

## **Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association**

Your office recently received a letter from Congressmen Jim Costa and Adam Putnam requesting that you cosponsor a Food Safety Bill that they plan to introduce next week. This bill was introduced during the last Congress and we hope that you will consider being a cosponsor.

Among other things, it would grant FDA mandatory recall authority and gives the agency the authority to set commodity-specific standards for the safe production, harvesting and packaging of fruits and vegetables, including mandatory standards for produce considered to be high risk, as well as Good Agricultural Practices (GAPS) for all produce. It addresses many of the food safety issues of concern to the public and the produce industry. A detailed section by section analysis was also sent to your office. As the "Dear Colleague" letter points out, the bill would implement risk assessment and risk management measures, strengthen federal and state agencies coordination, reduce the time needed to identify and trace a contaminant, require all domestic and foreign food companies selling food in U.S. to conduct a food safety risk analysis, outline appropriate food safety controls, and require verification that the food safety controls implemented are adequate to address the risks of food-borne contamination.

The bill would also ensure that food products coming into the United States would have to adhere to the same safety and quality standards as set by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The bill would grant FDA authority to access food safety production records during emergencies and deny importation of goods if strict food safety standards are not met and directs the agency to adopt a risk-based approach to inspections, giving greater scrutiny to facilities posing greater risk.

All of these measures, if appropriately implemented, would benefit our producers and our consumers in assuring that measures are in place to effectively deal with food safety concerns.

If you've already sign-on to the bill, thank you...we greatly appreciate your support. If not, we hope that you will consider being a cosponsor.

**Michael J. Stuart**  
**Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association**