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## **Bonnie Krause-Gams question**

Thu, 12/09/2010 - 02:29 -- Bonnie Krause-Gams

Question:

How will S.510 affect gardeners, seeds, and seed-saving?

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Answer::

S.510 is the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act which passed the US Senate November 30th and signed into law by President Obama January 4th. The bill would give the FDA the authority to test widely for dangerous pathogens and to recall contaminated food. The agency would, for the first time, have the resources and authority to prevent food safety problems, rather than respond only after people have become ill as was recently the case when thousands of people were infected with salmonella from vermin-infested henhouses in Iowa. The legislation has been criticized by some as giving too much power to the FDA, but enjoys the support of many well respected people in the sustainable food movement (e.g. Michael Pollan, Eric Schlosser, Marion Nestle, etc.) who feel it will do much more good than harm. The bill has been the subject of a great amount of hysteria and misinformation with unsubstantiated claims that it will outlaw backyard gardens, seed-saving, and the sharing of vegetables grown in home gardens. The truth is that S.510 does not empower the FDA to do any of these things. The one potential red flag regarding seed-saving pertains to farmers who save their own seeds. S. 510 does require inspection of seed-cleaning machines

&ndash; a provision that could make it harder for farmers to collect their own seeds and could benefit large seed producers. Similarly, some have expressed concern about other effects the legislation might have on small-scale producers. Small farmers who sell most of their harvest directly to restaurants, food co-ops, farm stands, and farmers' markets wouldn't have to register with the FDA under S.510. And they wouldn't be subject to the regulations in the legislation. But such farmers would still have to abide by current state laws. For more on the facts and myths of S.510, see this article in The Christian Science Monitor.

Question Details (optional):

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