second
- 7 about the differences between the standard and
- 8 metric. When you prepare a standard, a
- 9 standard is prepared based on one of three
- 10 things, or a combination of things. Science
- is one, regulatory or consumer requirements is
- 12 another, and the third is industry experience,
- 13 what actually goes on in the industry that
- 14 works, that they have found work over about
- 15 over time, that has been validated over a
- 16 period of time.
- 17 A metric is much different, the
- 18 metric is a specific specification that is
- 19 imposed upon, an organization or an action to
- 20 achieve a desired standard. In order to
- 21 develop a robust food safety system at the
- 22 agricultural level, it's important that the

- 1 system consider the entire universe for which
- 2 it's addressing, and in this case, it's the
- 3 entire farm from tomatoes, radishes, to leafy
- 4 greens, and it needs to look at all levels of
- 5 farming from the small farmer to the large
- 6 farmer in order to be considered valid.
- Now, in Europe, the -- and around
- 8 the world, the system of choice is called
- 9 global gap, and it is a risk-based system
- 10 built on standards that come from either
- 11 science, regulatory, or industry practices.
- 12 And in the application of these standards, the
- 13 inspector is so trained that the situation and
- 14 the risk is considered at whatever level he is
- 15 addressing, or she, excuse me, and the
- 16 application of the standard is so addressed.
- 17 The standard doesn't change at different
- 18 levels of the system, the standard is
- 19 addressed based on the risk that it perceives.
- 20 When we talk about metrics, we're
- 21 talking about taking a specific specification,
- 22 and applying it at all levels, whether it

- 1 works or not. And it is not up to the
- 2 inspector to make that value judgment. So,
- 3 when we talk about the national leafy green
- 4 effort, we have to look at whether it can
- 5 become or is a robust system, and without an
- 6 all-inclusive system where it addresses
- 7 everything from tomatoes to romaine, and from
- 8 the small farmer to the large farmer, I don't
- 9 think we have a system that's valid, and so I
- 10 think we need to go back and look at the
- 11 premise of this and address those issues and
- 12 determine whether we have standards or
- 13 metrics, whether it's all-inclusive or whether
- 14 it's not, and whether it addresses the entire
- 15 food safety system of this country.
- One of my concerns as a certifier,
- 17 and I bring this to the table, is that we
- 18 continue at the second- party, third-party,
- 19 fourth-party level, second-party being the
- 20 buyer, third-party being a certifier, fourth-
- 21 party being your regulatory certifier like the
- 22 USDA, that we have standards upon standards

- 1 upon standards, and we keep putting another
- 2 coat of paint on this thing that we call a
- 3 food safety system. I think it's time to slow
- 4 the train down and say to ourselves, do we
- 5 want to look at a risk-based system that truly
- 6 has a standard that is valid, is able to be
- 7 applied across the board for all commodities
- 8 at all levels, given the diverse environment
- 9 that we live in in the United States, a risk-
- 10 based system can do that. You can take a
- 11 standard, it can apply in California, in
- 12 Colorado, in Georgia, this state, or New York,
- 13 and be considered valid and have a robust
- 14 system which we can defend.
- 15 One of the issues that I want to
- 16 back up and talk about for a bit that has not
- 17 been addressed here this morning, and as an
- 18 advisor to more than 500 agricultural clients
- 19 throughout this nation, the thing that's
- 20 missing that has not been addressed is this
- 21 idea that the public has of our food being, in
- 22 a sense, pasteurized or ready to eat. And,

- were talking about a commodity that's grown
- 2 outside, in the environment, subject to a lot
- 3 of environmental stress, that people off the
- 4 shelf are buying and eating.
- 5 And now, I was raised on a farm,
- 6 I'm currently a farmer, and I can remember as
- 7 a young kid, my mom going to the truck farmer,
- 8 and buying lettuce and washing it because the
- 9 lettuce was grown outside, the lettuce was
- 10 subject to a different environmental
- 11 conditions, and it needed to be cleaned before
- 12 we ate it. So, in this matrix, I think we
- 13 need to find a vehicle which can be reeducate,
- 14 per se, our community that says this is a
- 15 phenomenal product, nutritious, great to eat,
- 16 supports the president's campaign on
- 17 nutrition, but it's not ready to eat. And
- 18 that's something that needs to be addressed.
- Now, in my travels, I've sadly
- 20 come across a term which I think has begun to
- 21 characterize the national leafy green effort.
- 22 And I don't want to diminish the efforts of

- 1 these fine gentlemen over here, because
- 2 they've worked very hard to bring us to this
- 3 point. But the -- it's been referred to as a
- 4 trade restriction, a trade barrier. And
- 5 without being all-inclusive, and without
- 6 addressing some of the issues that I haven't
- 7 heard before, at least in this testimony or
- 8 the one I listened to in Monterey over the
- 9 internet, are two, and they need to, I think,
- 10 be seriously looked at. One is, that in
- 11 California, and I spent a lot of time in
- 12 California, there is widespread acceptance of
- 13 the California Leafy Green Marketing
- 14 Agreement. One of the flaws in the agreement
- is, there are thousands of small farmers, and
- 16 I belong to CAFF, the California Alliance for
- 17 Family Farms, that have not signed on to it
- 18 for some very good reasons, most of all were
- 19 addressed this morning. Thousands of small
- 20 farmers who can't do it and because they can't
- 21 do it, it's become a trade restriction to
- 22 them. To customers they once sold radishes,

- 1 tomatoes, and lettuce, they no longer sell.
- 2 Sure, they could sign up for the leafy green,
- 3 but they don't, and because a larger or
- 4 different farmer has signed up for it, it's
- 5 easier for the farmer to purchase all their
- 6 goods from the one that is certified as a
- 7 leafy green rather than make two trips, one to
- 8 the farmer who is not, and one to the farmer
- 9 who is. That is prohibitive, and that's an
- 10 issue that needs to be addressed.
- 11 And, the second issue that I think
- 12 needs to be addressed, that is very important,
- is a number of buyers, and I know this from a
- 14 professional point of view, large buyers, have
- 15 written their standards for all commodities
- 16 using the leafy greens standard of California,
- 17 thus imposing upon them a metric which was
- 18 devised for lettuce, but is now being used for
- 19 tomatoes, and rashes, and a number of other
- 20 commodities.
- 21 And so, when I say that it's a
- 22 great effort on their part, and I applaud them

- for what they've done, I think it's truly
- 2 significant, there is a significant flaw in
- 3 the robustness of this concept that must be
- 4 addressed to ensure that it is valid. And
- 5 that is the all-inclusiveness of it, and that
- 6 is the definition of whether we are risk-based
- 7 and we write standard that can be applied up
- 8 and down the different levels of farming and
- 9 the different diverse areas of this country,
- 10 or we use a metric where one size -- and not
- 11 to sound trite, fits all.
- 12 And so with these ideas, I wish to
- 13 present these for further study and ask of the
- 14 group to consider these, to slow the train
- 15 down, so that what we have is not just another
- 16 coat of paint, what people believe is a trade
- 17 barrier, or restrictive trade, and something
- 18 that is an industry-generated vehicle, for
- 19 lack of better words, that we can all support.
- 20 Thank you.
- 21 JUDGE HILLSON: Let me ask the
- 22 USDA panel if they have any questions of Dr.

- 1 Kolb. Ms. Schmaedick, go ahead.
- 2 Actually, before she asks, why
- 3 don't you just state for the record, so we'll
- 4 have a full record, your academic and
- 5 professional background, if you could briefly
- 6 summarize it. Like you said, you were a
- 7 doctor, that was the first I heard --
- 8 THE WITNESS: Yes.
- 9 JUDGE HILLSON: And -- of --
- 10 THE WITNESS: I'm a PhD of
- 11 Manufacturing and Quality, I am a very small
- 12 farmer with not a whole lot of experience,
- 13 although I grew up on a two acre farm in
- 14 Wisconsin, I'm currently growing artichokes,
- 15 my -- I have built the nation's largest full
- 16 service food safety group of companies that
- 17 provides certification and advisory services
- 18 to farmers and processors, I'm a retired Army
- 19 Colonel, airborne ranger, three years in
- 20 combat.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Thanks. Okay, Ms.
- 22 Schmaedick? Go ahead.

- 1 EXAMINATION BY USDA
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Thank you.
- 3 Melissa Schmaedick, USDA. Thank you, good
- 4 afternoon Mr. Kolb.
- 5 THE WITNESS: Doctor.
- 6 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Doctor. Excuse
- $7 \quad \text{me.}$
- 8 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
- 9 MS. SCHMAEDICK: I just have a
- 10 couple of questions for you. So, if I'm
- 11 understanding your statement correctly, is it
- 12 your belief that the -- that a system, a GAP
- 13 system, and a GHP system be developed for all
- 14 commodities, and that the scope not be limited
- 15 to just leafy green vegetables?
- 16 THE WITNESS: I believe that
- 17 whatever vehicle that we choose in order to be
- 18 all-inclusive for a robust system needs to
- 19 consider all commodities.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: And, the
- 21 agreement as proposed, are you saying that
- 22 that is, in your opinion, not a risk-based

- 1 system?
- 2 THE WITNESS: Could you repeat the
- 3 question?
- 4 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Sure. The
- 5 agreement as proposed, given that the specific
- 6 metrics have not been developed, in your
- 7 opinion, is that a risk-based system or is it
- 8 not?
- 9 THE WITNESS: Well, there's two
- 10 questions in your question, with all due
- 11 respect, ma'am.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Uh-huh.
- 13 THE WITNESS: Having raised
- 14 horses, I can tell you I've never bought one
- 15 that I didn't open its mouth and look inside.
- 16 And, I think by signing onto this, we're
- 17 buying the horse without looking in its mouth.
- 18 And, the second question is,
- 19 according to the way in which this has been
- 20 defined, I don't believe we can support what
- 21 the international community, and someone who
- 22 writes standards for a living, could support

- 1 as valid or robust.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay. Thank you.
- 3 THE WITNESS: Yes ma'am.
- 4 JUDGE HILLSON: Mr. Souza?
- 5 MR. SOUZA: Thank you. Anthony
- 6 Souza, USDA. Good afternoon Dr. Kolb. Could
- 7 you explain -- give a little explanation on,
- 8 as a certifier, what the difference would be
- 9 between auditing to a standard and auditing to
- 10 a metric?
- 11 THE WITNESS: Yes sir, I'm glad
- 12 you asked. That's a very good question. When
- 13 you audit to a standard, it's much like a CPA
- 14 goes in and reviews your taxes. There is a
- 15 system of checks and balances that must meet
- 16 a specific specification. When you audit or
- 17 inspect to standard, the person in that
- 18 capability has a completely different role.
- 19 That role is to understand how the standard
- 20 was developed, understand the organization and
- 21 facility, farm that is being audited, from an
- 22 experience and educational point of view, in

- 1 other words, they have the academic background
- 2 and the experience to say, I understand this
- 3 to be a tomato farm, and I know how that
- 4 tomato grows. And they're able to apply a
- 5 risk analysis to that situation and determine
- 6 how the standard is to be applied, given those
- 7 sets of circumstances.
- 8 MR. SOUZA: Could you elaborate
- 9 just a little bit further on what you mean by
- 10 a -- the term risk analysis?
- 11 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir. A risk
- 12 analysis -- given a number of different
- 13 conditions, and I'll outline a few of those,
- 14 the type of commodity, for instance, green
- onions are a high risk commodity, versus
- 16 radishes, that are a low risk commodity, given
- 17 the environment in which they're grown, the
- 18 management, the inputs, the market they will
- 19 be sold at, the fashion in which they sold at,
- 20 this -- they sold of, all of these factors
- 21 would be evaluated in terms of what is the
- 22 risk that we're facing, and what is -- and to

- 1 what degree are the measures taken to avert
- 2 that risk or control that risk? Are they
- 3 acceptable and do they the meet the standard?
- 4 MR. SOUZA: As I understand you,
- 5 going back to the difference between metrics
- 6 and a standard, an auditor auditing under a
- 7 standard and one auditing under metrics, their
- 8 qualifications would then -- they would have
- 9 different qualifications to audit each system?
- 10 THE WITNESS: I must have given
- 11 you these questions, because they're very
- 12 good. Auditing against a standard takes a
- 13 very experienced and educated person who has
- 14 experience in that field of auditing and
- 15 experience in the field that he is observing.
- 16 He has the educational background to be able
- 17 to read the standard to understand how the
- 18 standard was written and why was written, he
- 19 has the ability to apply all the conditions of
- 20 the risk analysis, and make a determination of
- 21 whether or not the standard is being met.
- When a standard is a metric,

- 1 virtually anyone who can read that metric can
- 2 go see if it's being applied to meet the
- 3 specification. And, you find a number of
- 4 third-party certifiers who have written their
- 5 metrics, and they call them standards,
- 6 unfortunately -- have written their metrics so
- 7 that virtually anyone with little education or
- 8 little experience can read that metric and
- 9 say, you are doing it or you're not doing it
- 10 on a scale of 1 to 10.
- 11 And, that's where the system
- 12 breaks down. Most third-party certifiers, and
- 13 I'm one of them, are certifying people in a
- 14 marketing approach. Now, I've chosen not to
- 15 do that, but that's a conflict of interest
- 16 with my statements this morning. But, I won't
- 17 name any other certifiers, because to
- 18 establish a good, better, best, or excellent,
- 19 superior, is more of a marketing approach to
- 20 the standard rather than an approach that
- 21 states, you did meet the standard or you
- 22 didn't meet the standard. If we write a food

- 1 safety standard properly, you either met it or
- 2 you didn't meet it. You didn't halfway meet
- 3 it and you got an excellent, or you almost met
- 4 it, so you get a superior. It's much easier
- 5 to take a metric and give it to virtually
- 6 anyone, even outside of the food industry, and
- 7 say, go out and inspect this farm. It is
- 8 exceptionally difficult to find someone who's
- 9 educated and experienced to take a standard
- 10 and ask them to apply it and then make that
- 11 determination, did you meet that standard or
- 12 not?
- 13 And, I'm very much a proponent of
- 14 the global GAP system which has written their
- 15 standards very well, applies it from a risk
- 16 point of view, has developed a standard to
- 17 apply to all levels of farming equally, and I
- 18 believe the strongest suit, which we fail in
- 19 this country to follow through on, is, they
- 20 have inspectors who are exceptionally educated
- 21 and experienced who go out and do this. And,
- 22 finding an inspector to certify, who has those

- 1 qualifications is one of the most difficult
- 2 hiring practices there is, finding the right
- 3 people who can do this.
- 4 I have -- I won't belabor the
- 5 point, but I know of a certifier who hires
- 6 cropdusters to be food safety inspectors, who
- 7 hires school nutrition people to be food
- 8 safety inspectors. They're on the periphery
- 9 of what they do, but they don't have the
- 10 qualification to apply it correctly, the
- 11 standard, that is.
- MR. SOUZA: Would you say auditing
- 13 under or on a metric compared to auditing on
- 14 a standard, that a metric would be more
- 15 objective, and the standard, more subjective
- 16 due to the nature of the quality of the risk
- 17 assessment individual?
- 18 THE WITNESS: I could see where
- 19 someone would come to that conclusion. The
- 20 conclusion is true for both statements. Under
- 21 a properly written, robust, valid standard in
- 22 a robust system, it becomes more objective

- 1 than does the objectiveness of a metric system
- 2 because what you have is a body of experience
- 3 and education that is -- that understands the
- 4 science, the regulation, or the industry
- 5 culture behind it, and is able to say, you
- 6 achieved that standard or you didn't, given
- 7 this set of risks that are present.
- MR. SOUZA: With that being said,
- 9 could you elaborate a little bit on the
- 10 importance of the certification -- the
- 11 certifying body?
- 12 THE WITNESS: This body being
- 13 LGMA?
- 14 MR. SOUZA: As -- the certifying
- 15 body, somebody who would certify an auditor to
- 16 do risk assessments?
- 17 THE WITNESS: The responsibilities
- 18 of the certifying body are rather significant.
- 19 I'll give you an example. My -- we made a
- 20 conscious decision in my certification company
- 21 that we weren't going to do -- we were not
- 22 going to do business as usual. So, we did --

- 1 we made two decisions. Number one, that our
- 2 certification body would become ISO
- 3 registered. In other words, we would follow
- 4 the international system -- International
- 5 Standards Organization system so that we
- 6 ensure that our certification body was robust
- 7 and valid. Part of that means that when we
- 8 hire an inspector, they've got to have some
- 9 very clear and distinct and certified
- 10 credentials. The second decision that we
- 11 decided to do was to only audit those systems
- 12 which were of the same nature as us. They
- 13 were ISO-based systems such as the BRC, the
- 14 global GAP, the SQF, and, to stay away from
- 15 devising our own standards and trying to come
- 16 up with our own standards and in trying to
- 17 self train people from the ground up where
- 18 they were lacking in education or experience.
- 19 And so, that's a conscious
- 20 decision on the part of a certifier before
- 21 they begin business. Are we going to try and
- 22 do this as a marketing effort, in other words,

- 1 for business profit generation, or do we
- 2 intend to do this from an academic point of
- 3 view to ensure our system is robust and valid
- 4 and will stand up in a court so to speak?
- 5 Under scrutiny -- statistical scrutiny.
- 6 MR. SOUZA: Thank you, Dr. Kolb.
- 7 Just for the record, could you clarify what
- 8 BRC is and what SQF is?
- 9 THE WITNESS: Yes, I'm sorry.
- 10 British Retail Consortium, it's a body of
- 11 experts from industry who have sat down and
- 12 determined what is important to a -- in a food
- 13 safety system, and a processing plant,
- 14 processing scenario. And SQF is the Standard
- 15 Qualification for Food Safety. It's an
- 16 Australian-based system that does virtually
- 17 the very same thing, but at different levels
- 18 of certification. That includes farms,
- 19 processors, distributors, coolers.
- The whole body of this is called
- 21 the Global Food Safety Network, or the GFSI --
- 22 Global Food Safety Initiative, and there are

- 1 roughly six or seven valid and robust
- 2 standards within that, that come from our
- 3 international community which, if I might add,
- 4 has been one of the my -- my concerns all
- 5 along.
- 6 In the United States, we keep
- 7 putting these layers of food safety, or layers
- 8 of paint on top of our handler, our processor,
- 9 our grower, devised by third-party certified
- 10 buyers, devised by systems which don't have
- 11 the validity to develop a standard or even
- 12 write a correct metric, if necessary, whereby
- 13 the international community has solved this
- 14 equation years and years ago, and you can see
- 15 from their food contamination incidents that
- 16 their system has validity and it does work.
- 17 And so, when I made the comment
- 18 that I believe that the foundations of this
- 19 effort is flawed, I say that because it needs
- 20 to be robust in that context, and it needs to
- 21 have validity in that context so that it has
- 22 the credibility on the street that people will

- 1 accept it and not just become another layer of
- 2 paint or considered to be a trade restriction
- 3 to the small farmer.
- 4 MR. SOUZA: Thank you.
- 5 THE WITNESS: Yes sir, thank you.
- 6 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from
- 7 the panel? Ms. Deskins?
- 8 MS. DESKINS: I just wanted to
- 9 clarify something. You -- when you started to
- 10 testify, you said you were with an
- 11 organization. I didn't quite catch the name?
- 12 It's referred to as OPGMA, or the Ohio Produce
- 13 Growers Marketing Association. And, I'd like
- 14 to clarify my involvement with them. I'm the
- 15 senior project officer, or project manager for
- 16 the -- what I call the Ohio Project, funded by
- 17 a grant through ODA, the Ohio Department of
- 18 Agriculture, for the Ohio Fresh Produce Food
- 19 Safety Initiative to look at promoting and
- 20 protecting Ohio produce as an alternative to
- 21 a national effort.
- MS. DESKINS: Are you testifying

- 1 on behalf of them today or are you testifying
- 2 --
- 3 THE WITNESS: In my capacity as
- 4 the project manager for OPGMA, I am
- 5 testifying.
- 6 MS. DESKINS: Okay. So -- I'm
- 7 still trying to clarify. That organization
- 8 has authorized you to testify?
- 9 THE WITNESS: Yes ma'am.
- 10 MS. DESKINS: Okay. And then
- 11 also, in terms of your PhD. Can you tell us
- 12 what university you got it from?
- 13 THE WITNESS: It's from the
- 14 California Advanced Studies University in
- 15 Berkeley, California.
- MS. DESKINS: Okay, thank you.
- 17 THE WITNESS: They've since gone
- 18 out of existence. It's been a long time since
- 19 I got that degree.
- MS. DESKINS: Thank you.
- 21 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from
- 22 the panel? Any questions from the audience?

- 1 Any questions from the proponents? Mr.
- 2 Giclas?
- 3 EXAMINATION BY PROPONENTS
- 4 MR. GICLAS: Hank Giclas, Western
- 5 Growers. Dr. Kolb, thank you for your
- 6 testimony. I just had a couple of questions.
- 7 Can you talk about how global GAP was
- 8 developed? I mean, who were the original
- 9 entities, authors behind global GAP?
- 10 THE WITNESS: Hank, to be honest,
- 11 I don't know.
- MR. GICLAS: Are you familiar with
- 13 Europe GAP as a predecessor to global GAP?
- 14 THE WITNESS: Yes, we used to --
- 15 we at one time assisted folks becoming
- 16 certified under the program.
- 17 MR. GICLAS: Okay, are you
- 18 familiar with -- you know, who was, you know,
- 19 kind of the authorship behind Europe GAP?
- THE WITNESS: No sir.
- 21 MR. GICLAS: Well then, let me ask
- 22 you this question. Can you describe the BRC

- 1 membership in a little bit more detail? I
- 2 mean, who makes up, the -- you know, the BRC
- 3 and --
- 4 THE WITNESS: I can't answer that
- 5 either. I can only tell you from a
- 6 certifier's point of view what it took for us
- 7 to become eligible for that -- to award that
- 8 certification. And, we're in the process of
- 9 going through that again. We had to, of
- 10 course, have educational and experience
- 11 credentials in that particular arena. We had
- 12 to show that we had an accreditation body that
- 13 was valid and robust under an ISO system.
- 14 And, we had to also demonstrate that we had
- 15 the inspectors, auditors that were able to
- 16 apply the standard in the field according to
- 17 their criteria.
- 18 MR. GICLAS: Okay, I'm going to
- 19 represent to you that many of those standards,
- 20 you know, were developed by European retailers
- 21 without a significant, you know, component
- 22 input from the production community. Would

- 1 you -- you know, have any reason to object to
- 2 that representation if I describe it like
- 3 that?
- 4 THE WITNESS: I don't have any
- 5 basis for which to accept or reject your
- 6 statement.
- 7 MR. GICLAS: Okay. I guess I also
- 8 wanted to ask a little bit about the Ohio
- 9 project. Correct me if I'm wrong, you are
- 10 collaborating with, I think I heard, OPGMA and
- 11 some others organizations on a grant from the
- 12 Ohio Department of Agriculture that basically
- develops a program that would be similar to
- 14 the California marketing agreement, is that
- 15 correct or incorrect?
- 16 THE WITNESS: Partially correct.
- 17 I -- the ODA has provided OPGMA with grant
- 18 money to develop an initiative regarding fresh
- 19 produce food safety. My comments were that
- 20 the California leafy green was the right
- 21 vehicle at the right time to get the produce
- 22 issue back on track, and it was right for

- 1 California. And, it still is right for
- 2 California. I have concerns about it but
- 3 they're not for this discussion in that
- 4 agreement was exactly right for California.
- 5 I proposed that a similar agreement would be
- 6 exactly right for Ohio.
- 7 MR. GICLAS: Does -- do you know,
- 8 does Ohio have, the -- like the state
- 9 marketing authority that would allow that?
- 10 I'm just curious.
- 11 THE WITNESS: To answer your
- 12 question right up front, no it does not. To
- 13 further elaborate, at this point, we're not
- 14 too -- were concerned more about developing a
- 15 robust valid system at this point, to protect
- 16 and promote Ohio agriculture and its
- 17 diversity, and the vehicle in which it comes
- 18 out as is still in discussion.
- 19 MR. GICLAS: Fair enough. I quess
- 20 maybe one last question, also kind of along
- 21 these lines, I mean, you are familiar with the
- 22 depth and breadth and scope of different sets

- 1 of standards that are applied to the produce
- 2 industry. I mean, do you have any concern
- 3 that, you know, an Ohio standard and a
- 4 California standard, and a private standard,
- 5 you know, just adds to the chaos in the
- 6 marketplace, if you will?
- 7 THE WITNESS: I would agree with
- 8 that.
- 9 MR. GICLAS: Thank you. I have no
- 10 other questions.
- 11 JUDGE HILLSON: Mr. Resnick?
- MR. RESNICK: Thank you, Dr. Kolb,
- 13 for your comments, your testimony this
- 14 afternoon. You mentioned the dichotomy
- 15 between high risk and low risk commodities.
- 16 Where would leafy greens fall into that? High
- 17 risk or low risk in your opinion?
- 18 THE WITNESS: The data I've been
- 19 able to review indicate that under the proper
- 20 conditions, in other words, handling
- 21 conditions, it's very low risk if it's handled
- 22 correctly. And, I'm talking about from the

- 1 farm to market. Given contamination occurs
- 2 somewhere along that chain, it can be very
- 3 high risk, I think, because of the nature of
- 4 the product itself. And, I could get into
- 5 some scientific work that I've been able to
- 6 review, but I think it supports that.
- 7 MR. RESNICK: Would you agree with
- 8 the notion, then, that best practices and
- 9 agricultural and handling and processing
- 10 practices is essential to reduce risk in leafy
- 11 greens?
- 12 THE WITNESS: Well, that's a
- 13 hypothetical statement. I won't address that,
- 14 but I will say that there was a gentleman
- 15 here, who's son or daughter was sickened by E.
- 16 coli. Well, my daughter spent six months in
- 17 the hospital and the spinach crisis. She lost
- 18 part of her stomach and some of her liver as
- 19 result of that, and still today can't eat
- 20 properly. And so, I am more than concerned
- 21 for the best handling practices of leafy
- 22 greens. Sorry, I get a little uptight about

- 1 that.
- 2 MR. RESNICK: It's okay. Do you
- 3 need a moment?
- THE WITNESS: I'm good, thanks.
- 5 MR. RESNICK: Have you had an
- 6 opportunity to read the Leafy Green Marketing
- 7 Agreement as proposed?
- 8 THE WITNESS: Yes.
- 9 MR. RESNICK: Would you agree that
- 10 it sets up a framework for setting up metrics
- 11 based on risk?
- 12 THE WITNESS: Risk and metrics
- 13 cannot be used in the same sentence. Risk
- 14 denotes the application of a standard.
- 15 Metrics denote the application of a set of
- 16 specifications that must be complied with, no
- 17 matter what the risk is, low or high.
- 18 MR. RESNICK: So, the -- so could
- 19 those metrics be science-based and also reduce
- 20 risk?
- 21 THE WITNESS: Two questions. Can
- they be science-based, and can they reduce

- 1 risk? The application of science to metrics
- 2 is a lot like trying to make a bomb in your
- 3 backyard. It's not going to work. When you
- 4 take science and you combine that into -- or
- 5 develop it into a standard that allows it to
- 6 be applied in a risk scenario, it is the
- 7 proper application of science. When you take
- 8 science, and you apply it as a metric, in
- 9 other words, it's black and white and you have
- 10 to do it, irregardless of the circumstances,
- 11 there you have a pair -- there you have a null
- 12 paradigm, or null paradigm or null hypothesis.
- MR. RESNICK: Well, I understand
- 14 that you believe that the commodity-specific
- 15 basis of the proposed agreement is flawed,
- 16 but, taking it as it is, as a -- as one
- 17 vehicle in which to try to reduce the risk of
- 18 foodborne illness in leafy greens, do you
- 19 agree that that could be a -- that there could
- 20 be a robust risk-based reduction of -- I'm
- 21 sorry, I don't mean to -- we're using a lot of
- 22 different terms. Let me withdraw the

- 1 question.
- 2 I'm just trying to get the idea
- 3 that I understand that you want to see
- 4 something more comprehensive, and that's not
- 5 what we're talking about today. We're talking
- 6 about a commodity-specific vehicle. Do you
- 7 believe that this framework, with the
- 8 corroboration and collaboration of government,
- 9 and academia, and industry, can cooperatively
- 10 and collaboratively reduce risk in leafy
- 11 greens?
- 12 THE WITNESS: Using the right
- 13 vehicle, perhaps it can be obtained.
- 14 MR. RESNICK: Thank you. I have
- 15 nothing further.
- 16 THE WITNESS: Thank you Jason.
- 17 JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, you may step
- 18 down, doctor. Thank you for your testimony.
- 19 JUDGE HILLSON: Thank you, judge.
- 20 JUDGE HILLSON: It's about 10
- 21 minutes of four, give or take. You have four
- 22 more witnesses, is that right?

- 1 MS. LOVERA: Five.
- 2 JUDGE HILLSON: Five more
- 3 witnesses. Well, let's just take a 10 minute
- 4 break and we'll come back about two minutes
- 5 after four and plow on through. Let's go off
- 6 the record.
- 7 (Off the record.
- JUDGE HILLSON: And, I take it
- 9 that your next witness is Lisa Schacht, whose
- 10 name I may or may not be pronouncing right.
- 11 And I will mark your written testimony as
- 12 Exhibit 68.
- 13 (Whereupon, Exhibit 68 was marked
- for identification.)
- 15 Whereupon,
- 16 LISA SCHACHT
- 17 having been first duly sworn, was
- 18 called as a witness herein, was examined and
- 19 testified as follows:
- 20 EXAMINATION DIRECT
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay. Could you
- 22 please state your name and spell of the

- 1 record?
- THE WITNESS: Lisa Schacht. L-I-S-
- 3 A S-C-H-A-C-H-T.
- 4 JUDGE HILLSON: Okay. And, you of
- 5 the statement you want to read. Is that
- 6 correct?
- 7 THE WITNESS: Yes, please.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Well, please
- 9 proceed.
- 10 THE WITNESS: Thank you. Thank
- 11 you for holding this hearing in Columbus on
- 12 this very important issue of food safety in
- 13 the handling of leafy green produce. I am
- 14 Lisa Schacht. Together with my family, we
- 15 operate Schacht Family Farm and Schacht Farm
- 16 Market, located here in Franklin County, Ohio.
- 17 We raise a variety of produce including leafy
- 18 greens. I'm testifying today on behalf of our
- 19 farm and on behalf of the Ohio Farm Bureau
- 20 Federation. The Ohio Farm Bureau Federation,
- 21 OFBF, is the largest generate general farm
- 22 organization in the state of Ohio with more

- 1 than 230,000 members representing all of
- Ohio's 88 counties. Our members produce
- 3 virtually every kind of agricultural commodity
- 4 and as a result, OFBF is very interested in
- 5 the proposed National Leafy Greens Marketing
- 6 Agreement.
- 7 Food safety and the responsibility
- 8 and of growing and selling safe, fresh, and
- 9 local food is something we take very
- 10 seriously. My family operates a farm market
- 11 selling most of our produce directly to the
- 12 public, but we also sell some to small grocers
- 13 and other markets. We utilize a collection of
- 14 good farm practices and food safety practices
- 15 on our farm and in our market. There are many
- 16 common themes among these practices, but they
- 17 can vary because of specific practices may
- 18 need to be tailored to provide the customer
- 19 the safest and highest quality food possible,
- 20 which is the theme of my testimony today.
- 21 In my view, compliance is the key
- 22 to the success of any new marketing agreement

- 1 or food safety system and any new system
- 2 should be flexible in nature so growers of all
- 3 sizes can participate and comply. Ohio
- 4 produce growers vary in size ranging from
- 5 large operations that grow, pack, and ship
- 6 their produce both in-state and across state
- 7 lines, to very small farmers who sell all
- 8 their produce directly to the local public.
- 9 These farms are located throughout the state
- 10 and are situated sometimes in the middle of
- 11 suburbs or in very rural areas. Some are
- 12 located near the shores of Lake Erie, while
- 13 mine is literally surrounded by the
- 14 development on the east side of Columbus.
- 15 Some irrigate from surface water, others use
- 16 groundwater, some are near livestock
- 17 operations, some, as you've heard today, use
- 18 livestock production on as a part of their
- 19 production practices.
- 20 My point, of course, is that a
- 21 single national, one-size-fits-all leafy
- 22 greens marketing structure that favors the

- 1 development of one-size-fits-all on farm
- 2 production practices or matrix, as contained
- 3 in something like the California leafy green
- 4 agreement, will not work for Ohio farmers.
- 5 Let me share with you a number of specific
- 6 concerns that we have with the proposed rule.
- 7 First, basic structure of the
- 8 proposed system. USDA defines in the Federal
- 9 Registry notice several distinct groups that
- 10 would be involved in any future leafy green
- 11 program. One of these groups is called
- 12 handlers. Another group, the actual grower,
- is called the producer. For fee purposes, the
- 14 term, first handler, is also introduced and is
- 15 unclear. While this general description of
- 16 the leafy green industry may be accurate for
- 17 some parts of the country, it is not accurate
- 18 for Ohio. Ohio leafy green growers tend to be
- 19 the handler as well, so they are involved in
- 20 growing, packing, and shipping of product.
- 21 These Ohio grower/handlers range in size from
- 22 small volume growers who serve a local direct

- 1 market to large volume operations that move
- 2 product across state lines. Such differences
- 3 in industry structure for various parts of the
- 4 country must be recognized in order for any
- 5 new program to be successful. The proposal
- 6 subdivides the country into zones that are
- 7 far too large with far too many variances in
- 8 cultural practices between the northern and
- 9 southern states, which are all included in
- 10 single zones. The zones that includes Ohio,
- 11 for example, stretch as far north as Wisconsin
- 12 and as far south as Alabama. These vertical
- 13 slices across the US maybe need to be
- 14 redefined to a smaller or perhaps state-based
- 15 division. We also note only one producer is
- 16 allowed on the administrative committee from
- 17 our zone, zone four. Plus, the administrative
- 18 committee is dominated by handlers, who will
- 19 dictate on-farm production practices. This
- 20 construction of the system is very troubling
- 21 and needs to be modified. It also appears our
- 22 grower/handlers could not serve on the

- 1 national committees as a grower, if they also
- 2 handle produce. So, can they serve on the
- 3 committee as a handler if they are also a
- 4 grower, or are these individuals completely
- 5 left out?
- 6 Secondly, state-by-state
- 7 flexibility as per on farm practices.
- 8 Flexibility per developing in meeting on farm
- 9 practices is key to the success of this new
- 10 marketing agreement, as different growing
- 11 regions on a national, even at the state
- 12 level, vary significantly. For example,
- 13 different regions of the country use
- 14 production land very differently, such as
- 15 continual use of specific land for produce
- 16 production versus shifting use of land between
- 17 pasture, other crops, and production of
- 18 vegetables. We strongly believe that any
- 19 specific on farm practices be developed at the
- 20 state level and that this will achieve the
- 21 best results. The state-based program could
- 22 better recognize more localized management

- 1 issues such as water usage, wildlife
- 2 challenges, harvesting practices, soil
- 3 amendments, and more.
- 4 I know that the proposed leafy
- 5 green rule does not contain specific on-farm
- 6 practices. This is unfortunate because we
- 7 don't have the specifics to consider. But,
- 8 the California leafy green agreement does have
- 9 the specifics and is very often referred to as
- 10 the example of where the national agreement is
- 11 headed. Given the California agreement as an
- 12 example, Ohio growers have major concerns with
- 13 a number of specific on-farm requirements such
- 14 as water usage, animal intrusion, field
- 15 sanitation, harvest requirements, soil
- 16 amendments, and more. These specifics were
- 17 designed around some California cultural
- 18 practices and are not conducive to Ohio and
- 19 many other states' accepted practices. From
- 20 what we understand, many medium and small
- 21 growers in California also have major concerns
- 22 with the California agreement. This being the

- 1 case, how can we possibly expect these
- 2 practices to be workable for Ohio farmers?
- 3 The development of any new system
- 4 should consider the impact on various size
- 5 operations across the country. In Ohio, we
- 6 have one of the largest concentrations of
- 7 Amish farmers, you've met some of them. These
- 8 produce growers that do not use electricity
- 9 rely on horses in the production practices.
- 10 They often pick, pack, and sell their produce
- 11 all in one day, as they've shared with you.
- 12 We also have growing numbers of successful
- 13 small produce auctions, as they explained.
- 14 Under the proposed new rules, we are concerned
- 15 about this. These are a few of the many
- 16 specific examples that highlight the need for
- 17 flexibility.
- 18 Given these needs, we support a
- 19 national initiated agreement, but with
- 20 development, implementation, and enforcement
- 21 conducted on a state basis. Perhaps such a
- 22 system could be tiered so that smaller growers

- 1 can more easily participate and comply, and
- 2 various tiers that are suitable for various
- 3 types of producers. Such flexibility would be
- 4 more conducive to various structures of the
- 5 industry and could recognize various cultural
- 6 practices within a state or region. The Ohio
- 7 Farm Bureau office has received many calls
- 8 from small and medium-sized growers, organic
- 9 growers, representative of our Amish
- 10 community, and more, all very concerned, right
- 11 or wrong, with some of the ideas being
- 12 proposed in this rule. Flexibility would go
- 13 a long way to addressing in many of these
- 14 concerns.
- Third, the good science. We
- 16 believe any new practices should be based upon
- 17 proven and effective practices and sound
- 18 science. Most of our produce is not grown in
- 19 an indoor or enclosed environment and should
- 20 not be regulated in a manner that is
- 21 unrealistic to achieve. We understand that
- 22 currently some of the science-based

- 1 assumptions behind the California leafy greens
- 2 approach is now being called into question.
- 3 These challenges question the contamination
- 4 threat related to water quality and animal
- 5 intrusion. I suggest the federal government
- 6 take the time to fund and complete the science
- 7 and research needed to determine the most
- 8 appropriate and safe practices to assure safe
- 9 food supply before moving forward with any
- 10 vast new set of costly and complicated on-farm
- 11 production practices. It's our understanding
- 12 that most, if not all, recent food recalls
- 13 have not been aimed at the farm but further
- 14 down the food chain. If this truly is the
- 15 case, should we not be focusing research and
- 16 the new systems at the risks down the food
- 17 chain, versus the farm?
- 18 Fourth, state coordination. Any
- 19 new program should be coordinated with
- 20 existing state programs and not negate them.
- 21 Such coordination will be crucial to the
- 22 success of the new marketing agreement and

- 1 will provide redundancy in programming or the
- 2 elimination of successful programs. We need
- 3 to bolster the funding, education, and
- 4 training for inspectors. And when inspections
- 5 are needed, such inspection should be
- 6 conducted by or coordinated with existing
- 7 programs. We understand California is
- 8 struggling with inspection services per their
- 9 state agreement. Given the likely complexity
- 10 of this new agreement, we should not move
- 11 forward without such a federal plan before you
- 12 figure out how to make it work on such a large
- 13 scale.
- 14 Five, economic impact. We want to
- 15 make it clear that Ohio, and likely other
- 16 states, are at a distinct disadvantage
- 17 regarding the compliance costs with this new
- 18 rule because we must spread costs over a
- 19 shorter growing season, as opposed to some
- 20 states like California that can spread the
- 21 costs over the entire year, given their longer
- 22 growing season. Any new system should be

- 1 economically viable within existing industry
- 2 structures that vary across the country.
- We also believe that if the state
- 4 achieves a certain target enrollment in the
- 5 program by volume of its production, it should
- 6 then be allowed to receive federal aid per
- 7 program operation purposes. If we are
- 8 undertaking expensive new practices in the
- 9 name of food safety, which is a public good,
- 10 shouldn't the public also help pay for it?
- 11 It is also difficult to estimate
- 12 and address cost issues without fully knowing
- 13 what new on-farm practices or matrices will be
- 14 required or needed to be developed or
- 15 implemented. Of course, all new on-farm
- 16 practices or matrices must be practical and
- 17 cost-effective, and we recommend that a cost-
- 18 benefit analysis accompany all required
- 19 matrices. Some implementation flexibility
- 20 should be granted depending on results of the
- 21 cost-benefit analysis. Also, on-farm
- 22 practices and matrices should not have a

- 1 greater economic impact on one region than
- 2 another. For all these reasons and more, we
- 3 recommend any future leafy green rule from
- 4 USDA be accompanied by a package of funds to
- 5 aid in the successful on-farm implementation
- 6 of such on-farm practices.
- 7 In looking at the audit sheets of
- 8 California, as a small grower, I don't see
- 9 where I will find the time, let alone the
- 10 dollars to pay for this type of program.
- 11 As I said before, I already
- 12 maintain a series of good management practices
- on my farm, but how much more paperwork,
- 14 should I be expected to complete, at what
- 15 cost? I fear this proposal as it now stands
- 16 now will only serve to drive Ohio produce
- 17 farmers out of business.
- 18 Six, the official certification
- 19 mark. We believe that the establishment of
- 20 liability be clearly stated in such a new
- 21 program given the introduction of an official
- 22 mark. If the new program is mark-based, then

- 1 we recommend that liability for the product be
- 2 with those who fixed the mark and end at the
- 3 point of delivery to the next receiver of the
- 4 product.
- 5 Seven, the advisory committee.
- 6 Prior to this rule being finalized, USDA
- 7 should consider creating an advisory committee
- 8 that could offer comments to the department
- 9 about the design of any new system. Such
- 10 upfront input to USDA could lead to stronger
- industry buy-in to the program, a more
- 12 effectively developed program, and could
- 13 achieve quicker implementation.
- In conclusion, as we move forward
- in improving upon the safest, most abundant
- 16 food system in the world, let's remember to be
- 17 practical and cost-effective. We must use
- 18 sound science, allow flexibility for states to
- 19 work with growers in developing best
- 20 practices, and most importantly, we should
- 21 recognize, embrace, and build up the diverse
- 22 food production system we have in this

- 1 country. The leafy green industry is an
- 2 important component of Ohio agriculture, and
- 3 any future rulemaking regarding leafy greens
- 4 should not be proposed without careful
- 5 consideration of the issues we have raised.
- 6 Without such changes, the Ohio Farm Bureau
- 7 will oppose this agreement. Thank you again
- 8 for this opportunity to comment.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, Ms. Schacht,
- 10 I'm going to let your -- I'm going to receive
- 11 your written statement into evidence as
- 12 Exhibit 68.
- 13 (Whereupon, Exhibit 68 was marked
- 14 for identification and received
- into evidence.)
- 16 JUDGE HILLSON: And I will now ask
- 17 the panel if they have any questions for you.
- 18 Ms. Schmaedick?
- 19 EXAMINATION BY USDA
- 20 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Melissa
- 21 Schmaedick, USDA. Good afternoon Ms. Schacht,
- 22 thank you for your testimony. So, the first

- 1 thing I want to clarify, is, are you speaking
- on behalf of the Ohio Farm Bureau today?
- 3 THE WITNESS: As a member of Ohio
- 4 Farm Bureau, a grassroots individual of that
- 5 organization, yes.
- 6 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay, so, did
- 7 they send you as a -- as an official
- 8 ambassador to represent the group?
- 9 MS. SCHMAEDICK: You asked the
- 10 question earlier of when people have gotten
- 11 involved in the process. I was on the initial
- 12 committee when we submitted comments in
- 13 October of 2007. We actually met Jeff Zeller
- 14 also testified, he was on the committee,
- 15 myself, and two other people that were earlier
- 16 here in the audience, were available to our
- 17 policy development staff, and we went through
- 18 the original proposal in 2007 and submitted
- 19 comments. And, so, as someone who
- 20 participated in the discussion, I was asked to
- 21 come and testify.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay, so, you

- 1 were asked by the bureau to testify and they
- 2 have seen this testimony and the agree with
- 3 that?
- 4 THE WITNESS: Yes. We conferred
- 5 as we wrote the testimony.
- 6 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay, and you
- 7 also mentioned that you are a farmer. And,
- 8 that you have a family farm. Are you familiar
- 9 with the SBA definitions that we've alluded
- 10 to, over the day?
- 11 THE WITNESS: I am aware of them.
- 12 To be able to recite them, no.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay, would you
- 14 be comfortable identifying yourself as a small
- 15 or a large grower?
- 16 THE WITNESS: I would fall under
- 17 the category of small.
- 18 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay. And, you
- 19 mentioned that you produce leafy greens. What
- 20 other types of products you produce?
- 21 THE WITNESS: About 20 different
- 22 crops in addition to leafy greens would be

- 1 sweet corn, strawberries, pumpkins, potatoes,
- 2 green beans, tomatoes, peppers. The list is
- 3 extensive.
- 4 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay, thank you.
- 5 So, on page two of your testimony, under the
- 6 first bolded heading, basic structure in
- 7 proposed system, you talk about the terms
- 8 handler, or producer and grower, and that in
- 9 Ohio, it seems as if there are many producer
- 10 handlers, entities that would qualify as both.
- 11 Is that correct?
- 12 THE WITNESS: I believe that there
- 13 are producers that would qualify also is
- 14 handlers, that, the lines are blurred in their
- 15 operations.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: So, these
- 17 producer handlers, do they tend to -- does
- 18 their product tend to go into conventional --
- 19 into the market, or are they pretty much sold
- 20 locally? Are they sold to other handlers, or
- 21 is it -- does it stop?
- 22 THE WITNESS: As I described Ohio,

- 1 as well, in the testimony, there is product
- 2 being sold within the state as well as going
- 3 outside of the state, that producers at
- 4 several different levels of size are
- 5 participating in those types of commerce.
- 6 It's the diversity issue.
- 7 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Right, and I'm
- 8 just trying to -- what I'm trying to identify
- 9 is, what percentage is of Ohio leafy greens
- 10 grower handlers deliver their product to a
- 11 second handler? Do you know that by any
- 12 chance?
- 13 THE WITNESS: I cannot speak to
- 14 that specifically, no.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay. re you
- 16 currently operating under any type of
- 17 certification program?
- 18 THE WITNESS: No.
- 19 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay, and you
- 20 mentioned a state program, that you would be
- 21 in favor of a state program. Is that correct?
- 22 THE WITNESS: Correct.

- 1 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Under that state
- 2 program, how would that be funded? Would that
- 3 be an assessment based program or -- have you
- 4 --
- 5 THE WITNESS: The way your
- 6 proposal is, is that the assessment is how you
- 7 address funding. If you continued with the
- 8 proposal of making modifications to it, that,
- 9 rather than large maney or multistate zones to
- 10 where the matrix or the standards were drawn
- 11 up, more state specific, then it still could
- 12 be addressed in the way that the proposal is
- 13 through assessments. Whether or not that's
- 14 the best method, I'm not an expert to speak to
- 15 that.
- 16 MS. SCHMAEDICK: But the idea of
- 17 having an assessment, is that something that
- 18 you're opposed to?
- 19 THE WITNESS: I agree that there
- 20 is going to be a need for funds. And, where
- 21 those funds are best sourced, again, I would -
- 22 I don't believe that I could speak to.

- 1 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay. And,
- 2 you've been here throughout the morning. Is
- 3 that correct?
- THE WITNESS: Yes ma'am.
- 5 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay. So, on the
- 6 question of flexibility, have you heard
- 7 statements made today that would indicate to
- 8 you that there might be flexibility in this
- 9 proposal, the type of flexibility that you're
- 10 looking for?
- 11 THE WITNESS: I don't believe it's
- 12 been specific enough to guarantee or to assure
- 13 us that there would be enough flexibility --
- 14 the right kind of flexibility, or the right
- 15 direction that the matrix, as they refer to it
- in the proposal, would be drawn up in a manner
- 17 that addresses the diversity of our state and
- 18 our membership.
- 19 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay. The -- you
- 20 state that the Ohio Farm Bureau has 230,000
- 21 members, is that correct?
- THE WITNESS: Yes.

- 1 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Can you say with
- 2 regard to the state of Ohio, what percentage
- 3 of farms would fall under the small business
- 4 category versus the large business category?
- 5 THE WITNESS: I would have to
- 6 either refer you to the ag statistics or one
- 7 of the censuses.
- 8 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay.
- 9 MS. SCHMAEDICK: I -- all right.
- 10 Thank you, those are all my questions.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Any -- go ahead
- 12 Ms. Carter.
- MS. CARTER: Good afternoon,
- 14 Antoinette Carter with the USDA. Just a few
- 15 follow-up questions. With regards to Ohio
- 16 Farm Bureau Federation, the 230,000 members,
- 17 would you explain a little bit more about the
- 18 makeup of that membership, what it's comprised
- 19 of?
- THE WITNESS: We have a couple of
- 21 different membership categories, active farmer
- 22 category would include those who are actively

- 1 farmer farming, employed by a farmer, retired
- 2 from farming, or own a farm operation though
- 3 not active in farming it. Then, there is
- 4 associate membership, and that would be anyone
- 5 who wishes to be a member to support
- 6 agriculture.
- 7 MS. CARTER: So, do you have a
- 8 number of how many members are actually
- 9 producers and growers?
- 10 THE WITNESS: I don't have that
- 11 number in front of me, and I'm one of those
- 12 individuals that unless I have it written down
- in front of me, I can't recall it as well.
- MS. CARTER: And, on page one of
- 15 your prepared statements, to indicate that as
- 16 a -- as someone who owns a farm operation,
- 17 that you're currently engaging in good farm
- 18 practices and food safety practices. Could
- 19 you explain what some of the things that
- 20 you're currently doing?
- 21 THE WITNESS: Obviously, there
- 22 would be issues with water usage, and -- I

- 1 tend to sometimes defer to my husband for some
- 2 of the terminology and the listing of those
- 3 practices, but it would be cleanliness of the
- 4 tools and the equipment we use when we are
- 5 harvesting or using -- planting the field,
- 6 crop rotation, which fields are used and which
- 7 way.
- 8 We do have pleasure animals on the
- 9 farm, and so, manure handling is a great
- 10 issue, and we do address those practices.
- 11 Similar to that, that the organic community
- 12 would use.
- In the market then, of course,
- 14 it's all the good handling practices, that
- 15 would be the cooler temperatures, it would be
- 16 cleanliness issues, sanitation, those kind of
- 17 practices.
- 18 MS. CARTER: So, is it correct
- 19 that you're maintaining documentation and
- 20 records, as well, as part of those practices?
- 21 THE WITNESS: Because I'm not in a
- 22 certification program, I'm not necessarily

- 1 documenting every step of every process.
- 2 MS. CARTER: Are you doing any
- 3 type of documentation or record-keeping with
- 4 regards to --
- 5 THE WITNESS: Like I said, because
- 6 I'm not participating in the certification
- 7 program, I'm not necessarily documenting every
- 8 process or every step.
- 9 MS. CARTER: Okay. And, I hope
- 10 this is not redundant, but on page two of your
- 11 statement, you state that the term, first
- 12 handler, is a bit unclear in this proposal.
- 13 Based on your understanding, what do you think
- 14 that term means?
- 15 THE WITNESS: Let me first explain
- 16 why it seems unclear, rather than how you
- 17 stated the question may be. Is it -- right
- 18 away, it says that someone who handles
- 19 produce, but then it lists all those who are
- 20 not included. And yet, those are all people
- 21 or entities involved in the chain that I deal
- 22 with. And, it's like, well, if they're not

- 1 handlers, then what is a handler, I guess is
- 2 how I would say that it seems unclear to me.
- 4 well as retailing myself. I market to
- 5 caterers and food service entities, and I also
- 6 market to brokers. And so, who in that chain
- 7 is a handler, if they've handled the product?
- 8 That is where I'm confused or unclear about.
- 9 You know, it says anybody who handles leafy
- 10 greens, but then it turns around and
- 11 eliminates most of the handlers.
- MS. CARTER: You understand the
- 13 term relate to which types of handlers that
- 14 would be assessed under the program?
- 15 THE WITNESS: Ask it again please?
- 16 MS. CARTER: Is it -- do you --
- 17 well, is it your understanding that first
- 18 handlers would be assessed or could be --
- 19 could be signed up to be or eligible to be
- 20 signatories under the program?
- 21 THE WITNESS: At whatever
- 22 definition that you're using as a handler and

- 1 saying that the first handler is the one that
- 2 would be assessed, I can see where you believe
- 3 that there is a path from which to draw the
- 4 assessment.
- 5 And, if that's your question
- 6 related to where are we going to get the
- funds, then you've got to start someplace.
- 8 So, the first handler is a place to start.
- 9 But, is it the right one or does it guarantee
- 10 the use of the agreement, ensures safer food.
- 11 MS. CARTER: All right, on page
- 12 two, I believe it's that last full paragraph,
- 13 you note that there were, I guess, a number of
- 14 different major concerns with regards to the
- 15 current California agreement, including animal
- 16 intrusion, fields sanitation, harvest
- 17 requirements, soil amendments. Can you
- 18 explain or -- specifically, what you're
- 19 talking about with regards to these areas?
- 20 THE WITNESS: Only briefly that
- 21 the -- in the different times that I have
- 22 tried to do more research on the national

- 1 proposed leafy greens agreement, that you
- 2 continually come upon the materials that
- 3 explain that there is not enough proof that
- 4 any -- that some of these aspects of the
- 5 matrix in California greens has true basis in
- 6 regards to a food threat to food safety.
- 7 If I can cite a specific article, or a
- 8 specific website, no. I am aware, though of
- 9 the debate that some of the levels of practice
- 10 on the matrices might not be justified.
- MS. CARTER: So, you don't have
- 12 any specific areas that --
- 13 THE WITNESS: No.
- 14 MS. CARTER: Okay. That's all I
- 15 have, thank you.
- 16 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from
- 17 the panel? Ms. Deskins? Or -- oh.
- 18 MS. DASH: Suzanne Dash. How many
- 19 acres does your family farm?
- 20 THE WITNESS: We raise crops on
- 21 120 acres, 60 of it is vegetables.
- 22 MS. DASH: How much of that is

- 1 normally leafy greens?
- 2 THE WITNESS: Approximately an
- 3 acre and a half.
- 4 MS. DASH: Do any of the small
- 5 grocers or other markets that you sell to have
- 6 any food safety requirements that you have to
- 7 meet?
- 8 THE WITNESS: No. I -- the
- 9 majority of my crops are sold locally,
- 10 directly to the consumer. And then, a small
- 11 portion is wholesale, and no, I don't have any
- 12 that are requiring any kind of certification
- 13 or third-party audit.
- MS. DASH: The California
- 15 checklist that you referenced, what was that?
- 16 THE WITNESS: It's the audit
- 17 checklist from the GLMA.
- MS. DASH: Okay.
- 19 THE WITNESS: The LGMA, excuse me.
- 20 I got that backwards. LGMA.
- MS. DASH: So, there are some
- 22 practices on the checklist that you are doing,

- 1 and then there are some that you are not
- 2 doing?
- THE WITNESS: Yes.
- 4 MS. DASH: Is that right? Can you
- 5 give an example of something that you're not
- 6 doing that would be burdensome?
- 7 THE WITNESS: I'm not sure how was
- 8 referred in here. Let me see if I can find my
- 9 highlight. The field sanitation issues with
- 10 your workers, I am practicing. But, I operate
- 11 a pick your own operation as well, and only
- 12 one out of all the pick your own crops I offer
- do I segregate my public from my field staff's
- 14 access to the field. So, even though I'm
- 15 practicing good field sanitation with my
- 16 workers, I have -- I don't always have the
- 17 amount of control over my public as I have
- 18 over my workers. So, that would be of an
- 19 example of where I'm not complying.
- 20 MS. DASH: Thank you, that is all
- 21 I have.
- 22 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from

- 1 the panel? Ms. Deskins?
- MS. DESKINS: Sharlene Deskins,
- 3 USDA, Office of General Counsel. You said for
- 4 the Ohio Farm Bureau, that there were
- 5 different categories of membership. Do you --
- 6 can you tell us how many members would be in
- 7 the active farming category?
- 8 THE WITNESS: I don't have those
- 9 numbers in front of me, I don't rely on my
- 10 memory when I do that.
- MS. DESKINS: Okay, so, I guess
- 12 you wouldn't have any idea of how many --
- 13 THE WITNESS: You --
- 14 MS. DESKINS: of that number, how
- many would actually be leafy greens farmers?
- 16 THE WITNESS: Right, I couldn't
- 17 even -- yeah, I couldn't then even break it
- 18 down further, no.
- 19 MS. DESKINS: Okay.
- 20 THE WITNESS: Unfortunately, we
- 21 deal with that on our county level where we
- 22 want our Ohio staff to provide us with even

- 1 those kind of detailed information and those
- 2 kind of databases. They are difficult to
- 3 maintain.
- 4 MS. DESKINS: Okay. Another
- 5 question, on the last page, you talk about
- 6 liability for the use of the official
- 7 certification mark. What did you mean by
- 8 liability?
- 9 THE WITNESS: From a very naive,
- 10 just a person on the ground type of
- 11 perspective, if I am being held accountable
- 12 with traceability that my product is clean,
- 13 and then I happened to send it to a handler or
- 14 in -- and, I have met this standard that I
- 15 started to begin an audit process, began the
- 16 GAPs, and they affix a mark, even if it's just
- 17 to the bill of lading, but they're not -- if
- 18 there is not good care as to that movement of
- 19 that product, then how sure can I be that the
- 20 liability won't make it back to me at the
- 21 farm?
- 22 That's a concern. But, if people see that

- 1 mark and I think, okay, this is pure, and then
- 2 something happens in the handling process, can
- 3 we have some guarantees that the liability is
- 4 within the realm of activity or handling, that
- 5 realm of time?
- 6 MS. DESKINS: So, in other words,
- 7 you see this agreement as somehow impacting
- 8 liability issues if there is a food
- 9 contamination issue?
- 10 THE WITNESS: I believe it could.
- 11 I believe that consumer education is not
- 12 included in this at all, and that even though
- 13 we speak, and it was mentioned earlier today,
- 14 that it's only to be at the handler level,
- 15 that the mark is seen or whatever, and that
- 16 they don't intend for there to be a disparity
- 17 between the product of someone who's
- 18 participating and someone who's not, but we
- 19 believe that it could occur, that it would
- 20 become a marketing tool, that then it could
- 21 also be drawn into, also, a liability issue.
- THE WITNESS: Okay, so you also

- 1 think that there should be consumer education
- 2 on what the liability is, if there is a food
- 3 contamination problem?
- 4 THE WITNESS: Not what the
- 5 liability is, but our -- but consumer
- 6 education, not on the liability. Consumer
- 7 education as to the meaning of the mark, the
- 8 meaning of what it is that that notes. What
- 9 the agreement addresses.
- 10 MS. DESKINS: Okay. Because, I'm
- 11 still trying to understand -- I'm still trying
- 12 to find it -- I'm still trying to understand
- 13 what your understanding is about liability is
- 14 in this agreement. You -- so, your
- 15 understanding is, somehow, liability should be
- 16 connected with the person who uses the mark?
- 17 THE WITNESS: Correct.
- 18 MS. DESKINS: And, the liability
- in regards to who?
- 20 THE WITNESS: I'm not sure I
- 21 understand the second part of your question.
- MS. DESKINS: Well, if you're

- 1 talking about liability, who should be held
- 2 liable for the use of the mark? Are you
- 3 saying, whoever uses it then is liability, if
- 4 there is a food contamination?
- 5 THE WITNESS: If there is a
- 6 breakdown in the system, then it's -- if the
- 7 mark is supposed to ensure no breakdown in the
- 8 system, then is the liability held only to
- 9 those who use the mark, or does it go beyond
- 10 that?
- 11 MS. DESKINS: Okay. Again, I'm
- 12 just trying to understand. You see this
- 13 agreement then, as with all -- as somehow
- 14 involving tort liability on food contamination
- 15 issues?
- 16 THE WITNESS: Considering it's
- 17 supposed to be an assurance type program, as
- 18 my understanding, that there will be the
- 19 perception, I believe at some point, that
- 20 liability -- if there is a breakdown in the
- 21 system, has to be attributed.
- MS. DESKINS: Okay, the other

- 1 question that I had was, you had here that the
- 2 Ohio Farm Bureau will oppose this agreement if
- 3 there is not changes. Does the Ohio Farm
- 4 Bureau currently support the Nationally Leafy
- 5 Greens Agreement?
- 6 THE WITNESS: No, and in our
- 7 comments that were submitted in 2007, also,
- 8 addressed these concerns at that time, and as
- 9 the proposal moved up through the process, we
- 10 did not see those changes implemented --
- 11 included.
- MS. DESKINS: Okay, so are you
- 13 really trying to say here that the Farm Bureau
- 14 does not support this agreement?
- 15 THE WITNESS: We support a
- 16 nationally initiated agreement, if it's on a
- 17 state-by-state basis. We don't feel the way
- 18 it it appears without matrices being
- 19 specified, without the -- whether it --
- 20 without the parameters. When it comes to --
- 21 if there are going to be different sets of
- 22 matrix -- because can until today, we weren't

- 1 hearing that the zones for the administrative
- 2 committee could be different than the zones or
- 3 regions for how the matrix were drawn up. And
- 4 so, our position was that Ohio, as a state
- 5 alone, is diverse, let alone in comparison to
- 6 the rest of the country, and that as this
- 7 proposal moves forward, and becomes a rule,
- 8 that if you're going to develop matrices that
- 9 apply to us, are they or are they not going to
- 10 be according to zone or the entire nation, and
- 11 that our position is that it's only suitable
- 12 if it's tailored either state-by-state or
- 13 state collection -- collection of states that
- 14 have similar climactic and cultural practices.
- MS. DESKINS: I have no further
- 16 questions.
- 17 JUDGE HILLSON: All done? Any
- 18 questions from the audience? How about
- 19 proponents?
- 20 EXAMINATION BY PROPONENTS
- 21 MR. STENZEL: Tom Stenzel, from
- 22 United Fresh Produce Association. Thank you,

- 1 Ms. Schacht, for being here. Could you
- 2 clarify again, when you first heard about a
- 3 national leafy greens agreement and began
- 4 considering that?
- 5 THE WITNESS: In the fall of 07.
- 6 MR. STENZEL: So, as much as 2
- 7 years ago.
- 8 THE WITNESS: Uh-huh.
- 9 MR. STENZEL: So, the Farm Bureau
- 10 has discussed that, your staff, board members,
- 11 --
- 12 THE WITNESS: Uh-huh.
- 13 MR. STENZEL: Even if we may come
- 14 out at different points in what we're
- 15 recommending, would it be fair to say that you
- 16 have been very well informed and involved in
- 17 the process of discussing and having input?
- 18 THE WITNESS: Has Farm Bureau been
- 19 involved in and informed? Yes.
- 20 MR. STENZEL: And at this point in
- 21 time, would you say that for the Ohio farmers
- 22 on that -- on behalf of Farm Bureau, that

- 1 pretty much everybody would have a stake in
- 2 the issue has had an opportunity to have their
- 3 voice heard?
- 4 THE WITNESS: Not thoroughly.
- 5 MR. STENZEL: I'm curious, have
- 6 you had any discussion with your counterparts
- 7 in the California Farm Bureau who are
- 8 proponents of this agreement?
- 9 THE WITNESS: Personally, no. Our
- 10 staff, yes.
- MR. STENZEL: Do you have any way
- 12 to characterize the discussions as to, you
- 13 know, what they've told you, why California
- 14 Farm Bureau would support this?
- 15 THE WITNESS: Could you say that
- 16 again please?
- 17 MR. STENZEL: Any reason -- do you
- 18 have any understanding of why California Farm
- 19 Bureau would support it when Ohio does not?
- 20 THE WITNESS: Like in your earlier
- 21 question, I haven't had the direct
- 22 discussions. Ohio does not support it but

- 1 because we do not feel that the way it's
- 2 structured right now that it's suitable for
- 3 Ohio. Regardless of whether it's Georgia or
- 4 California or Nova Scotia, you know, --
- 5 MR. STENZEL: Right.
- 6 THE WITNESS: Dorothy, we're not
- 7 in Kansas anymore.
- 8 MR. STENZEL: Do you know if the
- 9 Farm Bureau -- Ohio Farm Bureau supports an
- 10 Ohio Grown campaign or some type of marketing
- 11 program that supports buy Ohio?
- 12 THE WITNESS: There is an Ohio
- 13 proud program.
- MR. STENZEL: Yes.
- 15 THE WITNESS: And, by local type -
- 16 -
- 17 MR. STENZEL: So, you would
- 18 support that Ohio proud program?
- 19 THE WITNESS: Yes. There is
- 20 support for the Ohio program -- the Ohio proud
- 21 program.
- MR. STENZEL: Do you have any way

- 1 to assure the public that all of the growers
- 2 who use that Ohio grown program are complying
- 3 with good agricultural practices?
- 4 THE WITNESS: I am also a member,
- 5 in addition to Ohio Farm Bureau, Ohio produce
- 6 Growers and Marketers Association as well, and
- 7 so I am privy, also, or am supportive of our
- 8 efforts to establish and -- the Ohio project,
- 9 which is an Ohio fresh produce standard. We
- 10 would -- we really see that it needs to be
- 11 more comprehensive than just a leafy greens
- 12 marketing agreement, and that just as you
- 13 heard our Amish community talk about the
- 14 efforts, because they are a such a concern,
- 15 not just in the Amish community, but in the
- 16 state, because we do have such a large volume
- 17 of people who are interacting directly with
- 18 the consumers, that they do wish to have a --
- 19 good practices that builds that consumer
- 20 confidence. I don't necessarily see, with the
- 21 way the proposal is now, that other than
- 22 promoting that there is another system in

- 1 place, that the government's overseeing, with
- 2 some stamp that was on the bill, that we can
- 3 necessarily guarantee consumer confidence, or
- 4 assure the consumer safe food.
- 5 MR. STENZEL: You are aware of the
- 6 FDA's guidance document for leafy greens
- 7 production?
- 8 THE WITNESS: Aware somewhat. Not
- 9 versed.
- 10 MR. STENZEL: Do you know if the
- 11 Ohio Farm Bureau supports that all growers of
- 12 leafy greens should follow the FDA guidance?
- 13 THE WITNESS: You are asking if
- 14 Ohio Farm Bureau has encouraged its membership
- 15 to do such?
- MR. STENZEL: Yes ma'am.
- 17 THE WITNESS: Per se, probably,
- 18 you know, I can't recall a specific time that
- 19 they did that.
- 20 MR. STENZEL: Okay. One last
- 21 question, and this is a particularly troubling
- 22 one for me. In your testimony, you refer to

- 1 foodborne illnesses associated with packaged
- 2 products, not raw materials, not raw lettuce,
- 3 but in bagged salads or that type of thing.
- 4 Do you or the Ohio Farm Bureau have any
- 5 evidence whatsoever that E. coli 0157H7 has
- 6 been introduced in a packaging plant as
- 7 opposed to on the farm?
- 8 THE WITNESS: Do I have evidence
- 9 of that? Not as a local farmer.
- 10 MR. STENZEL: As a representative
- 11 of the Ohio Farm Bureau, do you have --
- 12 THE WITNESS: Do I have --
- 13 MR. STENZEL: You used that in
- 14 your testimony today. Do you -- what evidence
- do you base your testimony on, that outbreaks
- 16 have been associated with packaged salads as
- 17 opposed to contamination of raw product?
- 18 THE WITNESS: I quess I would have
- 19 to say no, I don't.
- MR. STENZEL: Thank you.
- 21 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else? Go
- 22 ahead Mr. Giclas.

- 1 MR. GICLAS: Hank Giclas, Western
- 2 Growers. Thank you, Ms. Schacht, for your
- 3 testimony. I just have a couple of quick
- 4 questions. Do you -- are you -- is there any
- 5 language in the proposal that you believe
- 6 would preclude the national marketing
- 7 agreement from developing specific on-farm
- 8 metrics at a state level?
- 9 THE WITNESS: I don't believe it's
- 10 specific enough to assure that that's the
- 11 method that they would use.
- MR. GICLAS: But, there's no
- 13 language that would necessarily preclude that
- 14 either. Would you agree?
- 15 THE WITNESS: I would agree that
- 16 it's vague enough that it could even be a
- 17 national -- all 50 states compliance program.
- 18 MR. GICLAS: Are you aware of
- 19 language in the proposed program that allows
- 20 the national agreement to collaborate with the
- 21 existing state programs to affect its
- 22 purposes?

- 1 THE WITNESS: You say, did I
- 2 notice that part in the -- in there? Again,
- 3 my biggest concern is how a vague or how
- 4 unassuring it is stated in there.
- 5 MR. GICLAS: Well, do you have a
- 6 copy of the proposed agreement in there?
- 7 THE WITNESS: I have the one dated
- 8 September 3, '09.
- 9 MR. GICLAS: Then, can I refer you
- 10 to section 970.49? I think it's on page
- 11 45570, section D, under powers, and, ask you
- 12 to read that.
- 13 THE WITNESS: And, I have
- 14 highlighted in pink to collaborate with state
- 15 existing boards, and that -- and commissions
- 16 and in agreements with memorandums of
- 17 understanding to affect purposes of the
- 18 agreement. Memorandums of understanding as
- 19 are not necessarily quaranteed. Are they?
- 20 MR. GICLAS: Do you understanding,
- 21 a memorandum of understanding to --
- 22 THE WITNESS: Probably not as well

- 1 as you, sir.
- 2 MR. GICLAS: But the language, I
- 3 guess, my point is -- you said that there is
- 4 language in there that would allow for
- 5 collaboration with the state program.
- 6 THE WITNESS: So, again, my reason
- 7 for being here to testify is to emphasize that
- 8 from the Ohio perspective, we want to see that
- 9 kind of collaboration.
- 10 MR. GICLAS: Thank you. I guess
- 11 my last question is, in the first section of
- 12 your testimony, under structure, you talked
- 13 about handlers dominating the administrative
- 14 committee. Can I ask you, your understanding
- of the proposal, who would pay for or pay the
- 16 assessments that are associated with the
- 17 national marketing agreement?
- 18 THE WITNESS: As the question
- 19 earlier about first handlers, I know there has
- 20 to be a point in time, whether or not that's
- 21 the only point of assessment, because the way
- 22 the proposal is, that it is directing more

- 1 toward handlers. That -- and, that's where
- 2 you refer to using the mark, that's about the
- 3 only place where you can guarantee where you
- 4 can assess accurately. Correct?
- 5 MR. GICLAS: Well, I appreciate
- 6 the answer yes. Thank you.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else?
- 8 MR. GICLAS: I don't have anything
- 9 else.
- 10 JUDGE HILLSON: I don't have
- 11 anything else either. Thank you for
- 12 testifying. You may step down.
- 13 Call your next witness. You don't
- 14 have a written statement to take it?
- MR. JONES: No, sir.
- 16 Whereupon,
- 17 BOB JONES
- 18 having been first duly sworn, was called as a
- 19 witness herein, was examined and testified as
- 20 follows:
- 21 EXAMINATION DIRECT
- JUDGE HILLSON: Could you please

- 1 state your name and spell it for the record?
- THE WITNESS: Bob Jones.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Don't spell it for
- 4 the record.
- 5 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
- JUDGE HILLSON: We'll skip that
- 7 part of it. And, you may testify.
- 8 THE WITNESS: Good afternoon. I
- 9 certainly want to take an opportunity to thank
- 10 the panel for not only giving us the
- 11 opportunity here in the Midwest to give
- 12 comment, but obviously to come up to Columbus.
- 13 I certainly don't envy the task that you have
- 14 been given. The testimony here today
- 15 obviously draws passion from both sides, and
- 16 you have a big task in front of you.
- 17 My name is Bob Jones, my family
- 18 and I operate a 200 acre vegetable farm in
- 19 Huron, Ohio, which is right on Lake Erie. Our
- 20 farm currently raises over 600 varieties of
- 21 heirloom produce and sells them to
- 22 restaurants. I am the immediate past

- 1 president of the Ohio Produce Growers and
- 2 Marketers Association, and I also served nine
- 3 years on the board of directors of the Ohio
- 4 Vegetable and Potato Growers Association,
- 5 which was one of the three founding members of
- 6 the OPGMA, three years ago. My testimony
- 7 today is on behalf of our family farm and our
- 8 100 employees.
- 9 You have heard and I have reviewed
- 10 countless hours of testimony both today and in
- 11 previous weeks from many folks who are
- 12 passionate about their views concerning this
- 13 proposal. Several testimonies have been
- 14 entered into the record as to the specifics
- that surround this proposal, and I will not
- 16 reiterate these issues. I would, however,
- 17 like to enter into the record a few questions
- 18 that I personally have representing our farm
- 19 that I feel need to be addressed as this
- 20 proposal moves forward and that have caused me
- 21 to believe this proposal, the National Leafy
- 22 Greens Marketing Agreement, is not in the best

- 1 interest, at this time, of the collective
- 2 industry in the United States, nor the
- 3 consumer of those products.
- 4 Whether you are in favor of or
- 5 opposed to this proposal, we can all agree on
- 6 a few basic points. Food safety is critically
- 7 important and is truly a social responsibility
- 8 of all growers of leafy greens as well as
- 9 other vegetables. We can agree that improving
- 10 best practices of grower handlers, and even
- 11 consumers, is vital to our collective efforts
- 12 and in reducing foodborne illness outbreaks.
- 13 The Western Growers Association is an
- 14 excellent organization that has done an
- 15 outstanding job for several years of both
- 16 promoting and protecting it's members. The
- 17 Western Growers Association's efforts to
- 18 develop food safety standards is commendable.
- 19 While these efforts are well-intentioned and
- 20 commendable, we have issues with the proposal.
- 21 I believe that it is critically important to
- 22 and understand that Western Growers

- 1 Association, the National Leafy Greens
- 2 Counsel, the California Leafy Greens Marketing
- 3 Agreement, nor the Arizona Leafy Greens
- 4 Marketing Agreement, while representing a
- 5 majority of the leafy greens produced, do not,
- 6 and I repeat, do not represent the entire
- 7 industry and certainly not the best interests
- 8 of my family or even Ohio's growers.
- 9 Leafy greens are not the only
- 10 commodities that need to have best practices
- 11 addressed. A more comprehensive approach may
- 12 be in order. A state's rights cannot and must
- 13 not be overlooked when it comes to it's
- 14 citizen's rights to protect its abilities to
- 15 earn a living. I have heard and read
- 16 testimony in these proceedings that the
- 17 Arizona and California leafy greens marketing
- 18 agreements have been a good thing for those
- 19 state's growers. However, not all of those
- 20 state's growers in those states agree that it
- 21 has been completely effective, nor in the best
- 22 interest of the entire state's growers.

- 1 I believe in the California Leafy
- 2 Greens Marketing Agreement, that the point has
- 3 been made and confirmed that the state's large
- 4 growers and it's grower organizations can come
- 5 together as has been the case in both the
- 6 California and the Arizona, to develop
- 7 standards to protect its members, the
- 8 consumers of its harvest, by developing
- 9 standards that reflect its environmental and
- 10 cultural issues in their state. I both
- 11 congratulate and applaud the Western Growers
- 12 Association and it's member growers for the
- 13 their success in these efforts. All I am
- 14 asking is that you afford us here in Ohio, the
- 15 exact same opportunity.
- In closing, the review panel
- 17 probably noticed, as you came to Ohio this
- 18 week, that the climate is a bit different here
- 19 in Columbus than it was in either Monterey or
- 20 in Florida. The climate isn't the only
- 21 difference, and I think that's the point. We
- 22 have specific environmental conditions and

- 1 cultural practices that are unique to Ohio.
- 2 I want our standards to represent those
- 3 differences.
- 4 I want to thank the USDA for
- 5 conducting these hearings and for coming to
- 6 Ohio. Please consider as you make these
- 7 decisions, the potential ramifications to my
- 8 family and the vast number of small producers
- 9 in Ohio and around the United States of our
- 10 abilities to continue to earn our livelihood
- 11 as multigenerational family farms growing
- 12 leafy greens. Thank you.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Thank you, Mr.
- 14 Jones. Let me ask the panel if they have any
- 15 questions.
- 16 Ms. Schmaedick, do you have questions? Go
- 17 right ahead.
- 18 EXAMINATION BY USDA
- 19 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Melissa
- 20 Schmaedick, USDA. Thank you, Mr. Jones.
- 21 First question, I don't believe you stated the
- 22 name of your farm.

- 1 THE WITNESS: The Chef's Garden.
- 2 MS. SCHMAEDICK: The Chef's
- 3 Garden, okay. And I understand you to say
- 4 that in your opinion, a best practices program
- 5 that looked at -- that looks at all
- 6 commodities and not just leafy greens would be
- 7 your preference?
- 8 THE WITNESS: Yes.
- 9 MS. SCHMAEDICK: And, I also
- 10 clearly understand that your -- that program
- 11 that identifies differences in production
- 12 techniques and environment, et cetera, is
- 13 important --
- 14 Do you have any suggestions as to
- 15 how a program that would cover all commodities
- 16 and recognize a multitude of growing
- 17 environments could possibly be constructed?
- 18 THE WITNESS: I do, and at a later
- 19 time when we're further along with developing
- 20 our Ohio standard, I would love to share that
- 21 with you.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay, thank you.

- 1 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from
- the panel? From the USDA panel? Ms. Dash?
- 3 MS. DASH: Suzanne Dash. I wanted
- 4 to ask you if you would be considered a large
- 5 farmer or a small farmer, based on small
- 6 business administration's definition of
- 7 \$700,000 per year gross sales?
- 8 THE WITNESS: By your definition I
- 9 am a large farmer.
- 10 MS. DASH: Do you -- do any of the
- 11 buyers that you sell to have any food safety
- 12 requirements that you have to follow?
- THE WITNESS: Yes.
- MS. DASH: So, you are doing good
- 15 agricultural practices already, are these --
- 16 do you have audits on your farm?
- 17 THE WITNESS: Yes. Currently, I
- 18 am subjected to an Ohio Deparmtent of
- 19 Agriculture annual audit, an FDA annual audit,
- 20 the USDA annual audit, an AVENDRA, a Primus
- 21 audit, and an AIB audit, and a CERES GAP
- 22 certification in the field, HACCP, GMP, GHP,

- 1 and a crisis management plan.
- MS. DASH: Thank you, that's all I
- 3 have.
- 4 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from
- 5 the USDA panel? Anything from the proponents
- 6 panel? Mr. Resnick?
- 7 EXAMINATION BY PROPONENTS
- 8 MR. RESNICK: Jason Resnick,
- 9 Western Growers. First, for clarification, I
- 10 may have misheard, I thought I heard Ms. Dash
- 11 say \$700,000 as the definition of a small
- 12 grower?
- JUDGE HILLSON: I think it was in
- 14 the oral typo.
- MR. RESNICK: I just want to
- 16 clarify.
- 17 JUDGE HILLSON: I think 750 is the
- 18 number you --
- MS. DASH: Seven-fifty.
- 20 MR. RESNICK: So, at \$750,000,
- 21 that being the threshold, are you still
- 22 considered a large grower?

- 1 THE WITNESS: Yes.
- 2 MR. RESNICK: Okay, I just want to
- 3 clarify that. You mentioned that you grow a
- 4 variety of heirloom vegetables. Can you
- 5 specify which leafy greens identified in the
- 6 proposal you growe?
- 7 THE WITNESS: All but one and 20
- 8 additional.
- 9 MR. RESNICK: All but one --
- 10 THE WITNESS: And 20 that you
- 11 would probably classify as others. I classify
- 12 them in my operation as leafy greens. In your
- 13 proposal, all but one of the leafy green
- 14 commodities that you've listed, and 20
- 15 additional.
- 16 MR. RESNICK: Which is the one
- 17 that you don't grow?
- 18 THE WITNESS: I can't pronounce
- 19 it. It begins with a D. And it's probably a
- 20 name I just don't recognize.
- 21 MR. RESNICK: That's okay, thank
- 22 you. Do you believe that the framework for

- 1 the leafy greens marketing agreement could
- 2 provide the regional differences that you've
- 3 specified as being necessary for a food safety
- 4 program?
- 5 THE WITNESS: As it's currently
- 6 written, no.
- 7 MR. RESNICK: What would -- in
- 8 your opinion, be required to improve the
- 9 marketing agreement for leafy greens?
- 10 THE WITNESS: Throw it out and
- 11 start over.
- MR. RESNICK: Thank you.
- 13 JUDGE HILLSON: Thank you for your
- 14 testimony, Mr. Jones. You may step down. Ms.
- 15 Lovera, you may call your next witness. I'm
- 16 going to mark the written statement of Dr.
- 17 Goland as Exhibit 69.
- 18 (Whereupon, Exhibit 69 was marked
- 19 for identification.)
- Whereupon,
- 21 CAROL GOLAND
- having been first duly sworn, was

- 1 called as a witness herein, was examined and
- 2 testified as follows:
- 3 EXAMINATION DIRECT
- 4 JUDGE HILLSON: Could you please
- 5 state your name and spell it for the record?
- 6 THE WITNESS: Sure, it's Carol, C-
- 7 A-R-O-L, Goland, G-O-L-A-N-D.
- JUDGE HILLSON: And, you have a
- 9 statement that you wish to read?
- THE WITNESS: I do.
- 11 JUDGE HILLSON: Please proceed.
- 12 THE WITNESS: Thank you. My name
- is Carol Goland, and I am the executive
- 14 director of the Ohio Ecological Food and Farm
- 15 Association, or OEFFA. We're a nonprofit
- 16 organization that works to educate about,
- 17 promote, and advocate for sustainable
- 18 agriculture. But OEFFA also operates OEFFA
- 19 certification, which is a USDA accredited
- 20 organic certifier and we appreciate the
- 21 opportunity to be here today to give testimony
- 22 regarding the proposed National Leafy Greens

- 1 Marketing Agreement, and thank you for coming
- 2 to Columbus.
- 3 Many of the concerns that we have
- 4 with the specifics of the proposal have been
- 5 voiced in testimony by opponents at the other
- 6 hearing sites, and so I am not going to repeat
- 7 them here. I'm going to do that both as a
- 8 courtesy to our panelists who've already spent
- 9 many hours listening to them but also for a
- 10 more important reason, and that is that we
- 11 really do not believe that improvement to the
- 12 specifics of this proposal can save it from
- 13 what we see as it's fundamentally flawed
- 14 premises. So, I'm here today to express our
- 15 opposition to the proposed National Leafy
- 16 Greens Marketing Agreement, which we believe
- is not an effective way to address food safety
- 18 concerns.
- 19 Our opposition is based on three
- 20 arguments.
- 21 First, the stated aim of the
- 22 proposed National Leafy Greens Marketing

- 1 Agreement is to improve the food safety of
- 2 leafy green vegetables. And, while we most
- 3 certainly endorse the goal of a safer food
- 4 supply, we do not believe that the
- 5 Agricultural Marketing Service of the USDA is
- 6 the right agency to be charged with ensuring
- 7 the safety of leafy greens. We feel instead
- 8 that the effort to establish food safety
- 9 standards should be guided by an agency with
- 10 greater expertise in food safety, such as the
- 11 US FDA, which is an agency who has at it's
- 12 core mission, safeguarding public health.
- 13 Second, we do not believe that
- 14 this the right time for marketing agreement
- 15 focused on food safety be to be brought
- 16 forward. As you know, congress is currently
- 17 considering legislation that would have the
- 18 FDA establishe science-based standards for raw
- 19 agricultural commodities, including leafy
- 20 greens. At the same time, the president's
- 21 Food Safety Working Group has recommended a
- 22 new public health focused approach to food

- 1 safety. And, while concerned about the risks
- 2 of delaying, we do believe these efforts
- 3 should be allowed to reach their conclusions
- 4 in order to avoid potentially conflicting sets
- 5 of standards.
- 6 Third, we are concerned that a
- 7 marketing agreement is not the right
- 8 instrument for something as fundamentally
- 9 important to public health as food safety.
- 10 Adopting processes that minimize the risk of
- 11 pathogenic contamination should not be
- 12 voluntary. In addition, a marketing agreement
- 13 that takes a crop by crop approach to food
- 14 safety is both inefficient as well is
- 15 impractical. We are concerned that
- 16 diversified farms, characteristics of many
- farms in Ohio, as you've heard here today,
- 18 could be asked to implement multiple standards
- 19 for food safety based on a variety of
- 20 commodities grown or be forced to shift to
- 21 monoculture agriculture, either of which could
- 22 be economically and ecologically devastating.

- 1 None of this critique in any way
- 2 is meant to signal that the safety of leafy
- 3 greens is not important. It is vitally
- 4 important. However, we believe that in the
- 5 current proposal, the agent, AMS, the time,
- 6 now, and the tool, a marketing agreement, are
- 7 all wrong for this critical task. For that
- 8 reason, we urge the USDA to not further pursue
- 9 this proposal and instead to work in support
- 10 of other efforts aimed at developing and
- 11 implementing food safety standards that are
- 12 regionally appropriate and scale sensitive.
- 13 We hope that these standards will address food
- 14 safety in a manner that gives priority to the
- 15 highest risk foods and processes while maxing
- 16 maximizing producers' abilities to maintain
- 17 farming operations that are consistent with
- 18 conservation, organic standards, and their own
- 19 economic well-being. Thank you for this
- 20 opportunity to testify.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Thank you, Dr.
- 22 Goland. I'm going to receive your written

- 1 testimony into evidence as Exhibit 69.
- 2 (Whereupon, Exhibit 69 was marked
- 3 for identification and received
- 4 into evidence.)
- 5 JUDGE HILLSON: And, I will ask
- 6 the panel if they have any questions. Ms.
- 7 Schmaedick, go right ahead.
- 8 EXAMINATION BY USDA
- 9 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Melissa
- 10 Schmaedick, USDA. Good afternoon. Ms. Goland
- 11 -- or, Dr. Goland.
- 12 THE WITNESS: Either way, I
- 13 answer.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: A couple of quick
- 15 questions, I hope. First one is, you state
- 16 that process that would minimize contamination
- 17 should not be voluntary. Are you advocating
- 18 a mandatory program?
- 19 THE WITNESS: I think, depending
- 20 on what that would look like, but I guess I
- 21 would add that that doesn't mean that it's
- 22 necessarily a federally mandated program, I

- 1 guess. I'm trying to say that I don't think
- 2 food safety is something that we can choose to
- 3 opt in or opt out of.
- 4 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay. And, you
- 5 also state that you believe that the FDA would
- 6 be the more appropriate governing body to
- 7 oversee program?
- 8 THE WITNESS: I'm going to check
- 9 my words because I think I tried to state it
- 10 very carefully.
- 11 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay.
- 12 THE WITNESS: I think I used the
- 13 word guided, guided by an agency who had that
- 14 expertise in food safety, and also, who had
- 15 had as its core mission, safeguarding public
- 16 health.
- 17 So, I really was trying to make a
- 18 -- to emphasize the importance for having the
- 19 good science, scientific guidance that the FDA
- 20 can provide us.
- 21 MS. SCHMAEDICK: And, the proposed
- 22 agreement as it's currently written, in your

- 1 opinion, does it not provide for hand in hand
- 2 guidance with FDA.
- THE WITNESS: I do see the
- 4 inclusion of the FDA on the technical review
- 5 board committee. Otherwise, the mechanics of
- 6 that collaboration or partnership are not
- 7 entirely clear to me.
- 8 MS. SCHMAEDICK: And, you have
- 9 read the proposal. Is that correct?
- 10 THE WITNESS: Not every single
- 11 word, but yes.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Are you familiar
- 13 with the definitions of good agricultural
- 14 practices, good handling practices, good
- 15 manufacturing practices?
- 16 THE WITNESS: Not in detail. I
- 17 mean, those are familiar terms to me.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay. Do you
- 19 have a copy of the proposal?
- THE WITNESS: Yes.
- 21 MS. SCHMAEDICK: So, I would like
- 22 to direct your attention 2970.9, and 970.10.

- 1 THE WITNESS: Okay.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: If you could take
- 3 a look at those definitions, could you tell me
- 4 whether or not the FDA is referenced?
- 5 THE WITNESS: The FDA is
- 6 referenced in both of those sections.
- 7 MS. SCHMAEDICK: So, does that
- 8 provide you any further information on whether
- 9 or not FDA would be integrated in the -- in
- 10 this program as it's proposed?
- 11 THE WITNESS: I think I was aware
- 12 of that. So, yes, it reminds me of that fact.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay. Are you
- 14 aware of the current commodity specific
- 15 guidelines that are being reviewed by FDA?
- 16 THE WITNESS: I'm aware of the
- 17 July 2009 guidance that they brought out. Is
- 18 that correct, on leafy greens? And, if I'm
- 19 not mistaken, we're moving on to tomatoes and
- 20 melons. But, I may be not correct about that.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: So, in your
- 22 opinion, is the FDA incorrect in its approach

- 1 in developing commodity specific guidelines?
- 2 THE WITNESS: You know, it seems
- 3 to me that at some point, you have to
- 4 understand the science of the pathogens that
- 5 are involved, in order to understand the --
- 6 how contamination occurs and moves, you have
- 7 to understand something about the commodities
- 8 that they affect and then, everything else
- 9 about the environment in which that occurs.
- 10 So, I guess I see a difference between
- 11 generating the science that guides our
- 12 decision-making, and coming out with -- how to
- 13 say it, coming out with directives about how
- 14 to approach food safety in a crop by crop
- 15 manner. To me, it just is not reflective of
- 16 the kind of diversified farms that we have
- 17 here in Ohio, and I think that the concern
- 18 that has been voiced is, you know, how will
- 19 producers cope with multiple sets of whatever
- 20 you want to call them, standards, guidances,
- 21 metrics. When they're developed commodity by
- 22 commodity.

- 1 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay, thank you.
- THE WITNESS: Thank you.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from
- 4 the -- go ahead, Mr. Souza.
- 5 MR. SOUZA: Anthony Souza, USDA.
- 6 Thank you, Dr. Goland. A couple of questions,
- 7 just one question. On commodity specific, in
- 8 your final remarks on the back of your
- 9 prepared statement, you discuss concerns about
- 10 the diverse farms and multiple standards, and
- 11 then you conclude in your ending paragraph, we
- 12 hope that these standards will address food
- 13 safety matters in a way that gives priority to
- 14 the highest risk foods and processes. Any
- 15 suggestions on how you would approach, without
- 16 going commodity specific, on addressing the
- 17 highest risk foods and processes?
- 18 THE WITNESS: Well, I appreciate
- 19 that question. And, I think that the emphasis
- 20 on that sentence is the word priority. That
- 21 is, I know, I think we have an enormous task
- 22 in front of us, in terms of addressing food

- 1 safety issues in the country, and were not
- 2 going to do it all at once. So, part of that
- 3 means sort of chronologically, let's give
- 4 priority to those commodities, which we know,
- 5 either based on experience or the particular
- 6 nature of that crop, is most susceptible to
- 7 food safety problems.
- 8 MR. SOUZA: So, in FDA's reviewing
- 9 of some of the guidance documents, one of them
- 10 being the leafy greens, that I believe melons,
- 11 and tomatoes, do you feel like they're going
- 12 down the correct path on that?
- 13 THE WITNESS: You know, I don't
- 14 feel like I really have the knowledge or
- 15 expertise to comment on that. I mean,
- 16 obviously, I'm aware from just the popular
- 17 press, and what I've seen in terms of reports
- 18 of outbreaks and it's clear that leafy greens
- 19 have been implicated in a number of those, but
- 20 I don't have at the ready a table in my head
- 21 of frequency of outbreaks by commodity. I'm
- 22 going to assume that they are doing that based

- 1 on some knowledge of some kind.
- 2 MR. SOUZA: Under the multiple
- 3 standards, I can see where your concern is
- 4 here on the diversified farms. Can you think
- of a way that one might approach, let's say,
- 6 you have a farm that is maybe growing 25 or 30
- 7 different commodities, and implementing a
- 8 program that will cover all 25 to 30 of those
- 9 without imposing higher standards on a
- 10 singular individual commodity, let's just say,
- 11 for instance, that, in your multiple standard,
- 12 a diverse farm, you've got somebody growing
- 13 apples, so you're setting up a set of
- 14 standards or of metrics for that diversified
- 15 farm, and then you have an individual apple
- 16 grower. Would one -- could one imply that the
- 17 standards for that apple grower might be more
- 18 restrictive than if it was an individual
- 19 standard for that commodity, or individual
- 20 metrics?
- 21 THE WITNESS: So, if I understand
- 22 you correctly, we're looking at a grower who

- 1 has a single crop of apples, versus a grower
- 2 who would have apples -- who would be growing
- 3 apples as one of 20 or 30 crops.
- 4 MR. SOUZA: Correct.
- 5 THE WITNESS: And, the question is
- 6 whether the single crop apple grower would
- 7 have a more stringent set of guidelines to
- 8 follow.
- 9 MR. SOUZA: Imposed upon him.
- 10 THE WITNESS: Imposed upon him or
- 11 her.
- MR. SOUZA: Her, correct.
- 13 THE WITNESS: I don't think I see
- 14 the rationale for that, though on the other
- 15 hand, I see the danger on the diversified
- 16 farm, of if you're not managing -- juggling
- 17 multiple standards for multiple crops, what do
- 18 you do other than default to sort of the
- 19 strictest set of standards or the start of
- 20 standards for the crop that has the strictest
- 21 standards and -- so that you're only dealing
- 22 with one, and assuming that that covers

- 1 everything else. I mean, I think it's a real
- 2 problem.
- 3 MR. SOUZA: Thank you.
- 4 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from
- 5 the panel? How about the proponents?
- 6 MR. RESNICK: No, Your Honor.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, thank you,
- 8 doctor. You may step down.
- 9 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
- JUDGE HILLSON: And, Ms. Lovera,
- 11 you may call your next witness.
- 12 Whereupon,
- 13 RICHARD WANDER
- having been first duly sworn, was
- 15 called as a witness herein, was examined and
- 16 testified as follows:
- 17 EXAMINATION DIRECT
- 18 JUDGE HILLSON: Could you please
- 19 state your name and swell up and spell it for
- 20 the record?
- 21 THE WITNESS: Richard Wander, R-I-
- 22 C-H-A-R-D W-A-N-D-E-R.

- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, and I'm just
- 2 marking your written testimony as Exhibit 70.
- 3 (Whereupon, Exhibit 70 was marked
- 4 for identification.)
- JUDGE HILLSON: And, I assume you
- 6 want to read that?
- 7 THE WITNESS: I would like to.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Please proceed.
- 9 THE WITNESS: My name is Richard
- 10 Wander and I am a partner at Lynd Fruit Farm
- 11 in central Ohio. I thank you for taking the
- 12 time to listen to the concerns and needs of
- 13 growers in our region. While I am not a leafy
- 14 greens grower, I am president of the Ohio
- 15 Produce Growers and Marketers Association, and
- 16 have grave concerns of the effects of a
- 17 national marketing order on the many growers
- 18 throughout our state. If put in place a
- 19 national agreement would have an effect on all
- 20 produce growers and not just on leafy green
- 21 growers.
- 22 The California Leafy Greens

- 1 Marketing Agreement worked because it was
- 2 designed specifically for the local condition
- 3 of Western Growers. The whole agreement is
- 4 invalidated when it's specifics are attempted
- 5 to be applied to the hold United States.
- 6 Growers in each state must come
- 7 together to design food safety plans that work
- 8 for each region. I question how we are
- 9 supposed to comment on this agreement when not
- 10 all the specifics of the plan have been
- 11 developed. The proposal for developing a
- 12 national leafy greens agreement calls for very
- 13 limited grower involvement. The Ohio Produce
- 14 Growers and Marketers Association cannot
- 15 endorse this national effort. I believe that
- 16 for any food safety standards to work we need
- 17 involvement with all growers and not just a
- 18 selected few.
- We, as produce growers in the
- 20 state of Ohio, are very concerned about
- 21 delivering a safe and reliable products to our
- 22 customers. To do this we must have food

- 1 safety plans that are based on science and fit
- 2 each of our individual operations. Over
- 3 regulation and unnecessary requirements only
- 4 take away our time and energies from duties
- 5 necessary to make our products reliable.
- 6 Thank you.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, Mr. Wander,
- 8 I'm going to receive your written testimony as
- 9 Exhibit 70.
- 10 (Whereupon, Exhibit 70 was
- 11 received into evidence.)
- 12 JUDGE HILLSON: And I will ask the
- 13 panel if they have any questions of Mr.
- 14 Wander. I don't see -- do you have a
- 15 question, or do you --
- 16 go ahead, Ms. Schmaedick.
- 17 EXAMINATION BY USDA
- 18 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Melissa
- 19 Schmaedick, USDA. Thank you, Mr. Wander, for
- 20 your testimony. It just -- I was wondering if
- 21 -- well, there's been a lot of testimony today
- 22 about how the proposal lacks specifics.

- 1 THE WITNESS: Uh-huh.
- 2 MS. SCHMAEDICK: In terms of
- 3 metrics. And, I'm wondering is -- what is
- 4 your understanding of this program and,
- 5 hypothetically, if it were to be implemented,
- 6 is it your understanding that regulation would
- 7 start immediately, or would there be a phase
- 8 in process during which metrics would be
- 9 developed?
- 10 THE WITNESS: I do not know the
- 11 answer to that, as far as phasing in.
- 12 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Would it make a
- 13 difference if you had the understanding that
- 14 regulation would not become effective unless
- 15 it were actually developed?
- 16 THE WITNESS: I mean, I -- what
- 17 would make the most difference to growers in
- 18 Ohio is that we feel like we should be able to
- 19 control our own destiny, that we should be
- 20 able to develop our own food safety agreement
- 21 as opposed to having something developed for
- 22 the whole United States. And, that's our main

- 1 concern, is that as California and Arizona
- 2 were able to develop their own programs, that
- 3 we would be able to do the same thing here in
- 4 Ohio.
- 5 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay, thank you.
- 6 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from
- 7 the panel? The USDA panel, Ms. Dash?
- 8 MS. DASH: Suzanne Dash. Could
- 9 you explain how a national agreement would
- 10 have an effect on all produce growers?
- 11 THE WITNESS: Well, what we see
- 12 happening is that if something was put in
- 13 place for leafy greens, that buyers would want
- 14 that same type of agreement put in place for
- other produce commodities, not just for leafy
- 16 greens.
- MS. DASH: Thank you.
- 18 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from
- 19 the USDA panel? Anything from the proponents
- 20 panel?
- 21 MR. RESNICK: No, Your Honor.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, thank you

- 1 for your testimony, Mr. Wander, you may step
- 2 down.
- 3 You may call your next witness Ms.
- 4 Lovera. I'm going to mark Ms. Walden's
- 5 testimony as Exhibit 71.
- 6 (Whereupon, Exhibit 71 was marked
- 7 for identification.)
- 8 Whereupon,
- 9 NATALIE CAMPBELL WALDEN
- 10 having been first duly sworn, was
- 11 called as a witness herein, was examined and
- 12 testified as follows:
- 13 EXAMINATION DIRECT
- JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, and you can
- 15 state your name. You do not have to spell it,
- 16 because you already spelled it before.
- 17 THE WITNESS: I already did. But,
- 18 I am Natalie Campbell Walden, and on the list
- 19 that I saw right here, I am the last, so if
- 20 that will make your day better. Anyway, my
- 21 name my name is Natalie Campbell Walden and I
- 22 am here today on behalf of Turner Farm, a

- 1 certified organic farm in suburban Cincinnati,
- 2 as well as the longest continuously operating
- 3 CSA in our region. As stated in the Turner
- 4 Farm Mission Statement, Turner Farm operations
- 5 promote the connection between people of all
- 6 ages and the land that feeds them in body,
- 7 mind, and spirit, through education, and
- 8 example. Our goal is to produce fresh,
- 9 healthy, food in a safe and sustainable way.
- 10 Through education and example, we nurture
- 11 understanding of the rhythms of nature and our
- 12 place in the natural world, fostering
- 13 recognition of personal responsibility for
- 14 stewardship of the land, feeding both
- 15 ourselves and the community at large.
- We do not support a national
- 17 NLGMA. The suggestions, and to say that I
- 18 have listened well and learned well today, and
- 19 I understand that no metrics have been set up
- 20 for a national system, so, but I do still have
- 21 concerns that they will not fit the dynamics
- 22 of a small farm like Turner Farm. A thriving

- 1 small farms are essential in reestablishing
- 2 our vital eating habits in this country, and
- 3 that a substantial belief of the Turner Farm,
- 4 to help change our eating habits.
- 5 We see national NLGMA as a
- 6 solution to a marketing problem, not a
- 7 solution to the stated problem of food safety
- 8 and food education. The local food movement
- 9 is part of the solution to the problem of
- 10 getting clean, safe, fresh, nourishing food to
- 11 the general public, and if the tenets of
- 12 national LGMA are recommended, many small
- 13 farmers would be unable to comply. Why?
- 14 Because these proposals do not take into
- 15 account the ethos of organic farming or the
- 16 science of biodiversity in farming.
- 17 In approaching the issue of food
- 18 safety, we need a multilayered solution that
- 19 takes into account not only science but farm
- 20 size, climate considerations and cultivation
- 21 methods, environmental issues and population
- 22 pressures.

- 1 We at Turner Farm are confident that the USDA
- 2 has the best interest of the American people
- 3 at heart, vibrant local farm markets can only
- 4 strengthen the health of our population and of
- 5 our economy.
- 6 JUDGE HILLSON: Thank you.
- 7 THE WITNESS: And, thank you so
- 8 much for letting me speak today.
- 9 JUDGE HILLSON: Thank you for
- 10 testifying. I will receive your written
- 11 statement as -- into evidence as Exhibit 71.
- 12 (Whereupon, Exhibit 71 was
- 13 received into evidence.)
- 14 JUDGE HILLSON: And, I will ask
- 15 the panel if they have any questions of Ms.
- 16 Walden. Go ahead Ms. Schmaedick.
- 17 EXAMINATION BY USDA
- 18 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Melissa
- 19 Schmaedick, USDA. And, thank you, Ms.
- 20 Campbell Walden, or just Walden?
- 21 THE WITNESS: I go by both.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay. Well,

- 1 thank you for your testimony, I appreciate it.
- 2 You stated that you are an organic farm. Is
- 3 that correct?
- 4 THE WITNESS: Yes.
- 5 MS. SCHMAEDICK: And, in your
- 6 opinion, the National Organic Program, is it
- 7 a marketing program?
- 8 THE WITNESS: I would -- I heard
- 9 someone else answer that, someone answered
- 10 that question before and yes we are a
- 11 marketing -- it is a marketing program, yes.
- 12 This, it was certified through OEFFA, and it
- is a marketing program.
- MS. SCHMAEDICK: So, --
- 15 THE WITNESS: And, we are audited
- 16 accordingly.
- 17 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Is organic
- 18 production distinctly different from
- 19 conventional?
- 20 THE WITNESS: Yes in that the
- 21 interweaving of many different -- the
- 22 interweaving of many different biosystems and

- 1 the -- not applying pesticides that could be
- 2 harmful to the organic systems and the living
- 3 systems and organisms that create a farm like
- 4 Turner Farm, which, after 15 years of growing,
- 5 there are many systems that interface, and
- 6 sometimes in conventional systems, a pesticide
- 7 of some sort could stop one of those systems
- 8 that created a whole organic flow and sustain
- 9 a community at large.
- 10 MS. SCHMAEDICK: So, I'm curious.
- 11 You state that it's a actual production
- 12 method. Yet, you say that the National
- 13 Organic Program is a marketing program.
- 14 THE WITNESS: Well, Turner Farm
- 15 is, has its -- is more of an educational -- we
- 16 are now a 501(c)(3) and it is -- the mission
- 17 is to educate. We're a CSA that requires a
- 18 work involvement. Turner Farm sells at the
- 19 local farmers market, but it's overriding
- 20 focus of of its founder was that it was an
- 21 educational program. We have youth come in
- 22 from the inner city and see what it's like to

- 1 actually -- and, they have them help harvest
- 2 on Fridays for the Findlay market on
- 3 Saturdays, so they actually see where their
- 4 food gets -- comes from, and we find that many
- 5 children do not where their food is coming
- 6 from, and they don't even know that soil is
- 7 involved in the food that comes from, so that
- 8 is -- I would say that that is more in ethos
- 9 of the Turner Farm than marketing it's
- 10 produce. It's really creating that connection
- 11 within the community that we live in, between
- 12 the individuals of the community and the food
- 13 and were comes from, and how it's produced,
- 14 and what that requires, and how important
- 15 farmers are in our society. To -- you know,
- 16 you know that if you don't have farmers, you
- 17 don't eat.
- 18 MS. SCHMAEDICK: Okay, thank you.
- THE WITNESS: Yes.
- JUDGE HILLSON: Ms. Deskins.
- 21 MS. DESKINS: Ms. Campbell Walden,
- 22 when he testified that -- you might've already

- 1 answered this, but the dynamics of a small
- 2 farm don't fit into the national leafy green
- 3 agreement. Just if you know, can you tell us
- 4 what sections of it are not fitting in with
- 5 the small farms?
- 6 THE WITNESS: My concern is -- our
- 7 concerns were in that -- in looking at one --
- 8 and it has been addressed today, in looking at
- 9 the metrics of the California -- you know, the
- 10 California LGMA, that, for instance, on our
- 11 farm, there is a commitment to having trees
- 12 involved and, you know, there is a commitment
- 13 to the integration of the land. And, it
- 14 seemed that we might have to move the forest
- 15 away from our garden if what had been
- 16 suggested in California was moving ahead and
- 17 that that compliance would have limited our
- 18 land and our growing possibilities, and so it
- 19 has been -- I have been educated today to
- 20 learn that it will not -- the metrics will be
- 21 not just imposed upon all of the farmers in
- 22 that these issues will be developed according

- 1 to the needs of small farmers, as well as the
- 2 medium, as well as the monocultures, which is
- 3 the big monocultures which are very different
- 4 and have different problems.
- I mean, we have beehives because
- 6 we have flowers and plants growing all year,
- 7 and there is a different issue when you only
- 8 have one plant. You need bees to be brought
- 9 in to a monoculture when it only blooms once
- 10 for three weeks a year. So, it's just a
- 11 different issue. And, I'm glad to hear that
- 12 all those issues will be addressed if
- 13 something moves forward.
- MS. DESKINS: Thank you.
- 15 THE WITNESS: Yes. Thank you.
- 16 JUDGE HILLSON: Ms. Carter?
- 17 MS. CARTER: Antoinette Carter
- 18 with the USDA. Just a, I quess, a follow-up
- 19 question.
- THE WITNESS: Yeah.
- 21 MS. CARTER: Can you explain or
- 22 describe what products you grow on your farm?

- 1 THE WITNESS: Well, there is an
- 2 entire -- there is salad and spinach and the -
- 3 I always get it in another language, the --
- 4 purple -- eggplant and salad mixes. We have
- 5 spinach all year, that we growe underneath --
- 6 fresh spinach, and right now they are the --
- 7 excuse me, I'm nervous. The jerusalem
- 8 artichokes are quite wonderful, and we had a
- 9 meat CSA as well, so there is also the
- 10 involvement -- there are sheep and chickens
- 11 and pigs in certain areas. And, there is
- 12 cilantro and parsley, and there is a flower
- 13 CSA as well, so we have fresh flowers, and
- 14 corn. And -- organic corn.
- 15 MS. CARTER: So, how many acres,
- 16 do you farm on, and specifically, how many of
- 17 those are dedicated to leafy green production,
- 18 if you're able to share it?
- 19 THE WITNESS: I would sure there
- 20 is 60 acres that are farmed, and I would say
- 21 two acres are leafy green, because, the
- 22 eggplants and the jerusalem artichokes aren't

- 1 on the list. And the corn. But, we have a
- 2 lot of pumpkins for the pumpkin patch.
- MS. CARTER: Okay, thank you.
- 4 THE WITNESS: Yes.
- 5 JUDGE HILLSON: Anything else from
- 6 the USDA panel? Ms. Dash?
- 7 MS. DASH: Suzanne Dash. I'm
- 8 going to get the number correct. I'll save it
- 9 first. 750,000.
- 10 THE WITNESS: Fifty thousand.
- MS. DASH: Would you --
- 12 THE WITNESS: It's a small farm.
- MS. DASH: -- be willing to --
- 14 it's a small farm. Okay, a small farm.
- 15 THE WITNESS: Gross, yes, thank
- 16 you.
- MS. DASH: Thank you, that's all I
- 18 have.
- 19 JUDGE HILLSON: Okay, anything
- 20 else from the panel? Anything from the
- 21 proponents?
- MR. RESNICK: No, Your Honor.

- JUDGE HILLSON: Well, thank you
- 2 very much.
- 3 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
- 4 JUDGE HILLSON: And, you may step
- 5 down. Oh, sorry, I didn't even see you.
- 6 Please, I didn't even see you. Please
- 7 identify yourself.
- 8 EXAMINATION BY THE PUBLIC
- 9 MS. GOLAND: Carol Goland. Are you
- 10 familiar with the definition of organic
- 11 agriculture that the National Organic
- 12 Standards Board used and proposed to the USDA
- 13 that talks about organic production systems as
- 14 systems which can serve natural resources,
- 15 protect biodiversity, and strive to work,
- 16 using principles of ecological harmony?
- 17 THE WITNESS: Yes, I am.
- 18 MS. GOLAND: Okay, good. And, can
- 19 you understand how the standards that you have
- 20 to follow in order to be in compliance with
- 21 the National Organic Program follow from that
- 22 definition?

- 1 THE WITNESS: Yes.
- MS. GOLAND: And, do you see
- 3 anything, anything inconsistent than between
- 4 all of that and marketing yourself as organic?
- 5 THE WITNESS: No.
- 6 MS. GOLAND: Okay, thanks.
- 7 JUDGE HILLSON: Anyone else? Now
- 8 you may step down.
- 9 Now, you don't have any more
- 10 witnesses right Ms. Lovera, but you did tell
- 11 me something during the break about that you
- 12 have a couple of documents that you are
- 13 requested to -- earlier, when you testified,
- 14 I guess, was that -- Was that Monterey?
- MS. LOVERA: This is Patty Lovera.
- 16 When I testified in California, you asked me
- 17 for two things, one was a copy of a report
- 18 that we had written that I had referenced, so
- 19 I have that, and then we reran our petition to
- 20 deal with the duplicate issue, so I have both
- 21 of those.
- 22 JUDGE HILLSON: Do you -- any need

- 1 to call her to the stand to authenticate those
- 2 documents, or can we just agree that I can
- 3 just mark those to documents and get them in?
- 4 MR. RESNICK: I would be curious
- 5 what the number for the record is.
- 6 MS. LOVERA: Yeah, we read ran the
- 7 duplicates, but the petition had still been
- 8 growing, so it came out at over 7000, even
- 9 though we took this duplicates out, but it's
- 10 been a been a week longer, because it still --
- 11 because we're going to send in at the end of
- 12 the process, we were just going to send it
- into secretary Villsack, so we got a couple of
- 14 more weeks.
- 15 JUDGE HILLSON: Why don't you hand
- 16 me those two documents.
- MS. LOVERA: Okay.
- JUDGE HILLSON: I'm going to mark,
- 19 and I quess, and I'm going to admit, -- I'm
- 20 going to mark it as Exhibit 72, and that would
- 21 be the Bridging the GAPs study. I'm going to
- 22 receive that into evidence.

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1 (Whereupon, Exhibit 72 was marked
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- 2 for identification.)
- JUDGE HILLSON: And, I'm going to
- 4 keep this in order here. I'm going to mark as
- 5 Exhibit 73, it's a bunch of loose leaf papers
- 6 in a binder that says Food and Water Watch.
- 7 I'm just going to put the mark on the outside
- 8 of the Exhibit, but it's the -- identified as
- 9 the Petition to the US Department of
- 10 Agriculture.
- 11 (Whereupon, Exhibit 73 was marked
- for identification.)
- JUDGE HILLSON: And so, I'm just
- 14 receiving exhibits 72 and 73 into evidence.
- 15 (Whereupon, Exhibits 72 and 73
- 16 were marked for identification and
- 17 received into evidence.)
- 18 Well, it's getting on to 6
- 19 o'clock, there are no more witnesses, unless
- 20 somebody -- someone wants to testify, so what
- 21 I'm going to do is, I'm going to adjourn this
- 22 hearing, and we will reconvene in two days,

Page 2555 October 8, 2009, in Denver -- actually just outside of Denver, Colorado, in Aurora, Colorado. So, we're off the record. (Whereupon, at 5:51 o'clock p.m., the trial in the above-entitled matter was adjourned.)

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