



ROMAINE TEST & LEARN 2-YEAR FOOD SAFETY STUDY

In June of 2023 the California LGMA Advisory Board voted to institute a 2-year food safety study called Romaine Test & Learn. The project involves aggregating and analyzing pathogen pre-harvest and post-harvest test data.

Romaine Test & Learn was inspired by the [Aviation Safety Information Analysis and Sharing Program](#) used to [revolutionize the safety of commercial aviation](#) through aggregation and sharing of data – to our knowledge this is the first of its kind in the fresh produce industry.

STANDARDIZED PATHOGEN TESTING

The Romaine Test & Learn program includes standardized minimum protocols for pre-harvest and post-harvest pathogen tests. See the detailed methodology for each below:

Methodology	Pre-harvest Pathogen Testing	Post-harvest Pathogen Testing
Sampling timeline	≤ 10 days	≤ 24 hours
Sampling lot size	≤ 10 acres	Defined product lot (Field pack vs Processed)
Test organisms	STEC/EHEC, <i>E. coli</i> 0157:H7 and <i>Salmonella</i>	
Sample size	Minimum 375 grams from 60 N sub-samples	
Sampling methods	Randomized sampling within a designated lot	

MANDATORY DATA SHARING

LGMA members will anonymously input testing data into the Greenlink™ database managed by Western Growers. The data that will be collected will include sample size, sample date, sample stage, sampling region, commodity description, organisms tested, test result and organism type if applicable.

SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS TO ADVANCE FOOD SAFETY STANDARDS

Data will be analyzed for potential key learnings by industry and 3rd party scientists. Below are several potential ways to analyze the data:

- Frequency of pathogen detection per region
- Differences in pathogen positivity rate depending on where/when sample is collected.
- Do test results support the risk profile associated with leafy greens?
- Does data indicate a need to make changes to the current LGMA food safety standards (metrics)

TIMELINE

- The data collection period for this project will span October 2023 through October 2025. LGMA Members will share data quarterly, this requirement will be verified by LGMA audits.