



## CONSUMERS UNION REPORT ON PACKAGED SALADS: EXAMINING THE FACTS

You may have seen or heard reports about a consumer watchdog group's claims regarding presence of bacteria in packaged salads. It is possible that these reports may generate questions from our consumers, so as you evaluate these claims for a possible response, consider the following.

- **Consumers Union's tests found no public health risk.** This is a testament to the leafy greens industry's dedication to providing safe, high-quality products. CU found only harmless, naturally-occurring bacteria, for which no detection standards have been established by the federal government.
- **The produce industry supports comprehensive federal food safety programs.** PMA and United Fresh have actively advocated in support of risk-based, science-based federal food safety legislation, and have provided key guidance to lawmakers to support Congress' passage of comprehensive food safety reform this year. We have also urged for adequate funding for the Food and Drug Administration to fulfill its mission to safeguard consumers.
- **Re-washing packaged salad labeled "triple washed" or "ready to eat" isn't necessary and does not provide additional benefit, according to a scientific panel that studied the issue in 2007.** (Source: Palumbo et al, 2007. "Recommendations for Handling Fresh-Cut Leafy Green Salads by Consumers and Retail Foodservice Operators", *Food Protection Trends*, vol. 27, no. 11, pp 892-898. ) Consumers who want to follow CU's recommendation to re-wash ready-to-eat, packaged leafy greens should be cautioned that additional handling of these products in the home introduces a risk of cross-contamination.
- **The produce industry is committed to providing safe and healthy foods, every bite, every time.** Our growers are often the first to eat the foods we sell, and they understand the importance of maintaining consumer confidence. The industry has already invested tens of millions of dollars in food safety programs, and related research. We are committed to continuous improvement, and we welcome risk-based, science-based discussion.

*For more information, contact:*

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