



**AgEcon** SEARCH  
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

*The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library*

**This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.**

**Help ensure our sustainability.**

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search  
<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>  
[aesearch@umn.edu](mailto:aesearch@umn.edu)

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*

# INCIDENCE AND CAUSES OF FOOD POISONING--

## SUMMARY OF REMARKS

William E. Keene  
Oregon Health Division

---

The Pacific Northwest is the home of the infamous *E. coli* OH157:H7 outbreak stemming from undercooked, contaminated meat served in a Jack in the Box® restaurant six years ago. It was a large and spectacular outbreak—it killed 4 people, made over 500 people sick in the State of Washington, and made over 800 ill in the 4 states where the outbreak was centered.

It is difficult to over-emphasize how important the Jack in the Box® outbreak has been in framing the debate about food-borne illness in this country. That outbreak changed the way we deal with food-borne illness. The peculiar timing of the outbreak, occurring on the day that Bill Clinton was inaugurated, forced it to the top of the political agenda in a way that it might

not have otherwise. The vow that this would never happen again changed the mindset in some of the government agencies such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The Jack in the Box® outbreak had an effect on a lot more than just governmental agencies. It got the attention of the entire fast food industry, the meat industry, the food processing industries, consumer groups and the media.

As a result of the Jack in the Box® outbreak and many other outbreaks before and since then, there have been some behavioral changes in the way that people handle food and the way that industry deals with food processing. I believe that the net effect of that has been to save an untold number of lives.



# ***Agricultural International Trade Policy***

