

April 24, 2008

Daniel M. Dooley
Vice President
Agriculture and Natural Resources
University of California
Office of the President
1111 Franklin Street, 6th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607-5200

Dear Vice President Dooley:

As members of the California Roundtable on Agriculture and the Environment (CRAE), we are writing to urge your leadership and support for the creation of the Food Safety and Environmental Quality Coordinating Council. In late 2007, the need for a coordinating body was identified by key stakeholders as the highest priority for organizing and coordinating the management of both food safety and environmental issues.

CRAE represents diverse constituencies, including agricultural, environmental and labor organizations, and provides a forum for identifying common interests and opportunities for collective action and advocacy. CRAE formed a subcommittee on food safety and the environment a year ago to provide input to the leafy green industry's efforts to develop the California Leafy Greens Handler Marketing Agreement. The marketing agreement was created in response to the *E. coli* O157:H7 outbreak in September 2006 associated with spinach produced in San Benito County. The CRAE subcommittee has worked closely with many organizations and agencies on this issue, notably UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE), USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, California Department of Fish and Game, Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the Farm, Food Safety, and Conservation Network.

The Food Safety and Environmental Quality Coordinating Council concept arose from many different sources and was an outcome from a conference¹ organized by UCCE and now has broad support from among many organizations. The April 2007 conference involved UCCE, California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), UC Davis, Western Institute of Food Safety and Security (WIFSS), State Water Resources Control Board, various central coast agricultural watershed coalitions, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and many agricultural industry representatives. The conference attendees placed a high priority on the creation of an organizational structure to coordinate improved and formal collaborations with experts on food safety and environmental quality, facilitate the gathering and dissemination of science-based information, and help set research objectives and priorities. This was an important initial effort to frame the needs relative to interactions between food safety practices and the

¹ Coordinated Management of Water Quality Protection & Food Safety Initiatives in California Vegetable Production Conference, held April 23-25 in San Luis Obispo, CA.

environment and the importance of a holistic food safety approach. Subsequent efforts have continued to refine the potential role of a coordinating council.

We believe that the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, through its dedication to the creation, development and application of knowledge in agricultural, natural and human resources and the University of California's role as the state's land grant university, is eminently suited to lead and participate in this important effort. Therefore, we urge your guidance, leadership and assistance in stimulating the formation of the Food Safety and Environmental Quality Coordinating Council.

We would be pleased to meet with you, at your convenience, to further brief you on these critically important issues and to answer any questions you may have about the coordinating council concept.

Sincerely,

Ag Council of California
American Farmland Trust
California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
California Association of Winegrape Growers
California Farm Bureau Federation
California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation
Community Alliance with Family Farmers
Corny Gallagher, Agribusiness Executive, Bank of America
Ecological Farming Association
Environmental Defense Fund
Marrone Organic Innovations, Inc.
Natural Resources Defense Council
The Nature Conservancy
Richard Rominger
Roots of Change
San Joaquin Resource Conservation District
Sustainable Conservation
Western Growers
Western United Dairymen