

Inside the Conversation: What's on the Food Safety Network's Radar Right Now

An inside look from FPSA's Food Safety Network

At a recent meeting of FPSA's Food Safety Network, members gathered to share what they're seeing and hearing on the front lines of food production — from regulatory shifts to supply chain challenges and how they're managing food safety in an unpredictable environment.

Keeping an Eye on Regulatory Changes

One topic weighing on members' minds: the ripple effects of recent changes at the Department of Health and Human Services. With some customers growing nervous about evolving regulations, members are keeping a close watch on how these developments may impact compliance and business planning in the months ahead.

Supply Chain Pressures and Tariffs

Members also shared real-world experiences dealing with the impact of rising tariffs — particularly on stainless steel and other key materials.

"We've had people say, 'I've got a piece of equipment on the water, and now I'm going to be charged extra money I didn't budget for,'" one member shared.
From the OEM perspective, the situation is equally challenging:

"Our customers are saying flat-out, 'We're not paying tariffs. End of story.' That leads to some difficult conversations on how to absorb those costs — and how it may affect both pricing and project timelines."

Protecting Food Safety Standards

A key concern discussed: how economic pressures could affect hygienic design decisions. As companies look for ways to trim budgets, members emphasized the importance of not cutting corners on materials or design features that protect food safety.

"If an OEM has to find a way to cut 15% from costs, where does that happen? I worry about materials and construction choices that could impact food safety," one member noted.

Others added that the rush to source domestically — while understandable — could strain U.S. supply chains and raise new concerns about material quality and consistency.

Defining Food Safety "Non-Negotiables"

To help guide companies facing these tough decisions, the group is exploring the creation of a "non-negotiables" list — a practical reference that highlights the hygienic design principles that should never be compromised, even when budgets are tight.

"It would be great to have a reference list, especially as companies try to figure out what to cut and what to keep when scaling," one member suggested.

Collaboration Across FPSA Networks

The conversation also sparked ideas for collaboration across FPSA, including the role of automation in maintaining food safety while managing costs — a topic the Technology Network is

actively exploring.

In addition, members are preparing to contribute insights to an upcoming Pet Food Council webinar on scaling operations, as well as exploring ways to highlight best practices at future industry events.

This is just one example of how FPSA Networks bring members together to share expertise, stay ahead of industry changes, and collaborate on real-world solutions.