Title: Zero Tolerance Rules in Food Safety and Quality

Special issue editor names and affiliation: Norbert L. W. Wilson\textsuperscript{ab} and Michelle R. Worosz\textsuperscript{ac}
\textsuperscript{a}Auburn University
Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology
Auburn, AL 36830
USA
\textsuperscript{b}WilsonL@auburn.edu
\textsuperscript{c}mrw0016@auburn.edu

Corresponding special issue editor: Norbert L. W. Wilson
Phone: +1-334-844-5616
Fax: +1-334-844-3519
Auburn University
Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology
100 Comer Hall
Auburn, AL 36830
USA
WilsonL@auburn.edu
1. The Contours of Zero

The special issue of *Food Policy* will focus on zero tolerance as a characteristic of public policy, statues, and/or regulations of food. We also consider private rules including grades and standards. Of interest are the public and private rules that impose a “zero” standard for substances, e.g. residues, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), pathogens, and other constituents such as gluten and transfats. This standard also applies to rules governing production practices, for example, added hormones, and product defects, such as, insect parts.

We seek to explore the motivations for policies and rules stipulating zero tolerance in foods and the challenges to enacting said policies. In particular, we intend to study the ways in which “zero” is defined, the detection methods used, and the claims that are made, such as, the use of “free from” labels. We are seeking out papers that examine a range of concerns including the ways that “zero” is conceptualized, understood, implemented, and overseen. The special issue will also consider the effects of zero tolerance rules on value chain stakeholders and consumers. Our special issue will address at least four central questions:

- What factors contribute to the creation of zero tolerance rules in food?
- How are zero tolerance rules in food developed and administered?
- How does the quest for purity differentially affect the way agents perceive and interact with the affected foods, the related production processes and the operation of value chains?
- What are the unintended consequences and future implications of “zero”?

We note anecdotal evidence suggesting that consumers believe and expect that products labeled “free” from a substance will not contain any amount of that substance. Consider the case
of gluten. Gluten is a protein from wheat and similar grains. It is a food constituent that persons with celiac disease must avoid for medical reasons, but many other consumers choose a “gluten-free” diet and products for a range of non-medically related reasons. Consumers, particularly those with celiac disease, expect products labeled “gluten-free” will not contain gluten. However, this is not necessarily the case. For example, the standard from Codex Alimentarius (2008) sets “gluten-free” at 20 parts per million (ppm) of gluten.

Similarly, specialists, such as food scientists and regulators, struggle with the meaning of “zero” as they must establish the criteria for measurement tools and interpretation of results to determine the existence of a substance (McCabe, 2010). One example of this challenge is the detection of the antibiotic chloramphenicol in seafood products (European Commission, 2002; Tran et al., forthcoming). Policy, science, and technology interact in seafood, and in many other cases, to detect a substance at smaller and smaller ppm so as to reach a level that is closer to “zero”.

The intersection of key value chain stakeholders, consumers, policy-makers, and scientists suggests an interdisciplinary approach to the conceptualization and exploration of zero tolerance rules. Therefore, the special issue will span several disciplines. We plan to bring together authors from areas such as economics, public health, and sociology, among others. The diverse disciplinary approaches support a diversity of theoretical and empirical methods including specific case studies, quantitative and qualitative analysis, and conceptual pieces to address “zero”. Our intent is to advance the understanding of zero tolerance rules and to provide insights into the future of these policies and goals.
2. Timeline

After receiving notification of the acceptance of our proposal, we will submit the finalized papers by **November 5, 2012**.

1. Call for Paper
   a. We will immediately initiate a second call for papers beginning no later than **January 9, 2012**. The deadline for receipt of papers is **April 16, 2012**.
   b. We will have a double-blind review with two reviewers. Each contributing team of authors (or author) must have at least one author severe as a reviewer of the special issue. The submitting authors will be assigned to one of the submitted papers. We will seek out additional reviewers to fill the reviewer pool.

2. Receipt and Review of Papers
   a. Reviewers will be instructed to complete their reviews by **May 14**.
   b. Of the papers reviewed, we will select up to eight papers. While we intend to select the highest quality papers, we will also select papers to reflect the diversity of methods, fields of study, study location, etc. We will notify authors of the outcome of the reviews by **May 21**.

3. Revise and Resubmit
   a. Upon receipt of the reviewed papers, selected authors will have until **July 9** to respond to the comments from reviewers and submit a revised paper.
4. **Second Review**
   
a. If needed, reviewers will re-read the papers and make additional comments to the authors. Reviewers may direct us to reject a paper if sufficient progress has not been made.

b. Reviewers must complete the second review by **August 6**.

5. **Final Revisions**
   
a. The authors must respond to the last round of comments and submit the final version for final review and acceptance by **September 10**.

6. **Submit Final Papers to Food Policy**
   
a. As the special editions editors, we will conduct a final check of the papers before submission with a target completion date of **October 29**.

3. **Guide to Authors**

   We refer authors to the *Food Policy* website for detailed guidelines: [http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/30419/authorinstructions](http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/30419/authorinstructions). As indicated in the instructions, the papers are to be on average 6000 words long (including abstract, appendices, tables etc). Please adhere to the guidelines of *Food Policy* to ease the review process. Failure to abide by the guidelines may lead to a rejection of the paper.
4. References


