Introduction

• More than 31.8 million lunches are served daily in the United States through the National School Lunch Program.
• The foods distributed through this program account for 15% to 20% of the food served in schools.
• When USDA foods are involved in a food recall, there could be a significant health impact to the children who benefit from these programs.

Methodology

• The population for this study included school foodservice directors in the United States, the sample consisted of 3,700 school foodservice directors.
• The survey instrument consisted of three sections: attitudes, behaviors, and demographics.
• SurveyMonkey™ was used for online data collection.
• All statistical analysis was completed using SPSS (v. 20.0).

Results, Continued

• Approximately 89% of directors were mostly confident or very confident that their district could adequately respond to a food recall.
• 79% indicated their district has appropriate policies/procedures in place to respond to a food recall.
• Few directors utilized food safety recall systems (Recalls.gov or FoodSafety.gov).
  • While 55% regularly or very often utilize these systems, 23% indicated that they seldom or never do.
• Directors stated communication with their state agency, vendor, other districts, and school nutrition staff worked well.
• Directors preferred to know only information pertinent to them and preferred that it be sent directly to them.
• Email notification was stated as being the fastest, with timeliness being stressed.

Results

• 567 surveys were usable (17% response rate), of these 467 (84%) were female.
• The size of school districts ranged from 85 to 225,000 students, with 6,108 students on average.
• Most directors had positive attitudes, with approximately 92% of directors strongly agreeing that responding quickly to a food recall is important to protect children.
• Most (80%) directors strongly agreed that it is important to monitor recall notifications, however strongly disagreed when asked how likely it would be for a recalled product to be in their school’s inventory.

Application

• This study further illustrates the need for more training for school foodservice directors related to food recalls and product management within the district.
• Federal and state agencies can use the results of this study in developing programs to improve food recall practices.