Farming with Food Safety and Conservation in Mind

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Goal

Assist farmers in becoming adept at sharing their rationale for conservation management decisions, so they can more effectively advocate for these practices with buyers and food safety auditors.
Overview

- How Did We Get Here?
- FSMA Calls for Co-management
- Relative Food Safety Risk of Wildlife
- General Advice for Animal Management
- Why Soil Microbial Diversity is Important
- Vegetation’s Filtering Capacity

How Did We Get Here?

Environmental Conflicts After 2006 *E.coli* 0157:H7 Spinach Contamination

Denuded vegetative buffers
Hunted and poisoned wildlife
Installed fences

How Did We Get Here?

Conflicts with Government Mandates

• State and Federal Wildlife Agencies
• National Marine Fisheries Service
• Environmental Protection Agency
• State Water Agencies
• US Army Corps of Engineers
• USDA National Organic Program

Food Safety Modernization Act

- Take into consideration, consistent with ensuring enforceable public health protection, conservation policies established by Federal natural resource conservation, wildlife conservation, and environmental agencies; and in the case of production that is certified organic, not include any requirements that conflict with or duplicate the requirements of the national organic program established under the Organic Foods Production Act.
Relative Food Safety Risk of Wildlife

Native wildlife species pose a low relative risk of carrying human pathogens such as E. coli O157:H7 and Salmonella (prevalence in wildlife generally <3%).

- [http://www.wildfarmalliance.org/Press Room/WFA_Relative_Risk_Animals.pdf](http://www.wildfarmalliance.org/Press Room/WFA_Relative_Risk_Animals.pdf)

General Advice for Animal Management

Monitor crop fields for animal intrusion and designate a no-harvest zone if fecal matter is present, depending on the crop spacing and other features of the farm.

When there is unusually heavy wildlife activity in the field, use loud noises, sprinklers activated by motion sensors, scare balloons, food attractants placed in other areas, and fencing to discourage wildlife from entering the crop area.
**Why Soil Microbial Diversity is Important**

Use of cover crops, compost, and other high-quality organic matter inputs encourage diverse soil microbial populations, which enhance suppression of soil-borne plant pathogens through competition and lower survival of *E. coli* pathogens in soil.


**Vegetation’s Filtering Capacity**

Grasses, vegetated buffers, and wetlands can effectively decrease water-borne pathogens by intercepting them as they move off the landscape toward surface waters.

Farm Conservation Practices That Support Public Health – Specifically Food Safety

- Grassed Waterways
- Riparian Buffers
- Wetlands
- Cover crops
- Compost
- Windbreaks
- Hedgerows

Water Quality

Soil Microbes Outcompete and Kill Human Pathogens

Air Quality


- Grassed Waterways
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Nutrient and Pesticide Filtration
- Soil and Riverbank Stabilization
- Groundwater Recharge

Nutrient Cycling
- Increase Water Holding Capacity

Reduction of Airborne Pesticide Drift
- Pollination Services
- Beneficial Insect and Raptor Pest Control
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For further information, download new brochure at http://www.wildfarmalliance.org

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