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THE ROLE OF RESEARCH IN DEVELOPING FOOD SAFETY POLICY

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The Role of Research in Developing Food Safety Policy

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“Research is the act of going up alleys to see if they are blind.“

Anonymous
Do we have the objectivity, purpose, flexibility, and resources to travel those alleys?
Objectivity in research...

Who is/are the most objective provider(s) of science-based solutions to policymakers?

– Research scientists/expert panelists?
– Interest groups?
Relevancy of the science...

How do scientists decide what research they conduct?

– Availability of funds?
– What policymakers need?
Accessibility to results...

How do policymakers obtain information?

– Publications and symposia?
– Media?
How do scientists sustain long-term projects?

– Competitive funds?
– Formula funds to land-grant universities?
Flexibility of funds...

How are funding agencies able to move resources to address emerging issues?

– Through emergency appropriations?
– Through discretionary funding?
Traveling the Alleys with the Right Equipment has Resulted in...

- Enforcement of HACCP as prevention tool of choice.
- Development of peer-reviewed quantitative risk assessments.
- Facilitating approval of food decontamination methods.
Traveling the Alleys **without** the Right Equipment has Resulted in...

- Hesitancy in actively endorsing irradiation of highest-risk foods for most susceptible populations.

- Wasting of resources by requiring continuous inspection of all foods regardless of risk.

- Banning of whole muscle cuts from animals over 30 months from countries with sound BSE controls.
Getting the Equipment...

- **OBJECTIVITY:**
  - Establish formal mechanisms for scientific peer reviews prior to developing policies.

- **RELEVANCE:**
  - Develop a food safety research agenda with policymakers in leading roles.

- **ACCESSIBILITY:**
  - Establish issue-based advisory groups of scientists, with rapid access to policymakers.

- **SUSTAINABILITY:**
  - Increase formula funds to land-grant institutions.

- **FLEXIBILITY:**
  - Establish discretionary funding mechanisms.
Above all...

Take a stand on science, no matter what!