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Use of the Cyclosporiasis National Hypothesis Generating Questionnaire (CNHGQ) During Investigations of Foodborne Disease Clusters and Outbreaks

Comment On: CDC-2026-0925-0001

Use of the Cyclosporiasis National Hypothesis Generating Questionnaire (CNHGQ) During Investigations of Foodborne Disease Clusters and Outbreaks 2026-11011

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Comment from International Fresh Produce Association

Submitter Information

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General Comment

On behalf of the International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA), I am submitting the attached comments regarding CDC's proposed extension of the Cyclosporiasis National Hypothesis Generating Questionnaire (CNHGQ).

IFPA recommends that CDC add structured questions on drinking water source, recreational water exposure, and related environmental exposures to the CNHGQ. *Cyclospora cayetanensis* has no known host other than humans, and its oocysts require time to mature in the environment before becoming infectious, meaning contamination is closely tied to how water and waste move through an environment, not solely to food consumption. Current molecular tools for *Cyclospora*, including the targeted genotyping methods used in this year's outbreak investigations, cannot independently resolve case clusters the way whole-genome sequencing does for bacterial pathogens. This places significant weight on the hypothesis-generating interview itself: a questionnaire that does not systematically ask about water exposure cannot generate water-related hypotheses, regardless of whether water is relevant to a given cluster.

Our attached comments provide additional detail, including proposed draft question language, a recommendation to review past unresolved cyclosporiasis investigations for exposure patterns that may not have been captured, and a recommendation that CDC consider routine wastewater surveillance to better understand the parasite's presence across the U.S.

Respectfully submitted,
Max Teplitski, Ph.D.
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Attachments

IFPA_CDC_Comment_CNHGQ_Final