



## **FMI Board Policy Statement on Plan to Address Leafy Green Outbreaks and Consumer Advisories**

*(Board adopted on January 26, 2019)*

Retailers and wholesalers serve their customers every day by selling safe and wholesome products. When it comes to food safety, nothing is more important. However, twice in 2018, retailers were told by government agencies not to sell romaine lettuce due to ongoing outbreak investigations. In both cases, the source of the contamination was not found, suppliers were not identified, and recalls were not issued.

The FMI Food Protection Committee has developed a plan to help the retail and wholesale industry work through such issues and to help prevent this food safety, supply chain and economic crisis from occurring again. FMI will need to work with multiple stakeholders internally and externally to protect public health and to avoid commodity specific public health advisories that result in the inability to sell entire categories of commodities.

The Food Protection Committee went through a process of identifying the most important issues, determining retail/wholesale industry actions that could have the desired impact on each issue and the likelihood of success of those actions. The plan includes the following issues in order of priority:

1. Investigations
2. Food Safety Standards
3. Traceability
4. Unprecedented Decisions from Agencies
5. Definitions
6. Timing of Communications from FDA/CDC

For each issue identified and prioritized, the plan addresses 1) background information of importance of the retail/wholesale industry, 2) the challenges posed and 3) the proposed solution for the retail/wholesale industry. Some of the issues are external in nature and depend on us working with groups outside of our industry and others are within the control of the retail/wholesale industry.

A subgroup of the FMI Food Protection Committee continues to have calls and meetings on the plan and additional updates will be provided at the committee meetings and the Board meeting.