



## Spring Conference of The Food Industry Center

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### Consumer Confidence in the Safety & Security of the Food Supply

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### Consumer Food Safety/Defense Why is confidence important?

Consumer lack of confidence – or fear – has  
the potential of impacting:

- Food demand (for categories involved)
- The profitability of companies in the supply chain
- The economy
- Political pressure to affect legislation on how the industry does business.



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## Consumer Confidence: Reasons for Concern One-off surveys

- A June 2008 Harvard School of Public Health Study found that Americans have concerns about the safety of food imported from other countries.
- A March 2008 study conducted by J. Walter Thompson found that 60 percent of Americans believe that the food supply isn't as safe as it used to be.
- Almost seven in ten believe that the recent pet food recall showed how vulnerable the US is to an attack on its food supply.
- This was reported *before* the tomato/jalapeno incident and the peanut butter incident.

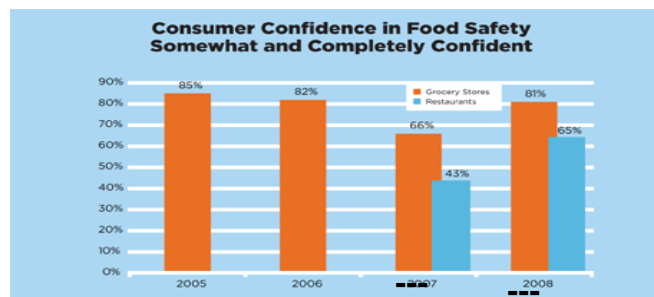


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## Consumer Confidence: Reasons for Concern

- Consumer confidence in food safety rebounded in early 2008 from an 18 year low, "it remains fragile." FMI 2008 Shopper Trends Study



How confident are you that foods you purchase in the grocery store are safe ? (4 pt scale)

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## Consumer Confidence: Reasons for Concern

- 53% of U.S. consumers indicate that they are concerned about the safety of the food you buy ... *July, 2005 TFIC Study*
- 93% say food company should be legally responsible when individuals are fatally sickened by tainted food ... *February, 2009 Harris Poll for the American Society for Quality (ASQ)*

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## Consumer Food Safety/Defense Continuous Tracking (CFST)

- Currently no database tracks food confidence such that we understand the relationship between food safety/defense incidents, media stories, consumer confidence and economic losses.
- CFST is intended to fill this void.



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## CFST Overview

CFST is a collaboration between:



*UM Food Industry Center*

*LSU AgCenter*

And is funded under a grant from:

*The National Center  
for Food Protection and Defense*

It involves:

- *Continuous* tracking of consumer confidence in food *safety and defense*.
- Development of a *food confidence indicator* – a composite of several measures.
- Understanding impact of *media coverage*.

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## CFST Methodology

Ø *On-line survey* conducted by TNS using their national panel of approximately 2MM consumers

Ø Weekly tracking – *175 interviews/week*

Ø Approximately a *20 minute interview*

Ø Sample – *Adults 21-64*

Ø Initiated *w/o May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008*

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## CFST Measures

- CFST uses a variety of measures developed from previous tracking studies.
- Based on data trends, the CFST research team has developed two composite measures that seem to capture consumer reactions to food safety and defense.
  1. **Confidence** in the food supply
  2. **Preparedness** (perceived) of the food industry.

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## CFST for Food Safety/Defense Confidence Measures

How *concerned* are you about the *safety of the food* that you buy?

How *concerned* are you about a *terrorist attack on the food system*?

*How serious* do you think the impact of a terrorist event regarding a common food product would be *on your household*?

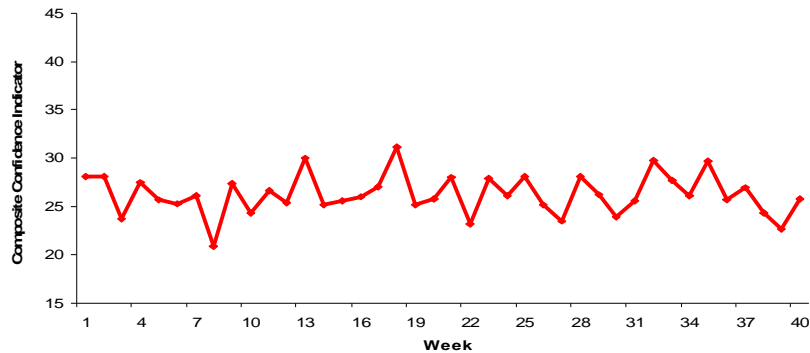
How *concerned* are you *about food defense*?

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## CFST Consumer Confidence in Food System Safety May 2008 - February 2009

NCFPD Continuous Tracking of Consumer Confidence  
Composite Confidence Indicator



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## CFST for Food Safety/Defense Preparedness

In thinking about food *safety*, that is the natural or accidental contamination of food, do you think the U. S. food supply is *safer today than it was a year ago*?

In thinking about food *defense*, do you think the United States is *better prepared for a terrorist attack on the food supply than it was a year ago*?

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## CFST Consumer Confidence in Food System Preparedness May 2008 - February 2009

NCFPD Continuous Tracking of Consumer Confidence  
University Perceived Preparedness Indicator



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## Media Exposure Index (MEI)

The following keywords are used to construct the MEI:

1. Food defense
2. Food terrorism
3. Agricultural terrorism
4. Food safety
5. Food poisoning
6. Food contamination
7. Food borne illness
8. Food borne disease
9. Food recall

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## Media Sources

Lexis-Nexis and Newslibrary are the search archives used to find articles and transcripts from 99 different media sources that fall within the following categories:

1. National and local newspapers
2. Network TV, Cable TV and Public Broadcasting Service
3. National Public Radio
4. News magazines
5. Internet

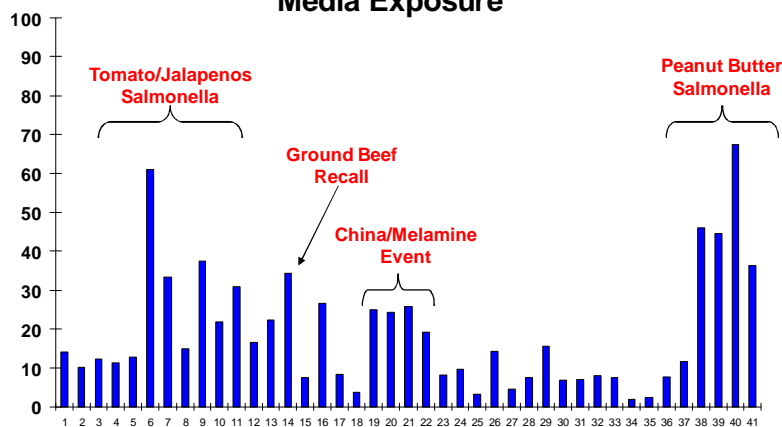
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## Food Safety Event Tracking & MEI – Media Exposure Index

May 2008 - February 2009

### Media Exposure

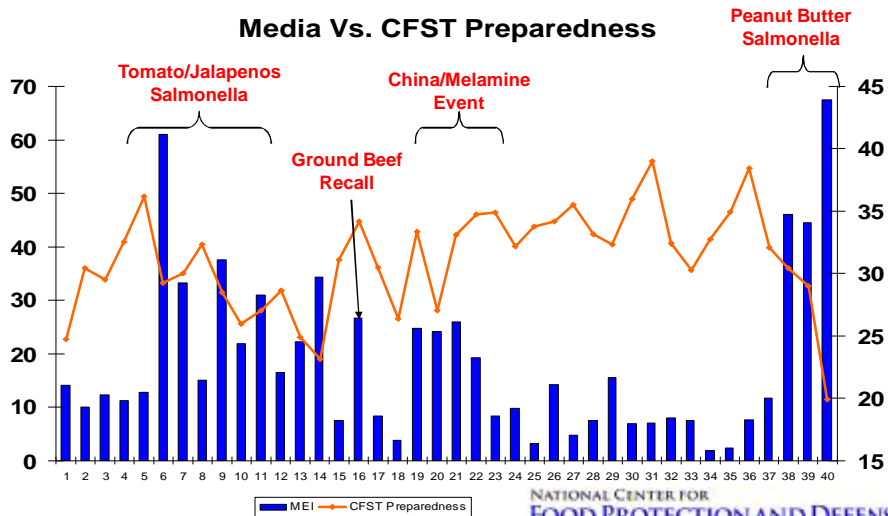


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## CFST Preparedness in Food System May 2008 - February 2009

### Media Vs. CFST Preparedness



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## Early Press – Immediate Implications

### U.S. food confidence drops

Published: Feb. 24, 2009 at 5:43 PM

**MINNEAPOLIS, Feb. 24 (UPI)** -- A University of Minnesota study finds confidence in food safety dropped about 20 percentage points in wake of the recent peanut product contamination.

After January's national salmonella outbreak of peanut products 22.5 percent of consumers in the study -- conducted jointly with the Louisiana State University AgCenter -- said they were confident the U.S. food supply is safer than a year ago. Eight people died and more than 500 have become ill in the most recent outbreak, which may have originated in a Georgia peanut plant and spread through peanut-butter products sold nationwide.

The drop in [food](#) confidence mirrors a similar drop last June, when a salmonella outbreak traced to jalapeno peppers sickened nearly 1,500 people.

The study involves continuously tracking consumer confidence in food supply safety via a weekly online survey of about 175 consumers from across the nation. The consumers are selected each week by a national market research company.

This indicator is unique because of its continuous tracking feature, Jean Kinsey, director of the [Food Industry](#) Center at the University of Minnesota, said in a statement.

**"The irony of this is -- less than 1 percent of the peanut butter consumed in the United States was involved in the contamination -- but some people will not [eat](#) anything with peanuts," Kinsey told United Press**

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## Skippy Ad – “Our products are Safe...”

- First case of manufacturers distancing themselves – what implications does this hold for smaller companies?

An advertisement for Skippy Peanut Butter. At the top, a red banner reads "Skippy® Peanut Butter is NOT Part of the Peanut Recall". Below this, text explains that while some peanut and peanut butter products have been recalled, Skippy's products are safe because they use roasted peanuts and are manufactured under strict quality control. The ad features two jars of Skippy Peanut Butter: "Extra Chunky" and "Pretzels & Peas". A gold seal on the left says "Quality Guaranteed". At the bottom left, there are cookies. At the bottom right, a coupon offers "SAVE 50¢ on any ONE (1) Skippy® Peanut Butter product (16 oz. or larger)".

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## Insights from CFST Research Team

Generally, *consumer confidence in the safety of our food supply is low*. Nearly 3/4ths of U.S. Consumers express concern ... or only about a fourth express confidence.

### Ø Implications:

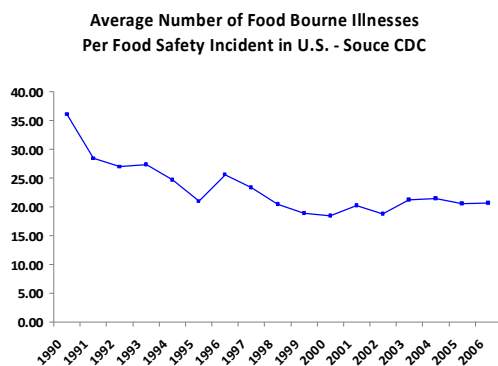
- Bolstering consumer confidence needs to be a *common priority* and a *collaborative initiative* for organizations in the food industry.
- To do so, *consumer communication needs* must be better understood in order to address concerns.

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Further ... The industry should consider undertaking an initiative to *educate consumers* as to it's *true safety level* – to put food safety incidents in a better perspective.



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## Insights from CFST Research Team

When an event occurs, consumers *do not* seem to *differentiate between Food Safety from Food Defense* – confidence in both seem to be impacted similarly regardless of the cause.

### ØImplications:

- Whether the cause of an incident is accidental or deliberate, *consumer confidence will suffer* in the short run, and possibly contribute to erosion in the long run.
- *Any type of event* has the potential to have widespread impact whether it is *accidental contamination*, a *terrorist attack* or *economic adulteration* ... Although each may require different contingency plans, all are critical to maintaining consumer confidence.

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Thank You  
&  
Questions?

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