

Key Takeaways

“It Must Have Been the Chicken: Attribution of Illness Burdens to Specific Foods”

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Top 5

- 1) The goal of evaluating foodborne illness attribution is to identify trends in foodborne outbreaks to better understand who gets sick from which foodborne pathogen and which specific food item so that the industry can focus their efforts on targeting actions that minimize food safety risks.
- 2) Analyzing foodborne illness attribution can also provide the industry with an understanding of how the Food and Drug Administration plans to address these concerns through future regulations or guidance documents which could impact your operation.
- 3) Trends that are identified as a result of foodborne illness attribution analysis should be examined in context. For example, an increase in the number of foodborne outbreaks associated with a specific food item could be the result of better methods used to identify pathogen sources, increased consumption of that food item, or other factors. These trends should not be used as a sole indicator of whether or not the food supply is safe.
- 4) When a foodborne outbreak occurs in a product you produce (or similar to one that you produce), you should review your food safety plan and/or program and your on-farm practices to determine if there is more you should be doing to minimize food safety risks in your operation.
- 5) One of the best ways to increase food safety in the industry and in consumer homes is to educate people about what food safety is and the strategies to minimize food safety risks.

Additional Reading

- Rahman R, RL Scharff, and F Wu (2023). Foodborne disease outbreaks in flour and flour-based food products from microbial pathogens in the United States, and their health economic burden. *Risk Analysis*. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/risa.14132>
- Scharff RL (2015). State Estimates for the Annual Cost of Foodborne Illness. *Journal of Food Protection*. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0362028X23062294>
- Scharff RL (2018). The Economic Burden of Foodborne Illness in the United States. *Food Safety Economics*. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-92138-9_8
- Scharff RL (2020). Food Attribution and Economic Cost Estimates for Meat- and Poultry-Related Illness. *Journal of Food Protection*. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0362028X22103248>

Scharff RL, J Besser, DJ Sharp, TF Jones, P Gerner-Smidt, and CW Hedberg (2016). An Economic Evaluation of PulseNet: A Network for Foodborne Disease Surveillance. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0749379715006108>

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