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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?



Sustainability of projects...

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!**

