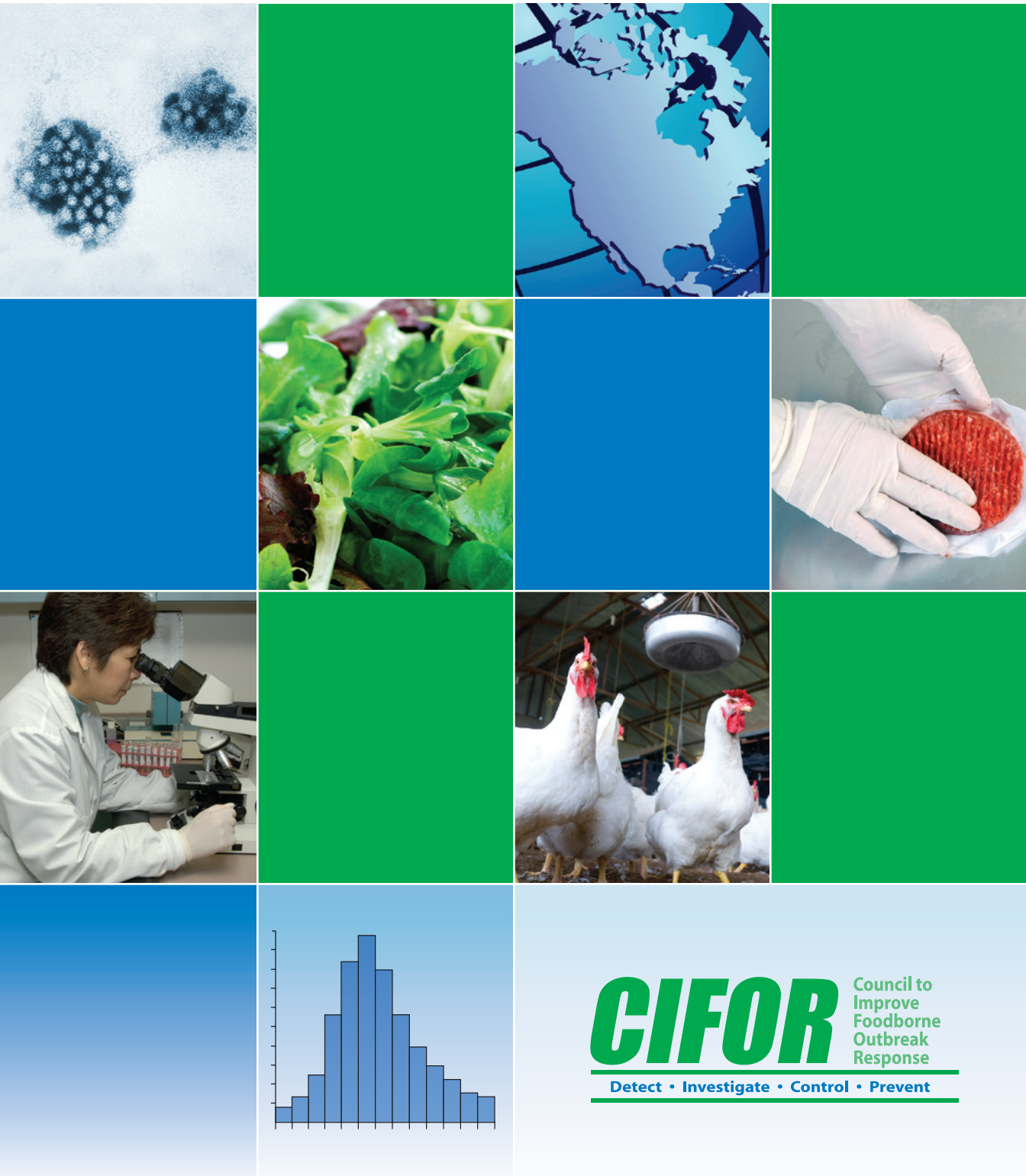


GUIDELINES FOR FOODBORNE DISEASE OUTBREAK RESPONSE



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Foreword

We are pleased and honored to join in congratulating the Council to Improve Foodborne Outbreak Response (CIFOR) on the landmark publication of its *Guidelines for Foodborne Disease Outbreak Response*, which address some of the most critical elements of a more effective, prevention-oriented food safety system.

The *Guidelines* is the culmination of a three-year process that brought together public health and food safety practitioners and experts from all levels of government to improve our response to foodborne outbreaks and create a common framework for evaluating foodborne disease surveillance. The CIFOR process alone provides a model for the kind of collaboration across professional, agency, and geographic boundaries that is essential to tackling a problem—in this instance, foodborne illness—that defies boundaries.

Publication of the *Guidelines* is significant also for the commitment it reflects to harmonize and integrate as fully as possible how health officials and regulators detect, investigate, and control outbreaks so that fewer people get sick. By harmonizing data collection, improving data sharing, and fostering new levels and modes of collaboration, we have the opportunity not only to contain outbreaks more promptly but also to learn more robustly the lessons they can teach for future prevention.

Like any guideline, the *Guidelines for Foodborne Disease Outbreak Response* will be, in the end, only as good as their implementation by our many colleagues in local, state, and federal agencies, for whom it provide both a flexible, forward-looking framework and a call to action. The call to action is important in the policy arena, too. Implementation of the *Guidelines* requires the commitment of policymakers and elected officials, who as surrogates for the public, rightfully demand improved foodborne disease surveillance and outbreak response and must provide the legal authorities, financial resources, and organizational capacities to achieve .

The CIFOR *Guidelines* points the way toward a better system of outbreak response. It is now incumbent on all of us to go there.

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Preface

The Council to Improve Foodborne Outbreak Response (CIFOR) *Guidelines for Foodborne Disease Outbreak Response* were developed to aid government agencies responsible for preventing and managing foodborne disease. The *Guidelines* focuses on local and state agencies, including public health, environmental health, agriculture, and other agencies responsible for food safety, because they investigate most of the outbreaks of foodborne disease in the United States. However, the *Guidelines* also supports the federal public health and regulatory agencies critical to the U.S. food-safety infrastructure.

The *Guidelines* describes the overall approach to outbreaks of foodborne diseases, including preparation, detection, investigation, control, and follow-up. The *Guidelines* also describes the roles of all key organizations involved in these outbreaks, provides recommendations for processes to improve communication and coordination among multiple agencies during multijurisdictional outbreaks, and identifies indicators that different organizations can use to gauge their performance in responding to foodborne disease outbreaks. Even though the *Guidelines* document provides comprehensive information for individuals and organizations involved in foodborne disease, it is not intended to replace existing procedure manuals. Agencies and individuals should use the *Guidelines* to compare existing procedures, fill gaps in and update site-specific procedures, create procedures where they do not exist, and train program staff.

CIFOR intends the *Guidelines* to serve as a foundation for epidemiologists, laboratorians, environmental health specialists, and others involved in food-safety programs. Many local, state, and federal government agencies work to solve outbreaks of foodborne diseases, and CIFOR hopes this document will standardize foodborne disease investigation across all those agencies.

Technical experts from different government and academic organizations across the country, representing a wide variety of disciplines, have compiled the information in the *Guidelines*. The *Guidelines* have undergone a comprehensive public review process. CIFOR considers these *Guidelines* a consensus document that captures best practices and identifies emerging new practices in outbreak response to foodborne diseases.

Acknowledgements

The development of the *CIFOR Guidelines for Foodborne Disease Outbreak Response* took thousands of hours of work by dozens of individuals over a 3-year period. Every one of these individuals had a full-time job, and many of them were repeatedly distracted by foodborne disease outbreaks over the course of the project. They gave of their time, energy, and expertise because of a strong commitment to improving the quality of foodborne disease outbreak response. CIFOR expresses its deep gratitude to everyone who participated.

We particularly acknowledge John Besser, Craig Hedberg, Pat McConnon, Don Sharp, and Jeanette Stehr-Green, who repeatedly stepped up to provide extra guidance and support whenever the need arose. Jac Davies, the editor and lead author, had a particularly large role in the creation of this document and was committed to giving her time and effort to this project. We would like to especially acknowledge her involvement.

The following organizations participate in CIFOR and their representatives participated in the development of these Guidelines:

- Association of Food and Drug Officials
- Association of Public Health Laboratories
- Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
- Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- National Association of County and City Health Officials
- National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
- National Environmental Health Association
- U.S. Department of Agriculture/Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA/FSIS)

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