

## Braley Introduces Bill to Boost Food Safety

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Legislation is Companion Bill to Harkin's Fresh Produce Safety Act

Washington, Mar 13 - Today Rep. Bruce Braley (D-Iowa) introduced the Fresh Produce Safety Act—a bill to boost safety procedures and standards for fresh produce sold in the United States.

The Braley bill is the House companion to a Senate bill of the same name introduced by Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) last September.

Recent ongoing recalls of fresh produce raise questions about the safety of our food supply and the oversight capacity of the Food and Drug Administration, Braley said. The FDA needs to be given the authority and resources to do their job and ensure that our food supply is safe. The Fresh Produce Safety Act will take needed steps to reform our food safety system and ensure that our food supply has proper oversight.

The Fresh Produce Safety Act gives the FDA authority to make its voluntary guidelines mandatory. The bill also requires stepped-up inspections of operations that grow and process fresh produce like spinach.

Other key provisions of the bill include: (1) a surveillance system to identify sources of fresh produce contamination; (2) a research program to identify and prevent contamination of produce; and (3) a requirement that FDA rules are written to ensure that imported produce is grown and processed with the same safety standards as the US.

Braley's action on food safety comes on the heels of an effort late last year to pressure the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) into strengthening oversight and improving the screening of imported children's toys for lead contamination and other safety hazards.