

Balancing Food Safety and Sustainability: Opportunities for Co-management

Introduction

Food safety auditors, and the buyers they serve, may be affecting on-farm management decisions with limited understanding of the impact of those decisions on ecosystem services, including surface water quality, riparian systems, and wildlife species and habitat. Buyers may not be guided by science based information regarding the impacts of their food safety decisions on ecosystem services. Market and regulatory food safety concerns have led to pressures on growers to make changes in on-farm management practices that have negatively impacted conservation goals in the Central Coast of California. Newly proposed national food safety rules (Food Safety Modernization Act, 2011) raise concerns that impacts to conservation goals may extend regionally and nationally.

Method

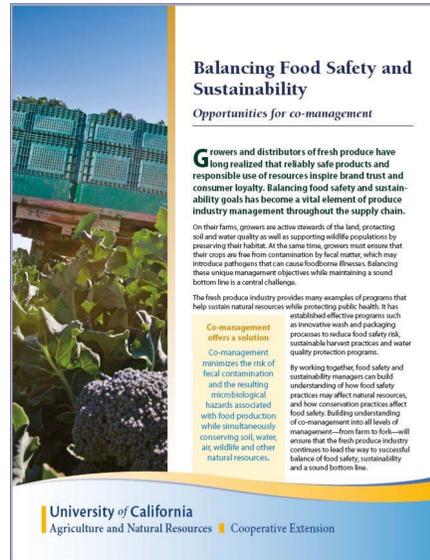
Develop outreach materials for target audiences that promote co-management along the supply chain

Outreach to fresh produce buyers:

- UC ANR Issues Brief
- 3-minute video to introduce co-management

Outreach to food safety auditors:

- Resource sheets that provide information on conservation practices in and adjacent to the production environment; and
- Issues that raise food safety concerns: animal activity, fecal contamination, proximity to wildlife habitat, water of unknown quality



Outcomes

Fresh produce growers report the ability to communicate and effectively influence on-farm food safety and conservation decisions

The project has delivered outreach and education materials that coincide with national rule-making related to food safety

- USDA, NRCS, FDA
- Produce Safety Alliance, Cornell

We are providing food safety auditors and professionals access to ongoing education programs on co-management

- Hartnell Food Safety Summit May 2013

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Objective

This project reaches out to audiences in the fresh produce supply chain who are pivotal in influencing on-farm food safety and conservation practices.

Promoting the adoption of co-management strategies protects public health from

- acute effects of food safety outbreaks,
- chronic effects of compromised ecosystem services

Adoption promotes economic sustainability for producers and buyers.

What is Co-Management?

An approach to conserving soil, water, air, wildlife, and other natural resources while simultaneously minimizing microbiological hazards associated with food production.

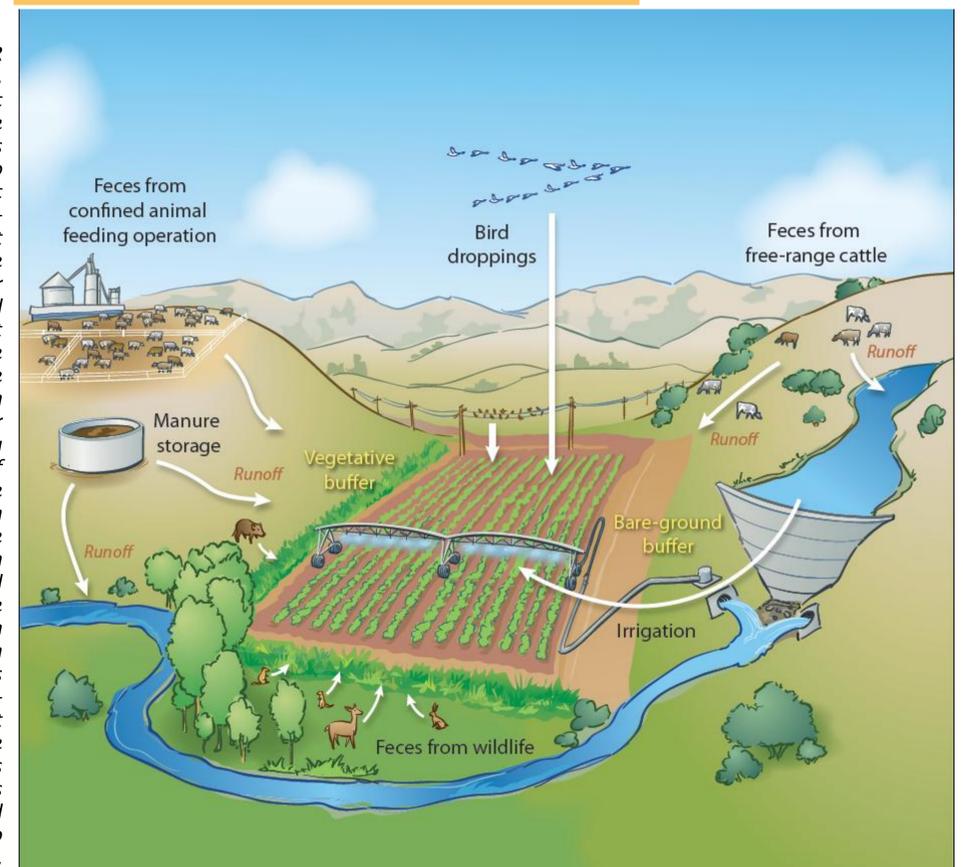
Outputs

Food safety auditors who are adequately trained in recognizing key conservation strategies in and adjacent to production fields and growers who can communicate their sustainability objectives are better prepared to engage in realistic and frank discussions of co-management strategies as they appear in the production environment.



Figure 2 From ANR Issues Brief.

This graphic provides many of the components necessary to encourage realistic discussion of co-management challenges at the field level. For example, vegetated buffer strips (on left and below vegetable field) placed above and below fields can help improve water quality by filtering runoff into and off farm land. Bare ground buffers (on right of vegetable field) help in monitoring animal activity, but they are less effective than vegetated buffers in removing pollutants in runoff. A co-management approach might use bare-ground buffers in strategic areas and vegetated buffers adjacent to stream and rivers.



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PROJECT MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD AT
http://ucfoodsafety.ucdavis.edu/Preharvest/Co-Management_of_Food_Safety_and_Sustainability/