

By: King of Zavala

H.B. No. 1908

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the safety of the fresh fruit and vegetables produced in this state.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that:

(1) the agricultural industry is a vital part of this state's economy, annually contributing \$103 billion, or 9.2 percent of the gross state product, and is the state's second largest resource-based industry, with one in seven Texans being employed in some segment of the agricultural industry;

(2) food safety must be a top state priority because an accidental or deliberate contamination of food or crops could be detrimental to the state's economy and would undermine consumer confidence in the integrity of food safety in this state;

(3) the growing and processing of fresh fruits and vegetables is crucial to this state, and since September 11, 2001, awareness of the threat of contamination of those products has increased; and

(4) this state should increase awareness of food safety among its growers and packers of fresh fruits and vegetables to avoid disastrous events.

SECTION 2. Subchapter A, Chapter 91, Agriculture Code, is amended by adding Section 91.009 to read as follows:

Sec. 91.009. COORDINATION OF FOOD SAFETY. (a) The

1 department is the lead agency and shall assist the fresh fruit and
2 vegetable industries with food safety issues and may provide
3 assistance to federal agencies in their implementation of voluntary
4 guidelines relating to sound agricultural practices.

5 (b) The department shall coordinate, plan, and approve
6 training and awareness programs for producers and packers of fresh
7 fruits and vegetables. A program under this subsection must inform
8 and educate producers and packers regarding:

- 9 (1) sound agricultural practices;
10 (2) proper food handling procedures;
11 (3) the prevention of accidental or deliberately
12 planned outbreaks of disease; and
13 (4) the enhancement of overall food safety.

14 (c) The department shall coordinate the planning and
15 implementation of programs required by Subsection (b) with:

- 16 (1) colleges and universities in this state;
17 (2) the Texas AgriLife Extension Service;
18 (3) Texas AgriLife Research;
19 (4) the Department of State Health Services; and
20 (5) private industry.

21 (d) The department may adopt rules to implement this
22 section. In the development of rules for the certification of
23 approved food safety curriculum or training, the department shall
24 consult and coordinate with the Department of State Health
25 Services.

26 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
27 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as

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1 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
2 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
3 Act takes effect September 1, 2009.