

Microbiological Data Program – 2010 Fact Sheet

- The Microbiological Data Program (MDP) is a model Federal-State partnership funded through cooperative agreements between the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service the following states: Ohio, Michigan, Colorado, Florida, Maryland, Minnesota, New York, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin, and California. Arizona has been added for FY 2011.
- MDP was established in 2001 to mirror the Pesticide Data Program and create a national scientifically valid baseline on the presence of foodborne pathogens and indicator organisms on fresh foods destined for grocery store shelves. Fruits and vegetables that are not normally cooked are selected for testing.
- The program started out testing four commodities: Celery, Lettuce (Romaine and Leaf), Tomatoes, and Cantaloupe. In 2010, the commodities that were tested were Lettuce, Spinach, Alfalfa Sprouts, Cilantro, Roma Tomatoes, Round Tomatoes, Hot Peppers, and Cantaloupes.
- CDC has been collaborating with MDP to determine types of produce to be sampled based on risk assessment and data from food borne outbreaks related to produce consumption. Samples are collected from wholesale markets and supermarket distribution centers. Sampling protocols are determined based on a statistically valid random sampling process taking into consideration population and consumption levels. Sampling plans are developed quarterly.
- Commodities are tested for *Salmonella* sp; *E.coli* O157: H7 and Non O157 Shiga Toxin *E.coli* .
- All eleven states except California, Texas, Maryland and Arizona analyze the samples collected in their states. California, Maryland and Texas ship specific commodities to Ohio for testing. The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) provides both sampling and testing activities in Ohio. Data from all eleven states are combined to create the national baseline.
- In 2010 MDP collected and tested a total of 18,950 samples (Ohio tested over 4200 samples). Seventy percent (70%) were from domestic sources, 28% imports and 1.4 % of unknown origin. Trace back information is currently required on all MDP samples to assist in removing samples suspected of contamination with any of the above pathogens.
- ODA currently employs five trained staff members to work on the MDP program samples. Ohio funding in FY2011 was \$640,000 (includes both sampling and testing activities). The total federal budget for the MDP program is \$4.5 million per year.
- Benefits:
 - o Accurate and up-to-date baseline information provides the basis for intelligent decision making and effective reduction strategies for microbial contamination of foods.
 - o MDP data enhances the understanding of the microbial ecology of fresh fruits and vegetables and permits the identification of long term trends.
 - o MDP data is intended to be used by collaborators such as CDC and FDA for educational purposes and planning public health initiatives.
 - o MDP data is available to producers and the general public providing solid evidence on the safety of fresh foods in the United States.
 - o The MDP program has created a national network of laboratories employing sophisticated technology for rapid detection of disease causing organisms strengthening our nation's food safety and food security efforts.
- USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service maintains a web site with additional information on MDP activities including annual performance reports: www.ams.usda.gov/science/.