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These steps, taken together, will help keep our food supply safe as we enter the 21st Century. But there is more to do. The new circumstances we face require strengthened systems of prevention, surveillance, research, and education. The President today asked Secretaries Shalala and Glickman, and Administrator Browner, to recommend to him within 60 days additional measures the Administration should take to further improve the safety of the nation's food supply.

Initiative: The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Department of Agriculture (USDA), in cooperation with state and local health departments, are taking the following steps to establish the new early warning system:

1. Increase the number of food safety "sentinel" sites from 5 to 10.

CDC, FDA, and USDA currently support 5 sentinel sites run by state and local governments to track foodborne illness (Northern California, Connecticut, Minnesota, Oregon, and metropolitan Atlanta). These sites do not adequately cover the U.S. population; in particular, there is underrepresentation of the mid-Atlantic, south, and south-west regions. Under this initiative, we will expand the number of sites from 5 to 10.

[Cost: including enhancements outlined below, \$600,000/site, for a total of \$3,000,000 for five additional sites]

2. Create foodborne disease electronic communication network.

A key element in any early warning system is the ability to communicate unusual findings, and to be able to swiftly recognize patterns of illness within and among sites that may indicate larger outbreaks. The need for rapid communication applies to both epidemiologic data and laboratory data. For epidemiologic data, there is a need for swift electronic reporting of cases to health departments in sentinel sites, as well as rapid reporting from sentinel sites to CDC and rapid communication to FDA and USDA for appropriate follow-up to prevent further illness. Laboratory data also need to be quickly communicated both back to the physician and laboratory sending the sample and to CDC. Currently available technology also permits the transmission of DNA "fingerprints" from bacteria and other microorganisms; there is the potential to create large databases containing these fingerprints much like the fingerprint libraries maintained by law enforcement agencies so that there can be immediate recognition of relationships among isolates (samples isolated and identified from individual disease cases).

To respond to these opportunities and meet these needs CDC, FDA, and USDA will fund a new computer network and database system that will capture bacterial

-- novel pathogens are emerging

Elizabeth: Here is the brief description you asked for. It works better as two paragraphs-- the first laying out the components of the new system, the second explaining how they will work together -- Victor

The New National Early Warning System to Improve Food Safety

The new National Early Warning System that President Clinton unveiled today will enable public health officials to rapidly detect and respond to episodes of food-borne illnesses, preventing major outbreaks, illness and death. The new system has three major components: an enhanced surveillance system with improved technology and an increase in the number of "sentinel" food-safety surveillance sites around the country from five to eight; an increase in technical and financial support to state and local food safety officials; and the development of a powerful new computer-based communications network that will link federal, state and local food-safety officials and allow them to detect, identify, and prevent outbreaks of food-borne illness, and to track any episodes back to their cause.

Working closely with state and local health officials, the eight sentinel laboratories will undertake special studies of food-borne illnesses and pathogens. The labs and state health departments will also be given new resources to hire more "disease detectives" to track food-borne illnesses, and they will be equipped with state-of-the-art technology to allow DNA "fingerprinting" of harmful microorganisms. These "fingerprints" will then be digitized for electronic transmission over the new Early Warning System communications network. This will allow scientists in remote locations to work together to quickly identify and match specific pathogens, eliminating delays caused by the current need to physically transport scientific specimens from one site to another.

The National Early Warning System For Foodborne Disease

The Administration will create a new national early warning system for foodborne disease. This system will improve the national capacity to detect and respond to foodborne disease, increase the number of foodborne disease active surveillance sites around the country, enhance technology, and link federal and state laboratories together to create a powerful new national network to detect, respond to, and prevent foodborne illness.

In the first facet of the early warning system, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will provide resources to State and local health departments in FY98 to improve surveillance, investigation, control, and prevention of foodborne disease outbreaks. New epidemiologic investigators will determine the connection between foods consumed and the illnesses they cause, collect specimens, trace implicated foods to their origin, and determine the factors that contribute to outbreaks of foodborne disease. CDC also will develop and standardize diagnostic and subtyping techniques and provide the resources and training to enhance public health laboratory capacity in States so they can rapidly identify a broad range of foodborne infections.

For the second part of the early warning system, the Administration will expand its network of "sentinel" surveillance sites. The foodborne diseases active surveillance network is a collaborative program involving CDC, five state health departments, USDA, and FDA that was established in 1995 to conduct in-depth surveillance for foodborne diseases and related epidemiologic studies. The core function of the network is population-based active surveillance at clinical microbiology laboratories in the sites. Since January 1996, information has been collected on every laboratory diagnosed case of *Salmonella*, *Shigella*, *Campylobacter*, *Escherichia coli* O157, *Listeria*, *Yersinia*, and *Vibrio* infection among the residents of these five areas. This information is transmitted electronically to CDC, resulting in a comprehensive and timely database of foodborne illness in a well defined population. Since becoming operational in 1996, the network already has identified an outbreak of *Salmonella* infections caused by contaminated alfalfa sprouts, and two outbreaks of *E. coli* O157 infections due to lettuce and apple cider. The network has also provided the infrastructure for quickly responding to new and emerging diseases, such as rapidly determining that new variant-Creutzfeld Jakob disease (recently associated with BSE in the United Kingdom) was not occurring in the United States, and collaborating in the investigation of a multistate outbreak of *Cyclospora* infections associated with consumption of raspberries from Guatemala. With this Administration initiative, the number of active foodborne disease surveillance sites will increase from five to eight to improve its geographic coverage, and the range of foodborne pathogens will be expanded to include parasitic and viral foodborne

pathogens.

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This new national early warning system will help us catch outbreaks early, preventing illness and possibly deaths. The sentinel sites will also gather more extensive data that will advance our understanding of foodborne illness and further our efforts not only to react quickly to foodborne illness, but to prevent illness from occurring at all.

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Q/As for the National Early Warning System

1. In the National Early Warning System the President announced, he talked about improvements in active surveillance sites and in State health departments. What's the difference?

The active surveillance sites provide opportunities for the in-depth studies on foodborne diseases necessary to identify precise sources of infection, the relative importance of various foods, and other key factors necessary to make food safer in the future. However, these sites cover only part of the U. S. population, and strengthening the capacity of other State health departments is necessary to identify and interrupt foodborne disease outbreaks that occur anywhere in the country.

2. What are the key elements of the National Early Warning System?

The National Early Warning System will increase federal support to State health departments to detect foodborne diseases by increasing the number of scientists available to investigate foodborne outbreaks and by enhancing laboratory-based surveillance of important foodborne pathogens through improved diagnostic reagent availability, diagnostic and subtyping development, standardization, and training. It will expand the number and scope of the enhanced food safety surveillance sites to improve the geographic and pathogen coverage. And it will link federal and State public health laboratories with sophisticated computer technology that will enhance communications and data sharing, including the digitized fingerprints of foodborne pathogens.

3. Why is it important to increase the number of active surveillance sites?

The studies conducted in the foodborne diseases active surveillance sites describe the epidemiology of new and emerging foodborne pathogens, estimate the frequency and severity of foodborne disease, and determine how much foodborne illness results from eating different kinds of foods. Because people from different backgrounds in different parts of the country have different eating habits, it is important to have information from many different geographical areas to be certain that the information reflects the nation as a whole.

Fighting Foodborne Disease: A New "Early Warning System"

Americans rightly expect to have the world's safest food supply. Although our food is unmatched in quantity and quality, we can do better, particularly in our efforts to reduce or eliminate disease caused by microorganisms and other contaminants carried by food. The Council for Agricultural Science and Technology, a private non-profit organization, estimated in its 1994 report *Foodborne Pathogens: Risks and Consequences* that as many as 9,000 deaths and 6.5 to 33 million illnesses in the U.S. each year are food-related; other studies have found similar results.

We also face special challenges as we enter the 21st Century. Novel pathogens are emerging. Long-understood pathogens are growing resistant to the treatments we have relied upon. Lowering of trade barriers has led to record levels of food imports. Companies now routinely move food from the furthest reaches of the world to the American dinner table overnight. These changing circumstances require greatly strengthened systems of coordination, surveillance, prevention and control, research, and education.

We propose a new national early-warning system for outbreaks of foodborne disease. The Administration will increase the number of food safety surveillance sites around the country from 5 to 8, enhance their technology, and link them together to create a powerful new national network to detect, respond to, and prevent outbreaks of foodborne illness. In collaboration with state and local health departments, we will look intensively for cases of foodborne disease, and will make every effort to understand how the food came to be contaminated, and how contaminated food is being passed into our kitchens. At the eight "sentinel" sites, we will fund more scientists to investigate food-related disease outbreaks -- new "disease detectives." We will also fund enhanced lab capabilities and use the latest science to develop DNA "fingerprints" of harmful microorganisms. And we will link the sites electronically with the latest computer technology so that we can identify related outbreaks that occur in different areas of the country.

This new national early warning system will help us catch outbreaks early, preventing illness and possibly deaths. The eight sentinel sites will also gather data that will advance our understanding of foodborne illness and further our efforts to identify and prevent harmful contamination in our food.

This initiative builds on the steps the Administration has taken to date to strengthen our food safety system. This summer the President issued new meat and poultry regulations. He replaced a century old system that still relied on touch and smell with a hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) system -- a new science-based approach geared toward today's microbiological threats. Data gathered by the eight sentinel sites will help us implement this new approach by helping us understand where food is most likely to become contaminated.

This Administration has also modernized our seafood safety programs using the HACCP approach. And in August the President signed the Food Quality Protection Act to protect Americans, and especially our children, from unsafe levels of pesticides in foods.

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To respond to these opportunities and meet these needs CDC, FDA, and USDA will fund a new computer network and database system that will capture bacterial fingerprints in a centralized database and will electronically link the sentinel sites and the three government agencies. This technology will, for example, permit immediate

recognition that an *E. coli* O157:H7 isolate from a patient in Oregon was identical to an isolate from a patient in Minnesota -- which, in turn, may allow public health investigators to determine that a product distributed to both Oregon and Minnesota was contaminated with the organism.

3. Modernize Laboratories at Sentinel Sites.

Upgrade laboratory capability so that sites can utilize DNA fingerprinting and other highly sophisticated techniques to identify infectious agents or other causes of illness. Reinforce the existing Salmonella serotyping system. This new capacity will allow us to identify the same fingerprint on bacteria from two widely separated cases. It will also provide a basis for subsequent epidemiologic investigation and development of strategies to prevent future outbreaks.

4. Increase "Disease Detectives" to Investigate Outbreaks

CDC, FDA, and USDA will fund additional experts to investigate and control foodborne disease outbreaks. While sophisticated laboratory studies can identify causes of illness and show relationships among isolates, there is still a need for people to make certain samples are collected correctly, and to do the investigative work (i.e., to trace back and try to find out why outbreaks of illness occurred, so that preventive measures can be put in place).

President Clinton Announces New Food Safety Initiatives

Today, the President took two important steps to improve the safety of the food supply in the United States. First, the President announced that the Administration will establish five new surveillance sites for tracking foodborne illness throughout the country, doubling the number of sites currently in operation from five to 10. This expanded system will use the latest science to identify and track contaminants in food and speed critical information to public health officials throughout the United States to prevent outbreaks of illness. Second, the President directed the Secretaries of the Departments of Health and Human Services and Agriculture and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to recommend within 60 days additional measures to improve the safety of our food supply. The President asked that these recommendations include measures to improve inspections, research, education, and coordination among local, state, and federal health authorities. The actions the President took today will help to detect and respond more quickly and effectively to outbreaks of foodborne disease in the United States.

BACKGROUND

While America's food supply is unmatched in quality and quantity, we still face challenges in ensuring food safety. The increasing diversity of the American food supply, as well as the larger role that imported foods play in the American diet, require strengthened systems of inspections, research, education, and coordination. Just this week, the Food and Drug Administration announced the voluntary recall of a brand of apple juice produced in California and distributed in Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, and Washington, because it had been linked to an outbreak of E. coli illness in Washington state. The FDA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are working with local and state health agencies to prevent further outbreaks of illness, and to ensure that the food and beverage supply is safe in Washington and the rest of the country.

BUILDING ON PREVIOUS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The actions that the President is taking today will work to ensure that we have the knowledge and the tools to prevent outbreaks such as these from happening in the future, and they build upon steps that the Administration has already taken to protect the nation's food supply. For example, in December 1995, the Administration updated the requirements for seafood by incorporating new science-based approaches to prevent food contamination, and did the same for meat and poultry inspection in July 1996. The President also signed legislation to strengthen the Safe Drinking Water Act in July 1996. Finally, in August, the President signed the Food Quality Protection Act, based on a new approach that streamlines the regulation of pesticides and emphasizes public health protection for children.

**President Clinton Announces Steps
to Promote Food Recovery
November 23, 1996**

Announcement

- In his radio address to the nation today, President Clinton mobilized Federal agencies to help feed needy Americans and encouraged all citizens to participate in food recovery, also known as gleaning.
- In conjunction with his radio address, President Clinton will issue a memorandum directing every agency to do more to recover surplus food from their cafeterias, commissaries, other food service facilities, and public events. He will also direct agencies to encourage their state, local, and non-governmental partners and grantees to recover food. In addition, President Clinton's memorandum will establish a government-wide working group, chaired by the Secretary of Agriculture, to carry out the President's policy and to assist agencies with food recovery efforts.
- President Clinton also announced today the Agriculture Department's release of its ***Citizen's Guide to Food Recovery*** -- a guidebook for getting prepared, perishable food that would otherwise be thrown away to those people who need it. Citizens can obtain the guide by calling 1-800-GLEAN-IT or by accessing the USDA home page on the World Wide Web at www.usda.gov. The guide explains how to get started, lists the names of charities across the country that work to recover food, and describes lessons we have learned.

Background

- Each year, billions of pounds of wholesome, edible food are discarded. According to the General Accounting Office, up to 20 percent of all food annually produced in this country for human consumption goes to waste. The annual value of the wasted food is estimated at around \$31 billion. It is estimated that these lost resources could have fed 49 million people.
- The U.S. Conference of Mayors reported that 18 percent of requests for emergency food assistance went unmet last year. In 59 percent of the cities surveyed, emergency food assistance facilities -- food banks, pantries, soup kitchens -- report that they may have to turn people away due to a lack of resources.

Building on Our Accomplishments

- On October 1, 1996, President Clinton signed the "Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act" to promote food recovery. The legislation limits the liability of donors to instances of gross negligence and intentional misconduct; establishes nationwide uniform definitions pertaining to donation and distribution of nutritious foods; and assists in assuring that donated foods meet all quality and labeling standards of Federal, State, and local laws and regulations. As a result, over the next year, nearly 1,700 7-Eleven stores will donate 4 million pounds of food to food recovery programs. The Administration expects that many other organizations will join in the food recovery effort.
- The Administration is already taking steps to promote food recovery. For example, in the Summer of 1996, USDA and AmeriCorps sponsored the "Summer of Gleaning" program that implemented 22 food recovery projects in 20 states. The AmeriCorps members in this program helped recover over 1,005 tons of food which provided an estimated 1.34 million meals. In addition, each Friday, the two cafeterias at USDA headquarters donate an average of 150 pounds of uneaten food to a non-profit food recovery program.

Questions and Answers on Food Safety Announcement
Internal Use Only

Q: What exactly did the President announce today?

A: Today, the President took two important steps to improve the safety of the food supply in the United States. First, the President announced that the Administration will establish five new surveillance sites for tracking foodborne illness throughout the country, doubling the number of sites currently in operation from five to 10. This expanded system will use the latest science to identify and track contaminants in food and speed critical information to public health officials throughout the United States to prevent outbreaks of illness. Second, the President directed the Secretaries of the Departments of Health and Human Services and Agriculture and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to recommend within 60 days a comprehensive food safety initiative based on the most likely present and future risks to food safety in this country. The President asked that these recommendations include measures to improve inspections, research, education, and coordination among local, state, and federal health authorities.

Q: The President listed several specific directives to HHS, USDA, and EPA, such as finding ways to increase the number of "disease detectives." Are the agencies required to do these exact things?

A: The President directed the Secretaries of the Departments of Health and Human Services and Agriculture and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to recommend within 60 days a comprehensive food safety initiative based on the most likely present and future risks to food safety in this country. The President asked that these recommendations include measures to improve inspections, research, education, and coordination among local, state, and federal health authorities, and he listed possible actions, such as increasing the number of "disease detectives" who investigate and control foodborne disease outbreaks. The Secretaries and the Administrator will look at these measures, as well as other potential steps, in developing their recommendations for a comprehensive food safety initiative.

Q: How was the E. coli outbreak in Washington state detected?

A: The recent E. coli outbreak in Washington state was detected through routine surveillance by the Seattle/King county health department. The state health department then contacted the CDC and the Sentinel sites in California and Oregon to alert them to the outbreak, and the CDC and FDA helped organize the voluntary recall of the apple juice and notify other health departments and the public of the possible contamination. (These are the same health department that detected the large West Coast outbreak of E. coli from undercooked hamburgers in 1993).

Q: How many cases of E. coli illness have been reported?

A: To date, the CDC has confirmed 13 cases of illness from E. coli in Washington state. CDC is currently looking at other reported cases of illness from other states.

Q: What has the CDC and FDA done in reaction to the outbreak?

A: As soon as the federal government got the news of the outbreak, CDC began working with local health officials and notified the six other states in which the juice was distributed. The FDA announced the voluntary recall of the contaminated apple juice from supermarket shelves and sent out a public alert. CDC and FDA have also sent officials to the apple juice plant in California, and both agencies are working with the juice industry to develop long-term prevention measures to keep similar outbreaks from occurring.

Q: What did the President mean when he said that you "stopped the outbreak of E. coli illness in its tracks?" Does that mean no one else will be getting sick?

A: The President meant that the FDA and the CDC began working immediately with local and state health agencies to identify the outbreak and prevent further illness. CDC worked with local health officials and notified the six other states in which the juice was distributed. The FDA announced the voluntary recall of the contaminated apple juice from supermarket shelves and sent out a public alert. CDC and FDA have also sent officials to the apple juice plant in California, and both agencies are working with the juice industry to develop long-term prevention measures to keep similar outbreaks from occurring. So far, 13 cases of illness from E. coli have been reported in Washington state, and CDC and FDA is working with other states to identify any other cases and prevent further illness.

Q: Did the Sentinel site in northern California help identify the E. coli outbreak?

A: The Sentinel sites in California and Oregon were contacted when the cases of E. coli were first detected. The Sentinel sites are currently involved in isolating the E. coli bacteria and performing laboratory tests to identify the exact strain of the organism in order to prevent future outbreaks. (In October, the Connecticut Sentinel site did detect an outbreak of E. coli from apple cider produced in that state).

Q: What do the Sentinel sites actually do?

A: The Sentinel sites work to catch outbreaks of foodborne diseases sooner, to investigate their potential source, and to develop effective prevention and control strategies. These sites apply a variety of powerful epidemiologic and laboratory tools, including laboratory-based surveillance of disease-causing organisms, surveys of physicians and communities, and the use of modern laboratory techniques to track illnesses caused by contaminated foods.

Q: Where are the five operating Sentinel sites located?

A: The five sites are located in Northern California, Oregon, Connecticut, Minnesota, and Atlanta. However, these sites do not adequately cover the United States -- there is underrepresentation of the mid-Atlantic, south, and south-west regions. That's why we're expanding the number of sites, from five to 10.

Q: Will the expansion you're proposing to the Sentinel project make a difference in detecting future contaminations before they spread?

A: These new Sentinel sites will expand our ability to catch outbreaks of foodborne diseases, such as those caused by E. coli, sooner, to investigate their potential source, and to develop effective prevention and control strategies.

Q: Which five states will get the new Sentinel sites?

A: A request for applications from states will be published in the federal register. CDC will review the applications and determine, through a competitive process, which five states will receive the five new Sentinel sites.

Q: With all the foodborne illness cases cited, is the food supply really safe?

A: Yes, the food supply is safe, in general. The U.S. food supply is among the safest in the world. The number of foodborne illnesses must be viewed in perspective. U.S. consumers spend over \$619 billion for food every year. We have more than 260,000 products made or processed by more than 30,000 manufacturers available to us on grocery shelves, and approximately 15,000 new products are introduced each year. In addition, the U.S. imported more than 3.5 million foods (not including meat and poultry products) this past year.

The complex system of delivering food from the farm to the tables of American consumers offers opportunities along the route for contamination or mishandling. The important thing to remember is that contamination is preventable, and that the actions we are taking today will help create an even safer food supply.

Q: Why are so many of these food safety initiatives just now being started or considered?

A: These initiatives are part of an ongoing effort by the Administration to enhance the safety of the food supply. For example, we created the Sentinel surveillance project in 1995 through the CDC, FDA, and USDA, which we are expanding from 5 to 10 sites today. In December 1995, the Administration updated the requirements for seafood by incorporating new science-based approaches to prevent food contamination, and did the same for meat and poultry inspection in July 1996. The President also signed legislation to strengthen the Safe Drinking Water Act in July 1996. Finally, in August, the President signed the Food Quality Protection Act, based on a new approach that streamlines the regulation of pesticides and emphasizes public health protection for children.

Today's actions will help to strengthen these existing food safety programs, enhance coordination between public agencies to ensure the safety of the food supply, and redouble efforts to decrease the incidence of foodborne illness in the U.S.

Q: Are any initiatives now underway or under consideration going to change the basic responsibilities that Federal agencies (FDA, USDA, CDC, EPA) have in protecting the food supply?

A: No, the basic responsibilities of FDA, USDA, CDC, and EPA will remain the same. The President's action will increase the number of surveillance sites currently run by the CDC, FDA, and USDA, and his directive to agencies will help find ways to make the food supply even safer.

Q: Are there any estimates on how much these food safety programs will cost (including costs to industry and consumers)? How long will they take to implement?

A: The expansion of the surveillance system from five to ten sites will cost about \$2.5 million dollars in FY 1997. We will have more details on further actions when the Departments of Health and Human Services and Agriculture make their recommendations to the President, within the next 60 days.

Q: Are there any estimates on how many foodborne illnesses may be prevented through newly implemented or future food safety efforts?

A: According to recent estimates by CDC and others, between 6.5 and 33 million cases of foodborne illness occur every year, with up to 9,000 deaths. These illnesses range in severity from stomach aches lasting a few hours to life-threatening illness. While we can't estimate exactly how many foodborne illnesses will be prevented by this or future food safety efforts, we anticipate that these actions will help identify foodborne illnesses more quickly and result in better protection of the public.

Q: Would the new food safety initiatives require new legislation or regulations?

A: In keeping with Vice President Gore's National Performance Review, a primary objective of the President's directive is to achieve more efficient use of resources through coordinated efforts of public health agencies at the Federal and state levels. A wide variety of options will be considered in determining the most effective, timely way to accomplish this. Again, we will wait to see the specific recommendations of the Departments of Health and Human Services and Agriculture and the EPA.

Q: What type of steps can consumers take now to help protect themselves against foodborne illness?

A: There are a number of things consumers can do to protect themselves against foodborne illness, starting at the grocery store. Foods should be stored at the proper temperature - the old advice to keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot is as true today as it was 30 years ago. Meat, poultry, and eggs should be thoroughly cooked. Home food handling and preparation should always begin with clean hands. Use clean utensils and food preparation surfaces, including cutting boards, for all food preparation. Don't use the same utensils and preparation surfaces used for raw and cooked foods without cleaning them thoroughly in between.

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DRAFT 10/30 8am

Fighting Foodborne Disease: A New "Early Warning System"

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This initiative builds on the steps the Administration has taken to date to strengthen our food safety system. This summer the President issued new meat and poultry regulations. He replaced a century old system that still relied on touch and smell with a hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) system -- a new science-based approach geared toward today's microbiological threats. Data gathered by the ten sentinel sites will help us implement this new approach by helping us understand where food is most likely to become contaminated. This Administration has also modernized our seafood safety programs using the HACCP

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\$ 890,000.

\$ 2,740,000.

600,000.

\$ 3,340,000

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This new national early warning system will help us catch outbreaks early, preventing illness and possibly deaths. The ten sentinel sites will also gather data that will advance our understanding of foodborne illness and further our efforts to identify and prevent harmful contamination in our food.

This initiative builds on the steps the Administration has taken to date to strengthen our food safety system. This summer the President issued new meat and poultry regulations. He replaced a century old system that still relied on touch and smell with a hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) system -- a new science-based approach geared toward today's microbiological threats. Data gathered by the ten sentinel sites will help us implement this new approach by helping us understand where food is most likely to become contaminated. This Administration has also modernized our seafood safety programs using the HACCP

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URGENT

- 1 -

Office of the Assistant Administrator
OFFICE OF PREVENTION, PESTICIDES AND TOXIC SUBSTANCES
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
401 M Street, S.W. (7101), Washington, D.C. 20460

FACSIMILE COVER SHEET

(Please type or print in BLACK ink.)

TO: Elizabeth Drye

OFFICE/REGION/ORGANIZATION:

White House

FAX #:

456-7028

TELEPHONE #:

FROM:

Jim Adala

TELEPHONE #:

DATE:

11/1/96

NUMBER OF PAGES:

2

(including this cover sheet)

FACSIMILE NUMBER: (202) 260-0903

VERIFICATION NUMBER: (202) 260-2892

SPECIAL MESSAGE:

Q + A's

DRAFT

How will the Environmental Protection Agency participate in this interagency effort to enhance food safety?

EPA has jurisdiction over protecting the nation's food supply from risks of pesticides in our diet. That responsibility has now been greatly enhanced by the enactment of the 1996 Food Quality Protection Act, signed by President Clinton on August 3, 1996. The three relevant agencies, EPA, HHS, and USDA will not only share responsibilities for this important new law, but also coordinate implementation of today's Presidential directive.

How is the EPA improving consumer's information and education about possible contaminants in our food supply?

Consumers have many questions about the possible risks from pesticides on their food. As part of the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996, EPA will publish an annual guide to provide consumers with easy to understand information about pesticides in food and recommendations on how they can reduce the potential risks from chemicals in their diets. This is in addition to a variety of regular publications by food safety agencies at USDA and HHS concerning not only pesticide residues but also other possible hazards in our food.

How will EPA's participation in this and other initiatives improve protection for our children?

It is a simple rule in pediatrics that "children are not little adults." Children are more vulnerable to the risks of pesticides and other contaminants as their bodies mature, and proportionately are exposed to greater amounts of these compounds.

The Clinton Administration has made great strides in protecting children from environmental hazards. In October 1995 EPA Administrator Browner announced a new policy to consistently and explicitly take into account health risks to children and infants from environmental hazards when conducting assessments of environmental risks.

In addition, the Food Quality Protection Act contains many reforms which provide significant new protection for America's children.

These include:

- o Requires an explicit determination that all pesticides are safe for children.
- o Provides for an extra margin of safety to make sure that children are protected.
- o Requires consideration of children's special sensitivity and exposure to pesticide chemicals.

E X E C U T I V E O F F I C E O F T H E P R E S I D E N T

23-Oct-1996 12:20pm

TO: Bruce N. Reed

FROM: Elizabeth E. Drye
 Domestic Policy Council

SUBJECT: Food Safety

I know you and Jerry have been trading phone calls. Here's what he has to announce:

POTUS would announce a new national early warning system for food outbreaks. Specifically, he would announce funding for five new food safety "sentinel sites." There are five sites now -- Northern California, Minnesota, Atlanta, Oregon, and Connecticut. Doubling the number of sites will give us a nation-wide system for early detection of food-borne illness. Sites will be designated on a competitive basis.

The five new sites will help states and local governments use the latest science to identify food outbreaks early, preventing illness and death. All ten sites will be linked together and share data to more rapidly identify diffuse, national outbreaks. Sites will also gather the data that we need to better implement the "modern" approach to food safety -- the hazard analysis and critical control point (HACCP) system -- that the President has put in place for meat, poultry, and seafood. Research done at the sites will better identify hazards and determine where contamination occurs.

You could use the event to highlight the President's food safety accomplishments, announce this new step, and state that he has asked Cabinet officials to suggest additional measures within 90 days.

26-Oct-1996 10:36am

TO: DRYE_E
TO: Mark A. Weatherly

FROM: T J. Glauthier

CC: Ronald M. Cogswell
CC: Alecia Ward
CC: Adrienne C. Erbach

SUBJECT: RE: Food safety initiative??

Message Creation Date was at 26-OCT-1996 10:31:00

Mark, let's have your branch take the lead for us. It sounds like much of it will focus on USDA, and if it really is related to HAACP then it's important that you and your staff are involved.

Elizabeth, I have heard nothing of this initiative before, but it sounds like the agencies have been working on it for sometime. Your email mentioned that this first piece would be done within existing budgets, but that there would be another, larger initiative for the FY98 budget. We need to get more information very soon about just how this relates to what we are already planning to do as part of the implementation of the new food safety law signed in August. Is it possible that we are all talking about the same thing?

E X E C U T I V E O F F I C E O F T H E P R E S I D E N T

29-Oct-1996 05:49pm

TO: DRYE_E

FROM: K. Lisa Grove

SUBJECT: RE: early warning systems ...

Message Creation Date was at 29-OCT-1996 17:44:00

Delete "He replaced a century old system that still relied on touch and smell ..." so that it reads "This summer the President issued new meat and poultry inspection regulations. The new rules require plants to implement science based hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) systems geared toward today's microbiological threats."

DRAFT 10/28 6pm

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