

# California Agricultural Neighbors

## Building a Proactive Food Safety Culture

### Next Steps

**Next Step 1: CAN Communication Goals:** Communication to broaden engagement that is supportive of a proactive food safety culture

**Next Step 2: CAN Research Goals:** Expanded research partnerships and leveraging data science to fill information gaps essential for more effective action

**Next Step 3: CAN Collaboration Goals:** Engagement of additional partners and collaboratives, including the California Longitudinal Study to accelerate translation of new information to action

**Next Step 4: CAN Knowledge Transfer Goals:** Investing in the future expertise and capacity to enhance transfer of knowledge from research into applied practice

### Background

Outbreaks of pathogenic *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) O157:H7 associated with leafy greens in the California Central Coast growing region in 2018-2020 necessitated a robust response to protect public health through efforts shared among local stakeholders. In January 2021, the Salinas Valley agricultural community came together in an effort known as California Agricultural Neighbors (CAN). CAN provided a roundtable opportunity to foster collaboration and discuss enhanced neighborly food safety practices when various agriculture operations such as leafy green fields, cattle ranches, vineyards, and compost sites are adjacent to one another.

CAN promotes a “proactive food safety culture” through a well-informed conversation with a foundation that food safety is a shared responsibility for all agricultural producers. Culture itself comes from implemented practices after verified scientific research provides a pathway to improving on-farm agronomics and field practices. Communicating neighbor-to-neighbor is a culture change itself within the agricultural community, promoting an understanding of roles and responsibilities. Whether through data, education, expanded knowledge capacity, or through value-added food products and their processing, CAN’s proactive culture is defining improvements within food safety practices. By promoting a proactive attitude and collaboration, the change in food safety becomes a culture of improvement.

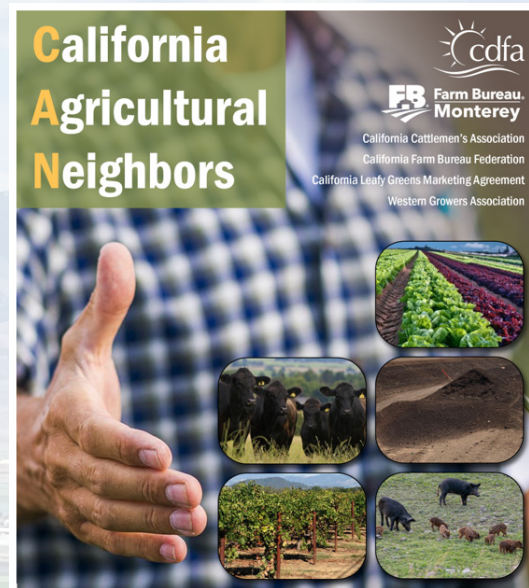
### Outcomes

In June 2022, CAN published an [Action Report: Neighbor-to-neighbor best practices to help enhance localized food safety effort](#). An [Actions for Food Safety flyer](#) outlines the report’s recommendations:

- **Action 1:** Foster Neighbor-to-Neighbor Interactions and Conversations
- **Action 2:** Build a Research Roadmap for the Salinas Valley based on the following processes
- **Action 3:** Create a Quantitative Microbial Risk Assessment (QMRA) Framework
- **Action 4:** Build and Maintain Capacity to Transfer Knowledge from Research into Applied Practice

Soon after the initial report was issued, CAN formed Work Groups focused on further developing and advancing toward implementation of these actions. The Fall 2024 report and its Next Steps listed above are the result.

Visit the [CDFA](#) or [Monterey County Farm Bureau](#) California Agricultural Neighbors (CAN) webpages for more information.



**Building a proactive food safety culture**

Fall 2024

[Click here](#) to view the pictured report.