

# More efficient methods of food-recall notices needed

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Consumers need faster, more efficient ways of being notified when there is a recall of food products.

That's the message Michigan State University's Ewen Todd gave to a symposium at the 2010 American Association for the Advancement of Science annual meeting being held in San Diego.

Todd, a professor of advertising, public relations and retailing, spoke at a symposium titled "Tracking and Tracing Our Food Supply: The Way Forward."

"As our [food supply](#) becomes increasingly global and interconnected, food recalls that were largely regional in the past have the potential of injuring vast numbers of [consumers](#) across the United States in relatively short periods of time," Todd said. "For this reason, time is of the essence in delivering targeted recall messages to consumers through various means to reduce the risk of illness.

"Direct phone calls, e-mail messages and even Facebook are now being explored for a more targeted approach, as opposed to the more traditional media and word of mouth."

These days, Todd said, consumers are increasingly concerned about the safety of their food.

"About three-quarters of Americans believe food recalls increased in the

past year, and they are more concerned about [food safety](#) than they were five years ago," he said.

In reality, Todd said, the numbers of recalls during the past year are up slightly, "but not dramatically."

Another contact method worth exploring involves the use of what are called "loyalty" cards, which consumers use at grocery stores to collect on discounts the store may be offering. Stores that use such cards are better able to monitor what a consumer purchases.

"That could be a more direct way of contacting consumers," Todd said, "but there could be privacy issues involved."

Provided by Michigan State University

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