

Appendix II

Moderator's Guide Consumer Perceptions of Food Recalls

Opening Remarks – Introductions and Rules

Ice Breaker (5 min.)

Moderator: Let's go around the room and introduce ourselves. Please tell me your first name, and a little bit about your household, like how long you have lived in the area or about your family.

1. Food recalls and food outbreaks in general

Moderator: Tonight's discussion is going to be about food safety and concerns relating to food safety.

(20 min.)

- Let's first think about those situations when food is unsafe for consumption. What comes to mind when you think about problems concerning food safety? Probe for: germs, illness, chemical contaminations, recalls, etc.
- What do you think of when you hear that there has been a food recall? (Probe: anger, worry, better check to see if I have this product at home, relief that I don't have the product in my home?)
- What food recalls have you heard of?
- Why do you think there are food recalls? Who is responsible for deciding that there should be a food recall? (Probe: manufacturers, government such as USDA, FDA, other?) What happens during a food recall?
- Are there any other terms that you use instead of food recalls?
- What about the term foodborne outbreak—what do you think of when you hear about a foodborne outbreak? What outbreaks of foodborne illness have you heard of? How is an outbreak of a foodborne illness related to a food recall? How are food recalls and food outbreaks the same and how are they different?
- What examples of foodborne illness outbreaks have you heard of?
- Do you think that there have been more or fewer food recalls/outbreaks in the last few years? Why do you think that?
- What about organic foods? Do you think organic food is more or less likely to be involved in a food outbreak or food recall? What about locally grown foods? Are they more or less likely to be involved in a food outbreak or food recall? Why?
- Who do you think is responsible for (takes charge of) food recalls? Probe for: conducting vs. announcing recalls.

MODERATOR: (If needed) There are differences between food recalls and foodborne illness outbreaks. An outbreak is when large numbers of people get sick with the same type of bacteria or virus and it is suspected that these illnesses are from a common source of food. If the source

of this food can be determined, this can lead to a food recall. A food recall is when a specific food is determined to be unsafe for any reason to eat and it is removed from the food supply.

- Are all food recalls the same or do you think there are different types of food recalls? (Probe: type of problem (the seriousness of the problem that led to the recall; a bit of plastic vs. germs that could make you sick), size (in number of cases/pounds of product that are defective, the area of the country that may have the defective product) What are some examples?
- How is a food recall the same or different than another type of product recall – like for car tires, or children’s toys? (Probe: type of problem, seriousness of problem, government or industry actions, news media coverage) [Keep this question brief, the goal is to inquire about seriousness of a food recall compared to other recalls.]

2. Reactions to a food recall (10 min.)

- When you first hear about a food recall, what do you do? When do you do it?
- How do you know that you are not consuming recalled food?
- Have you ever had a recalled product in your home? What did you do with it?
- Have you ever avoided buying a food because you’d heard it was recalled? Tell me about that experience.
- Who do you think should be helping you to be sure that you are not eating recalled food? What should they be doing? (Probe: grocery stores, restaurants, government, other?)

3. Information during a recall (10 min.)

- How do you first hear about food recalls? (Probe: television news, radio, newspaper, internet news website, other internet sites like FDA, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) or webMD, friends, family, restaurant, grocery store?) If using the internet, what web site do you generally look at? How do you get to those websites?
- Who would you like get information from during a food recall? (Probe: television news, radio, newspaper, internet news website, other internet sites like FDA, USDA or webMD, friends, family, restaurant, grocery store, food manufacturer?)
- Would you be interested in finding out information about food recalls from a text message service or facebook page? Any other way?
- Are there any groups that you trust more to give accurate advice about food recalls? Any groups that you don’t trust?
- What information do you want to know during a food recall? Do you feel like this information is available to you? (Probe for: product name, brand name, product label, size of product container.) Why?
- Is there anything confusing about food recall information? What?
- Would you be interested in seeing a short brochure or a website that tells consumers what to look for and what to do when they hear about a food recall? Where would you want to see these brochures or websites?

4. End of a food recall (10 min.)

- How do you find out that a food recall is over? (Probe: television news, radio news, newspaper, internet news websites, other website – which ones?, friends, family, restaurant, grocery store, other?) Do you feel like you know when the recall is over?
- What information do you want to know when a food recall is over? Do you feel like this information is available to you? Why or why not?
- How confident are you that the food is safe to eat after you hear that the recall is over?

5. Food Safety Information – other than recalls (15 min.)

Moderator: We have been talking about food recalls. Now I want to shift our discussion a bit to talk about other types of food safety information.

- What are some things you do to ensure you don't get sick from the food you eat, from the time you buy it to the time you eat it?
- Other than food recalls, what kinds of food safety issues are you interested in? (If none mentioned, probe: safe handling of food, proper storage time of food, food safety risks for pregnant women or other high risk groups, others?)
- Where have you heard or read information about food safety? Where do you think you could go to find out information about safe food handling, such as what temperature to cook a food to? Have you ever been there to get food safety information? What about for information about how long to store foods?
- (Discuss one at a time) Have you ever heard of 1) food biotechnology (genetically modified foods), 2) food irradiation, 3) organic foods? What kind of information about food biotechnology would be interesting to you? Where would you like to hear about this type of information?

7. Microwave safety (20 min)

Moderator: Finally, I would like to discuss how you use your microwave for cooking and reheating food.

- What do you mostly use your microwave oven for? In discussing this section probe separately for:
 1. reheating previously cooked food,
 2. cooking frozen meals,
 3. cooking raw meat, fish, and eggs.
- What are your major concerns when it comes to reheating and cooking foods in microwave? Probe for: food not being fully cooked/half raw, not being warm enough, overcooked, burned other, etc.?
- How do you know that the food you are reheating or cooking in the microwave is ready to eat? What are some techniques you use to ensure that your food gets cooked? Probe for: use of a food thermometer, using the poultry and meat settings, covering the food, rotating food during cooking.
- How different or similar are microwave ovens when it comes to their cooking capabilities? Probe for: wattage, settings, rotating plate, etc?
- How does your microwave's wattage affect how you prepare food? Do you compare your microwave oven's wattage with time and cooking temperature information on the product cooking instructions? When do you do that?

- Now, let's talk specifically about frozen meals that contain meat or poultry. I am talking about things like frozen pot pies, pizzas, single serving meals containing beef, pork or chicken.
 - What critical information is found on a product label regarding cooking and preparation?
 - How do you know that the meat is raw or already precooked? What makes you think that?
 - How do you know when a frozen meal is cooked completely? (Probe: follow cooking instructions on the package, use thermometer, know by cooking time, steaming hot, other?)
 - If you noticed that the bottom of container of a frozen meal was still cold after cooking for the time indicated on the package, what would you do? (Probe: cook it some more; stir it up and eat it; other?)

Thank you, those are all the questions I have.