



Sponsored by the National Center for Food Protection and Defense (NCFPD), a Homeland Security Center of Excellence for the food and agriculture sector, in collaboration with the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO).

FoodSHIELD is a Homeland Security initiative that is impacting every federal, state, local and private sector entity that intersects and links with the farm-to-table continuum of the food and agriculture sector.

What is FoodSHIELD?

- FoodSHIELD is a sophisticated web-based platform that facilitates communication, coordination, education and training on a national level among the diverse communities that protect and defend the food supply and the public's health.
- FoodSHIELD builds strong community among peers among the food, agriculture, and health sectors and connects critical resources for rapid emergency response.
- **Simply put, FoodSHIELD allows the diverse groups of regulatory officials, laboratorians, researchers, and stakeholders that are responsible for protecting the nation's food supply to interact and function as one unified network.**

How Does FoodSHIELD Work?

Currently, the FoodSHIELD system is comprised of three comprehensive databases that are accessed by agency officials through a secure log-in process. The first is the contact directory, *ContactDIR*, that contains all of the names, agency affiliations, contact information, and other individual-level data for the site.

The second database, *LabDIR*, is the laboratory directory of integrated resources that comprise the nation's food and agriculture laboratory infrastructure. Laboratories use this system to identify their equipment and analytical capabilities, in addition to surge capacities. This provides a valuable tool for quickly finding expertise, capacity, and capability across the nation.

Food&AgDIR, the third database, is the directory of state, federal, and local agency resources. Agencies identify their food and agriculture regulatory and investigatory programs and personnel. *Food&AgDIR* also captures agency regulatory actions, investigation, functions, capabilities, and resources. This enables immediate access to appropriate contacts for "real time" communication and coordination.

Access to these data is offered for free to all governmental and academic personnel. Data are kept current by the individual agencies and laboratories, who are contacted (or "pinged")

periodically via email. The FoodSHIELD staff also conduct follow-up telephone calls and spot checks of the system.

This platform has been built for expansion with other participating stakeholders, resources, and technology. Other databases have been identified for development including, and in coordination with, industry, academia, international regulatory bodies, and public health officials. Seeing the immense potential of FoodSHIELD, food industry officials have recently formed a taskforce to coordinate their potential inclusion within FoodSHIELD in the form of *IndustryDIR*.

These dynamically-updated databases allow federal, state, and local officials to access and target specific resources within the food and agriculture spectrum. FoodSHIELD's platform provides a full array of state-of-the-art web-based tools, such as web conferencing and forums, to enable more efficient communication, coordination, national preparedness and rapid emergency response.

Funding and Support:

FoodSHIELD start up development is occurring over a four-year period under a \$500,000/year CSREES grant to NCFPD and University of Minnesota researchers from USDA. Attesting to the demonstrated potential of FoodSHIELD, the NCFPD has invested an additional \$150,000 into the initial development. Also through USDA, the Food Emergency Response Network (FERN) invested an additional \$100,000, which includes hosting the FERN website. AFDO has matched these contributions through both direct costs and in-kind contributions of over 200 state officials who firmly believe in FoodSHIELD's potential. The US Department of Homeland Security has agreed to continue funding FoodSHIELD through NCFPD after the USDA CSREES grant expired in fiscal year 2009.

Summary: Why FoodSHIELD?

FoodSHIELD is the only current unifying communication system that is designed to link the entire disparate food and agriculture infrastructure. Utilizing FoodSHIELD technology, and the existing profile data, will accelerate a coordinated readiness and response to all threats, intentional and unintentional, to our nation's food supply.

There are no other government websites focused on food protection and defense that offer the comprehensive, secure, and continually updated and reliable capabilities of FoodSHIELD. As noted by Pat McCaskey, USDA/FSIS Laboratories, "If not this...what?"

FoodSHIELD begs the question: If not now...when? We are striving to quickly expand membership and coordinate efforts to provide an effective, unified approach to protecting and defending our vulnerable food supply.

Please contact Carrie Rigdon, FoodSHIELD Coordinator, at 651-201-6084 or crigdon@foodshield.org for more information, or visit our website at www.foodshield.org.