

## MYTH OF THE MONTH

### Myth:

*“Talk is Cheap!”*

### Reality:

*FALSE. Not so cheap. There always has been a lot of discussion about food irradiation. More time is spent talking about food irradiation than irradiating food.*

### TALK IS NOT CHEAP!

The next time you are at a conference or forum discussing any aspect of food irradiation, look around and count the number of attendees. Most likely, during the meeting, there are more people sitting in that room than there are people actively irradiating food in the whole country where the meeting is taking place.

We talk about what we might irradiate in the future. Why don't we talk about what we are and can irradiate right now? Today? Tomorrow? Next Tuesday? Right now, thousands of tons of food is being irradiated for various purposes around the world. ... perhaps only a short distance away from where you are reading this.

If you want something irradiated, send it to a commercial service irradiation facility. If you want a lot of something irradiated, consider purchasing an irradiator yourself. Both options exist. Right Now! For many food products, utilizing various irradiation processes, the commercial path is clear.

Often the discussions are about researching new processes using irradiation. Research is the first step for new applications of irradiation technology. Research can, and must, be continued. However, we should also be taking advantage of past research that has already cleared the path to commercialization.

Similarly we need ongoing discussions with government regulators to assure that foods currently being irradiated are compliant. And, we must secure approvals for more food products and processes that have been determined safe. Government oversight must be continued to keep the commercial path clear and credible.

Sometimes at these meetings there are discussions involving the actual experiences of people having their products irradiated or the experiences of the people irradiating the product. These are valuable because they provide a map of the path to commercialization. Unfortunately, these discussions are rare because too often those with the knowledge are too busy irradiating actual product to attend the meeting and their comments are often restricted for proprietary reasons.

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