

DRAFT: 5-11-97; 4:40PM

Statement of Vice President Al Gore
Food Safety Announcement
Washington, DC
May 12, 1997

Dan - need to
be clear this is me
in a series of steps
Clinton/Gore have taken
(1997 Gore plan, seafood
meat, poultry, rules)

Good morning. Today, we act to protect America's children from invisible hazards in their food -- and to make sure America's bountiful food supply is safe, sanitary, and wholesome.

Earlier this year, President Clinton directed Secretary Shalala, Secretary Glickman, and Administrator Browner to report to him ~~on the state of food safety in America, and to devise a strategy for battling the threat to public health.~~ *on next steps to*

This morning, I am pleased to accept their report -- "Food Safety From Farm to Table." *the battle to improve the safety of our nation's food supply.* This important document confirms that America's food supply is among the safest in the world. But it reminds us that our nation has more to do. A series of changes -- economic, demographic, and biological -- has raised new challenges. For example, a generation of consumers that has grown up with the microwave and the freezer often hasn't been schooled in proper food-handling techniques. The population of Americans especially vulnerable to foodborne illnesses -- the elderly and those with compromised immune systems -- is growing. And microorganisms themselves are adapting to the environment, becoming craftier, developing greater resistance to human intervention.

Each year in America, unsafe food is responsible for as many as ~~33~~⁵ million illnesses and up to 9,000 deaths. That is unacceptable. *Thousands of premature.*

Today's report outlines a series of aggressive measures to combat this hidden danger, and to make sure the food Americans eat is healthy and safe. Our plan has five key components.

First, moments ago, cabinet agencies, representatives of the food and restaurant industries, and consumer advocates signed an agreement to launch an unprecedented public education campaign about the dangers of foodborne illnesses. This campaign will teach all Americans -- from chefs in fancy restaurants to barbecuers in their own backyards -- that they can prevent many serious problems with a few simple safety measures . . . for example, cleaning utensils, wiping down food preparation surfaces, cooking foods at high enough temperatures, and washing fruits and vegetables. This campaign, which will begin later this year, is an unprecedented partnership to nourish the public with information about food safety. This campaign will supply Americans with food for thought so they can safely enjoy the food they eat.

Second, we're going to improve food inspections. The Food and Drug Administration will hire additional inspectors for seafood plants. And we'll expand a promising approach called Hazardous Analysis Critical Control Points that we began as part of our reinventing government

proposes to
initiative. Under the HACCP ("HASS-upp), food manufacturers identify the key points where contamination is likely to occur, and then devise a strategy for preventing it. This approach is already in place for meat and seafood. Our plan extends it to the manufacture of fruit and vegetable juice, which will reduce terrible incidents like the one Laurie Girand just described.

for example
Third, our plan boosts investments in research to develop new tests for detecting and combating food contaminants. Our proposal will target \$16.5 million to critical research needs. This will give food safety officials across the country new tools to detect the most elusive threats -- like the Hepatitis A virus and cyclospora, which cannot now be detected in many foods. And it will aid in developing new strategies for fighting other pathogens that have developed resistance to time-tested controls such as refrigeration and heat.

Fourth, we will strengthen coordination and improve efficiency among the agencies that have a role in protecting public health. The Agriculture Department, the CDC, the FDA, and the EPA will form a new intergovernmental group to improve our response to foodborne illnesses.

outbreaks of
Fifth, we'll continue building an Early Warning System to detect outbreaks of foodborne illnesses before they erupt into larger threats. We'll add an eighth Center for Disease Control "sentinel site" to spot incidents early. Each site will be a Paul Revere of public health: it will sound the cry, spread the word, and ~~get our citizens ready to respond~~. We'll also make sure that the dedicated public health professionals who work as America's "disease detectives" have high-tech tools like DNA fingerprinting to track down illnesses, stop them in their tracks, and work to prevent their recurrence.

help governments, industry and communities make quick actions
Ensuring the safety and integrity of America's food supply is not ~~a~~ something any individual or institution can do alone. It is a challenge we must meet together -- consumers, producers, industries, universities, physicians, and government working together toward a common goal. Just as we came together to combat the dangerous of meat-packing plants at the dawn of the Industrial Age, we can come together to combat new hazards using the tools of the Information Age.

Busy parents have enough on their minds. They shouldn't have to worry that the juice their baby drinks or the sandwich their son eats in the school cafeteria or the hamburger their daughter orders for dinner will be hazardous to their health. When children reach for a piece of food, parents deserve to have peace of mind.

I thank all of you for your working with us on this effort.
I thank Secretaries Shalala and Glickman and Administrator Browner for their hard work. And I congratulate them on beginning to put in place ~~a~~ plan to keep our food safer and our children healthier.

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THE WHITE HOUSE AT WORK
Monday, May 12, 1997

TODAY: VICE PRESIDENT RELEASES PLAN TO IMPROVE FOOD SAFETY

Today, Vice President Gore announces a five-point plan to strengthen and improve food safety for the American people, to better protect America's children and families:

- The plan will improve inspections, expand preventive safety measures, increase research to develop new tests that detect risks in the food supply, and build a national Early Warning System -- to catch outbreaks of foodborne illness sooner.
- Vice President Gore said: "When children reach for a piece of food, parents deserve to have peace of mind. This Administration is using the most modern science and a common-sense approach to increase the safety of our nation's food supply and protect the public health."

SATURDAY: PRESIDENT CHALLENGES CONGRESS TO GET TOUGH ON GUNS AND JUVENILE CRIME

In his weekly Radio Address, President Clinton challenged Congress to pass a juvenile justice bill that is tough on gangs, tough on guns, and includes targeted crime prevention to stop crime before it starts:

- The President's Juvenile Justice legislation would declare war on gangs with new prosecutors and tougher penalties; extend the Brady Bill so that someone who commits a violent crime as a juvenile is barred from buying a gun as an adult; require child safety locks to be sold with guns, and keep schools open after hours and on weekends.
- Last week's House-passed Juvenile Justice bill falls far short of that goal, because it is weak on guns and does not include targeted crime prevention.
- President Clinton made a special call for his measures to cut off young people's access to guns, now the third leading cause of death for young people between the ages of 13 and 24: "Not a single hunter would lose a gun because of child safety locks...but countless young lives would be saved if stolen guns became useless guns."

TOMORROW: FIRST MEETING OF NEW HEALTH CARE COMMISSION

The President's new Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality in the Health Care Industry, co-chaired by HHS Secretary Shalala and Labor Secretary Herman, holds its first meeting tomorrow:

- The Commission will begin its work to develop a ■ Patient's Bill of Rights ■ so patients get the information and care they need when they need it, and to

recommend ways to ensure that the lower cost of many of today's health plans does not mean lower quality.

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TO: Elizabeth Drye DATE: 05/15/97
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MESSAGE:

Elizabeth: Per our discussion. Also attached is the release which GMA sent out about the FSI -you may have seen this already.

N.

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May 12, 1997

The Honorable Albert Gore, Jr.
Vice President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Vice President:

I did not get an opportunity to speak with you at today's White House briefing on the Food Safety Initiative, but wanted to convey on behalf of the Grocery Manufacturers of America our support for the Initiative. I have enclosed a copy of the statement we released today committing our organization to working with Secretary Shalala and Secretary Glickman to implement the Food Safety Initiative.

I want to commend the Administration for reaching out to a variety of sources including consumers and industry for input as the Initiative was being developed. I particularly want to single out the skill and dedication Elizabeth Dye brought to this project. She opened up the dialogue for all affected groups which resulted in a consensus program that will assure that we make the world's best food safety system even better.

Your remarks at today's meeting were very much on target in stressing the fine qualities of our current food safety system, and to reassure Americans that our food is safe, while at the same time setting high standards to further enhance food safety.

Best personal regards.

Sincerely,

C. Manly Molpus

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GMA ENDORSES WHITE HOUSE FOOD SAFETY INITIATIVE, CALLS FOR PUBLIC PRIVATE FOOD SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

WASHINGTON, DC ... May 12, 1997 ... Speaking at a White House ceremony today to mark President Bill Clinton's new Food Safety Initiative, Grocery Manufacturers of America (GMA) President and CEO C. Manly Molpus said, "Americans have the safest food supply in the world, but we can and must do more. This includes reinvigorating the food safety alliance between government, all levels of the food chain and consumers."

"We pledge to continue this public-private partnership to promote food safety from field to factory and from market to table," Molpus added. "GMA strongly supports key recommendations of the report: consumer food safety education, greater emphasis on risk assessment, improved ability to detect and control food safety problems, and closer coordination with state food safety activity. In these efforts, the Administration is very much on target."

"Representing the largest volume of food and beverage sales in the US, GMA will work with the administration to fine-tune our food safety system and assure the highest possible standards," Molpus explained.

"America's grocery manufacturers have an outstanding food safety record that includes a wide range of innovations and practices which set the foundation for today's initiative. In fact, consumers have a very high degree of confidence in national brand products. We look forward to working with the President, Vice President Gore, Secretaries Glickman and Shalala and EPA Administrator Browner through the Public-Private Partnership for Food Safety Education, an effort GMA already supports. National uniformity in labeling and assuring a strong Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition within the Food and Drug Administration, will also help promote public confidence in the nation's food supply," Molpus concluded.

GMA is the organization representing companies that make and market the world's best-known brands of food and consumer packaged goods. GMA is the industry voice on public policy and industry productivity issues, through strategic issues management involving government relations, communications, legal, regulatory, scientific and education advocacy. GMA member companies have sales of 400 billion dollars, representing the largest volume (90%) of all food and consumer packaged goods sold in the U.S.

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Elava/Bree - FII
 Mostly accurate
 Trade press story
 This same reporter broke the sarin's announcement and was picked up by 11 see what happens - 5/2/97

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Food safety initiative final version carries provisions for enhanced seafood surveillance, food safety council, education partnership, manure regulation and more

The seafood industry will see increased government attention on *Vibrio vulnificus* and the Norwalk virus if Congress approves funding for the multi-agency food safety initiative, sources told *Food Chemical News*. The final version of that initiative calls for increased surveillance for *Vibrio vulnificus* by CDC, FDA and states through boosts in personnel and epidemiological and lab resources.

That effort, detailed in a final version of the initiative submitted to President Clinton, would comprise an enhancement of the Gulf Coast *Vibrio vulnificus* surveillance program. The report, which is about 50 pages long, calls for research to develop new decontamination methods for such contaminants as *Vibrio* and Norwalk on seafood, as well as for hepatitis A on strawberries. The entire report emphasizes the need for research to find and improve pathogen detection methods. The federal agencies involved in the initiative are CDC, FDA, USDA and EPA.

One source close to the initiative noted that even if the government had known ahead of time about the hepatitis A recently linked to Mexican strawberries, the hepatitis A could not have been detected because the government lacks reliable methodology for such detection. Pathogen detection in the food supply is complicated by the fact that detection is different for almost every type of food. That is, detection of pathogens in milk is different from detection in berries, which is different from detection in meat, etc.

The White House was scheduled to announce the final version of the initiative April 29, but that was postponed due to conflicts with other White House press events. At press time, sources said that an announcement of the initiative by Vice President Al Gore was scheduled for May 12, but that date — and Gore's availability for the event — could change again.

(See FSI, Page 37)

May 5, 1997

FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS 37

"If ... improved objective performance standards can be crafted through additional, scientifically based rulemaking," Boyle added, "AMI will support and participate in those efforts."

Consumer groups not satisfied with spinal cord safety

On Monday, April 28, Billy and his colleagues in FSIS held another meeting focusing on AMR, this one with representatives from the consumer advocacy groups Public Voice, National Consumers League, Center for Science in the Public Interest, and the Safe Food Coalition.

The meeting was prefaced by an April 22 letter from NCL's Linda Golodner to Billy and Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman. NCL appears to be backing off its earlier demands that back and neck bones be kept out of AMR systems altogether, an action taken by Britain more than a year ago. Instead, Golodner suggested that USDA impose bone scoring requirements, "an iron limitation of not more than 2 mg per 100 g," a calcium test performed "after separator and before the desinewer" for a maximum level of 20 mg per 100 g, and a prohibition on presizing.

"Resolving the spinal cord and marrow issues through lengthy rulemaking procedures is unnecessary legally and represents an unacceptable abdication of responsibility," Golodner wrote. "The British waited much too long to act decisively and have paid a very dear price." NCL and other consumer groups are concerned that spinal cord in AMR meat may expose many American citizens to a higher risk of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies, Britain's deadly "mad cow disease."

At their meeting, the consumer groups reiterated these issues, focusing on the BSE risk from spinal cord. They cited risk factors, including the imports of British cattle into the U.S. in the 1980s, the imports of Mexican cattle into the U.S. that continue every year, and the limited resources FDA will have to enforce its proposed mammalian-to-ruminant feed ban.

According to one of the consumer group participants, the spinal cord directive will be "closing the barn door after the horse is out." Since spinal cord is only an economic

adulterant, not a health hazard, suspect product would go into distribution even if some of it is sent off for tests.

"We're not convinced that the directive itself will provide a complete assurance that spinal cord won't get into end products," one consumer advocate explained. The advocate noted, however, that the directive may be useful in putting pressure on industry to keep spinal cord out of AMR systems. "The next step is for us to meet with industry," the advocate said.

Under the terms of USDA's 1994 reorganization, FSIS cannot propose a "major regulation" dealing with human health or safety (changing the definition of meat to exclude spinal cord would qualify) without performing a risk assessment and cost-benefit analysis, which would take a minimum of six months to complete. The entire rulemaking process would last for one to two years. "They're doing the best that they can," the consumer advocate admitted.

On the bone marrow issue, the consumer groups requested that FSIS propose a rule aimed against "unacceptably high" marrow levels in AMR product. Bone scoring requirements might be used, as in NCL's proposal. But the performance standards proposed in Billy's letter to AMI may fulfill this request, one source said. "We'll wait to see what they come up with." (7FCN 1102, 3 pages, \$5, and 7FCN 1103, 2 pages, \$5)

— Wendy Love Anderson

(FSI, continued from Page 3)

The initiative is structurally the same as its draft predecessor, i.e., presented in seven sections, and most of the concepts from the draft survived in the final report (See *Food Chemical News*, April 7, Page 38).

Regulation of manure likely

Regulation of manure is likely in the near future, as the report cites the need to control the various ways that manure can contaminate the food supply. The report does not detail any manure regulations, but emphasizes that controls are needed.

The report also calls for the establishment of a National Council on Food Safety, which would include an independent scientific board to review food safety messages. The board would include representation from the scientific and academic communities and would use a risk-based methodology for prioritizing its work.

A public/private partnership for food safety education also would be established by the initiative, but details on that effort were sketchy. The report places new emphasis on education of health care professionals, a goal that was accentuated repeatedly by participants in a March 31-April 2 public meeting on the draft initiative. Health care professionals need to recognize foodborne illness, test for it and report it, the source said. The agencies will try to be "appropriately multilingual" in all public and educational efforts, the source said.

Egg and produce HACCP appear imminent

Egg HACCP and produce HACCP appear imminent, as the report indicates that regulatory options will be proposed for controlling pathogens in eggs and in fresh fruits and vegetables.

Federal outreach to states and cooperation with states are linchpins of the plan, and that strategy is in line with the federal government's need to share the resource burden for implementing the initiative.

Federal agencies must maintain a dialogue with all parties who have a stake in the initiative, in order to establish and follow a strategic plan for developing, implementing and reviewing the initiative's components, the report said.

It remains uncertain whether Congress will give the agencies the \$43 million requested for the initiative. While it is tough for any congressional members to argue against the concept of a safer food supply, Congress will be very wary in the current budgetary climate to approve new funding for projects.

— John Briley

Performance standards featured in FSIS regulatory agenda

The switch from requirements to performance standards, part of the "Reinventing Government" effort, dominates the semiannual regulatory agenda of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, published in the April 25 *Federal Register*.

No fewer than six proposed rules explicitly establish performance standards. In June, FSIS plans to give notice that it is establishing performance standards "for the production of certain meat and poultry products with established standards of identity. ...

Performance standards spell out the objective level of performance establishments must meet during their operations to produce safe products, but allow the use of customized, plant-specific processing procedures."

In this case, FSIS plans to establish food safety performance standards specific to the standards-of-identity products instead of relying on "statutory authorities, general regulations, regulations for similar products, or FSIS directives." Similarly, FSIS is developing new performance standards "to limit the amount of water absorbed and retained by single-ingredient raw meat and poultry products to the amount that is unavoidable in carrying out washing or chilling procedures." Water-added raw products may have to bear a label attesting to their absorbed water content, according to the proposal, which was scheduled for publication in April 1997.

In other cases, however, the agency is replacing its own specific regulations. For instance, proposed performance standards will replace "command-and-control" procedures for thermal processing of meat and poultry products; irradiation of poultry to control foodborne pathogens; handling, chilling and freezing of poultry; cutting carcasses into primal parts within an establishment; and preventing physical or chemical contamination of meat and poultry products and product ingredients.

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Date: 05/12/97 Time: 15:55

FNew rules for fruit, vegetable juices and egg products

WASHINGTON (AP) Fruit and vegetable juices and egg products must be certified as safe all the way from farm to grocery store under new Clinton administration rules unveiled Monday to improve the safety of the nation's foods.

"Our food supply is the safest in the world," Vice President Al Gore said in presenting the \$43.2 million, five-point program. But, he added, "the nation has much more to do."

Millions of Americans each year are stricken by illness caused by the food they consume, and about 9,000 a year mostly the very young and the elderly die as a result, officials say.

Among recent problems: several hundred Michigan schoolchildren struck by the hepatitis A virus after eating contaminated frozen strawberries in a school lunch program.

And at least 49 people have been sickened recently after drinking trendy, unpasteurized fruit juices, contaminated with the virulent E. coli bacteria.

"We're not raising the food safety victory flag yet," said Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala.

The government is still studying whether to require pasteurization of fruit juices, officials said.

President Clinton requested a study of needed steps in January and asked Congress to appropriate the money necessary to carry out recommendations. The report calls for:

Improved inspections and expanded preventive safety measures, including \$8.5 million for additional Food and Drug Administration inspectors. In addition, fruit and vegetable juices and egg products will be included among the seafood, meat and poultry products subject to the safety tracking system.

A \$4 million national education campaign by the Agriculture Department and the FDA to improve food handling in homes, restaurants and stores.

Increased research, costing \$16.5 million, to develop new tests to detect food-borne pathogens, some of which cannot be detected in many foods.

Creation of an intergovernmental group to improve federal, state and local coordination when illnesses break out.

Spending \$13.7 million to build a national early-warning system to detect and respond to outbreaks.

Under the new juice and egg rules, companies must prove they have prevented contamination at every step of production, from harvesting to sales. A similar system now governs seafood and meat companies.

The Safe Food Coalition, a group of consumer and public interest groups, praised the new rules but said additional measures still are needed.

The group wants the appointment of a presidential commission to find the best organizational structure to ensure food safety.

"Food-borne illness is an issue that has been shoved to the back of the shelf for far too long," said coordinator Carol Tucker Foreman, a former Agriculture Department assistant secretary.

Right now, FDA and Agriculture share main responsibility.

APNP-05-12-97 1609EDT



Toby Donenfeld @ OVP

05/12/97 04:59:32 PM



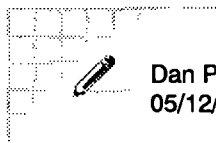
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Subject: reuters story

Monday May 12 4:10 PM EDT

U.S. Unveils New Food Safety Initiative

WASHINGTON (Reuter) – The Clinton administration Monday proposed hiring more seafood inspectors and tightening safety precautions for fruit and vegetable juices as part of a new plan to improve U.S. food safety.

"When children reach for a piece of food, parents deserve to have peace of mind," Vice President Al Gore said at a news conference. "Today's report outlines a series of aggressive measures that combat the hidden dangers and make sure that the food Americans eat is healthy and safe."

In January, alarmed at a deadly bacteria that turned up in apple juice, President Clinton asked the Food and Drug Administration, the Agriculture Department and the Environmental Protection Agency to report back with ways to strengthen the safety of the food supply. He requested \$43.2 million in his 1998 budget to fund the initiative.

In their plan unveiled Monday, the three departments also proposed increasing FDA's surveillance of imported foods. More than 170 Michigan schoolchildren and teachers got sick with the virus hepatitis A this spring after eating tainted strawberries which were grown in Mexico.

The administration also wants to boost research for new tests to detect contamination and to launch a nationwide food safety education campaign in partnership with industry.

Congress must still provide the funding for the food safety initiative and administration officials expressed confidence they would get the financial go-ahead.

"I think this is one of the areas we will get the support for," Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman told reporters. "We're going to push."

Over 9,000 Americans die each year from foodborne illness and experts predict the numbers could climb by 10 to 15 percent over the next decade. As Americans dine out more they are more likely to be exposed to foodborne illness. And an explosion of imports of fresh fruits, vegetables and meat has put pressure on the system.

Deadly bacteria have been cropping up unexpectedly. Last year, a child died and 50 other people got sick in an outbreak of the virulent E.coli O157:H7 bacteria linked to unpasteurized apple juice.

The administration's new food safety plan would apply the cutting-edge Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles to fruit and vegetable juice manufacture.

Consumer groups praised the initiative.

"Foodborne illness is an issue that has been shoved to the back of the shelf for far too long," said Carol Tucker Foreman, former assistant secretary of Agriculture and head of a coalition of labor unions and consumer groups.

"The Clinton-Gore Administration has dragged it out of the cupboard, tossed out old, ineffectual methods and applied the disinfectant of good modern science to fight food poisoning," she said.

Date: 05/12/97 Time: 15:55

FNew rules for fruit, vegetable juices and egg products

WASHINGTON (AP) Fruit and vegetable juices and egg products must be certified as safe all the way from farm to grocery store under new Clinton administration rules unveiled Monday to improve the safety of the nation's foods.

``Our food supply is the safest in the world,'' Vice President Al Gore said in presenting the \$43.2 million, five-point program. But, he added, ``the nation has much more to do.''

Millions of Americans each year are stricken by illness caused by the food they consume, and about 9,000 a year mostly the very young and the elderly die as a result, officials say.

Among recent problems: several hundred Michigan schoolchildren struck by the hepatitis A virus after eating contaminated frozen strawberries in a school lunch program.

And at least 49 people have been sickened recently after drinking trendy, unpasteurized fruit juices, contaminated with the virulent E. coli bacteria.

``We're not raising the food safety victory flag yet,'' said Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala.

The government is still studying whether to require pasteurization of fruit juices, officials said.

President Clinton requested a study of needed steps in January and asked Congress to appropriate the money necessary to carry out recommendations. The report calls for:

Improved inspections and expanded preventive safety measures, including \$8.5 million for additional Food and Drug Administration inspectors. In addition, fruit and vegetable juices and egg products will be included among the seafood, meat and poultry products subject to the safety tracking system.

A \$4 million national education campaign by the Agriculture Department and the FDA to improve food handling in homes, restaurants and stores.

Increased research, costing \$16.5 million, to develop new tests to detect food-borne pathogens, some of which cannot be detected in many foods.

Creation of an intergovernmental group to improve federal, state and local coordination when illnesses break out.

Spending \$13.7 million to build a national early-warning system to detect and respond to outbreaks.

Under the new juice and egg rules, companies must prove they have prevented contamination at every step of production, from harvesting to sales. A similar system now governs seafood and meat companies.

The Safe Food Coalition, a group of consumer and public interest groups, praised the new rules but said additional measures still are needed.

The group wants the appointment of a presidential commission to find the best organizational structure to ensure food safety.

``Food-borne illness is an issue that has been shoved to the back of the shelf for far too long,'' said coordinator Carol Tucker Foreman, a former Agriculture Department assistant secretary.

Right now, FDA and Agriculture share main responsibility.

APNP-05-12-97 1609EDT

House Plans \$43.2 Million Effort High Court Boost Protection of U.S. Food Supply Backs Workers On Benefits

By BRUCE INGERSOLL

WASHINGTON — The Clinton administration proposed tightening inspection of ports and hiring more seafood inspectors under an elaborate plan to protect U.S. consumers against food poisoning. The five-point, \$43.2 million plan, announced by Vice President Al Gore, is pending on congressional approval. "Children reach for a piece of food, it's deserve to have peace of mind," President Gore said. The plan "outlines a series of aggressive measures to combat the hidden dangers, and to be sure that the food Americans eat is healthy and safe." The administration, he said, is seeking extra \$16.5 million for development of new tests to detect food-borne pathogens, such as the virus hepatitis and cyclospora. It also intends to step up the inspection of food imports — including fruit and vegetables — which have doubled in volume in just five years. This spring, more than 170 Michigan children and teachers were stricken with hepatitis A after eating tainted strawberries from Mexico.

The plan would provide the Food and Drug Administration with an additional \$8.5 million for more inspectors to oversee the use of a new hazard analysis and control system at U.S. seafood plants. The agency is mulling a regulatory plan to introduce the same system to the fruit and juice industries. Last year, one child died and 50 other consumers fell ill in an outbreak of E. coli 0157:H7, a virulent bacteria linked to unpasteurized apple juice.

More than 9,000 Americans die each year from food-borne illness. "That is totally unacceptable," Mr. Gore said.

The White House ceremony, which was attended by consumer advocates and relatives of several food-poisoning victims, was clearly designed to prod Republican lawmakers into approving fiscal 1998 budget increases for the FDA and the Agriculture Department.

"I think this is one of the areas we will get support for," Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman said. "We're going to push."

The administration's plan — first broached by President Clinton in a January radio address — was endorsed yesterday by the Grocery Manufacturers of America and the National Food Processors Association. "We will work with the administration to fine-tune our food-safety system and assure the highest possible standards," said Manly Molpus, spokesman for the Grocery Manufacturers.

Consumer groups welcomed the initiative. "Food-borne illness is an issue that has been shoved to the back of the shelf for far too long," said Carol Tucker Foreman, coordinator of the Safe Food Coalition. "However, [it] is more a catch-up effort than a coherent plan for the future. It offers a patchwork of old organizational responses when a new pattern is needed."

Mrs. Foreman, a former assistant secretary of Agriculture, urged the administration to continue relying on meat and poultry inspectors and FDA inspectors as "the first line of defense against food-borne illness," until new approaches prove effective.

By EDWARD FELSENTHAL
Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court, clarifying federal benefits protections, ruled that companies can't discharge workers just to cut the cost of providing health and other benefits.

The justices said the main federal benefits law, which had previously been applied to pension plans, also covers other kinds of benefits, from health and disability insurance to school-scholarship programs.

Business groups had argued that such a ruling would prohibit employers from considering the costs of benefits in making decisions such as whether to close plants, outsource or divest themselves of subsidiaries. But groups representing workers said Congress wanted to restrict companies' ability to interfere with benefits that employees rely on.

"From the employee and participant point of view, [the ruling] was very important," said Mary Ellen Signorille, a lawyer for the American Association of Retired Persons, which filed a brief supporting workers. If the court had ruled otherwise, "there would be the potential for employers and plan sponsors to discriminate against people" by discharging employees whose medical benefits are high.

The "plain language" of the law explicitly applies to any benefit plan, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wrote in the opinion for a unanimous court. "Had Congress intended to confine [the law's] protection," she said, "it could have easily substituted the term 'pension plan' for words that refer broadly to benefit plans."

The case was filed by former employees of Santa Fe Terminal Services Inc. who transferred cargo between railcars and trucks at a rail yard. In 1990, Santa Fe's parent, the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway, opened the yard work to competitive bidding. When another company won the contract, Santa Fe workers were faced with the option of working for the new company, which offered reduced benefits, or being laid off. The workers charged that contracting out the work was a way for Santa Fe to get out of providing benefits it had promised under a collective-bargaining agreement.

The federal appeals court in San Francisco had ruled that the workers could sue over the loss of pension benefits but not other benefits. The difference, the appeals court said, was that pension benefits "vest," meaning workers have a legally enforceable right to collect them.

The Supreme Court rejected that distinction. Justice O'Connor added that companies have broad rights to reduce or even eliminate health and other nonpension

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benefits. But she said that flexibility doesn't allow companies to discriminate against some workers by firing them to cut benefits.

Atchison Topeka is a unit of Santa Fe Pacific Corp., Schaumburg, Ill. (*Inter-Modal Rail Employees vs. Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway*).

In other Supreme Court actions:

- The White House asked the justices to overturn a lower court decision ordering government lawyers to give Whitewater Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr access to confidential notes from interviews with Hillary Rodham Clinton. The White House petition says the ruling by the federal appeals court in St. Louis "turns a blind eye to legal and political realities."

and would compromise officials' ability to confide in government lawyers. (*Office of the President vs. Office of Independent Counsel*)

- The justices, without comment, declined to review a ruling that upheld the Clinton administration's "don't ask, don't tell" policy on gays in the military. This was the second time the high court has refused to review a gay serviceman's challenge to the policy, which was adopted in 1993 and has been upheld by several courts. (*Selland vs. Cohen*)

WSJ Journal Link: For the full text of the ERISA Supreme Court decision, see The Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition at <http://wsj.com>

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
TUESDAY, MAY 13, 1997

In Washington, Money Chase Shows No Sign of Slowing

By PHIL KUNTZ

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

WASHINGTON—When the Republican National Committee's major donors gather tonight at the Washington Hilton for a huge fund-raising gala, some of those with the deepest pockets will be offered a special perk: dinner with "the VIP of your choice."

One of the VIPs will be Sen. John McCain, who will enter the hotel as hecklers across the street wave a "politicians for sale" banner and throw "fat cat" cash at passers by. The protest is being waged by Common Cause and other groups fighting an uphill battle to overhaul the campaign finance system. Their top ally in the Senate is a certain Republican from Arizona: Mr. McCain.

"Of course I don't like it," says Mr. McCain of his role in the black-tie event. He adds, "The whole system makes me uncomfortable [but] I can't support unilateral disarmament."

The current uproar about foreign and otherwise improper donations to the Democratic Party and, more recently but to a lesser extent, to the Republican party has done little to slow the money chase in Washington. Nor has it spurred either party's leaders to push very hard for revamping the rules.

Slamming Republicans

President Clinton and other top Democrats occasionally slam Republicans for not bringing overhaul bills to the floor. But the subject hasn't even come up at private weekly meetings where the White House and congressional Democrats plot legislative strategy. As for Republicans, Mr. McCain was appointed to a Senate GOP task force to study the issue, but it's dominated by members such as Mitch McConnell of Kentucky who have little interest in a major overhaul.

"I think the progress has been, to be charitable, less than rapid," says Mr. McCain.

He and Democratic Sen. Russ Feingold of Wisconsin are cosponsoring the main overhaul bill, which would entice candidates to limit spending with cheap rates for campaign commercials. But it so far has failed to gain more than a handful of GOP co-sponsors in either chamber. Mr. McConnell and other critics say the bill unconstitutionally tramples candidates' free-speech rights. And a significant number of Democrats, especially in the House, don't like its limits on giving by political-action committees.

A Derailed Train

Mr. McCain's chief campaign-overhaul ally in the House, Republican Rep. Chris Shays of Connecticut, had expressed confidence earlier this year that GOP leaders would move a bill, but now says he feels the issue is like a derailed train. "In my opinion, the Democrats would like to tank this and blame the Republicans," he says, "and the Republican leadership would rather take the blame than have the reform."

Both men predict that this summer's House and Senate hearings into campaign improprieties will produce enough heat to get things moving, if only to ban the large, unregulated donations to parties known as "soft money." Mr. McCain says recent revelations that the RNC accepted foreign donations also will increase pressure as Democrats continue to insist that the GOP be investigated too.

The Democrats received new ammunition yesterday when it was disclosed that the Internal Revenue Service had rejected an RNC-affiliated, nonprofit think-tank's request for tax-exempt status as being too partisan. The National Policy Forum, financed with millions of dollars in undisclosed donations, is under scrutiny for getting financial help from a Hong Kong businessman.

Business as Usual

But Mr. McCain's hopes for the hearings could be dashed by delays, unavailable witnesses and the White House's strategy of publicly releasing — and casting in the most favorable light — damning subpoenaed documents before Congress can make hay of them.

As for tonight's GOP gala, Mr. Shays says, "it signals that for the leadership, it's business as usual." Indeed, Republican National Committee Chairman Jim Nicholson says the event "will break its \$11.3 million goal." (That figure is somewhat inflated; the party counts most high-dollar donations since the beginning of the year toward the gala total.)

The RNC says that upward of 70% of its money comes from small donors, but a significant portion is raised at \$1,000-a-plate events like tonight's. Dirk Van Dongen, a lobbyist for the National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors, helped raise \$1.6 million for the event. That earned him a seat at the head table, breakfast and a photograph with Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott and House Speaker Newt Gingrich, lunch with congressional leaders and a committee chairman "of your choice" and a private reception with Republican governors.

How did he do it?

Memos by Mr. Van Dongen show he put together a team of 36 people, mostly Washington lobbyists, and persuaded them to agree to raise \$30,000, \$45,000 or \$100,000 each. To prod them on, he encouraged

them to take advantage of an upscale boiler room of sorts the RNC set up in a Capitol Hill hotel on two days recently. Twenty phones, RNC aides and prospecting lists were available so the lobbyists could spend up to several hours focused solely on "dialing for dollars."

On several occasions, Mr. Van Dongen sent his team memos on the progress each had made.

Last week's memo was a pat on the back for people like Sam Brunelli, a former Denver Broncos football player who is now a Washington consultant for RJR Nabisco Holdings Corp.'s R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. and other corporate clients. He promised to raise \$100,000 and has more than doubled that. Mr. Brunelli says the recent controversy hasn't hurt fund-raising one bit: "The only thing that I find is that a lot of people felt that with the unions out there giving money, maybe we're going to have to give more."

On the other hand, people like James Miller, a lobbyist for a variety of corporations and trade groups, were not-so-subtly told to get with it. Last week, Mr. Miller was \$65,000 short of his \$100,000 commitment. "I practice law, and I lobby and the

amount of time I can devote to fund-raising is limited," he explained late last week. "I'm going to be on the phone the next three days and try to meet my goal."

Variety of Excuses

Other underperformers, including some younger lobbyists recruited by Mr. Van Dongen, privately offer a variety of excuses: Some donors are publicity-shy in the midst of the current uproar, an issue that is apparently a bigger problem for the Democrats, who struggled to raise \$4 mil-

lion at their spring gala. Others prefer to give to the annual fund-raiser for the House and Senate GOP campaign committees, which is next month, because powerful lawmakers are more apt to notice.

Lobbyist Nancy Dorn, who was listed last week as not having raised anything toward her \$45,000 commitment, says she never really meant to promise anything. Why was her name on the list? In fund-raising, as with many things, she says, "I guess hope springs eternal."

Give Enough and You Shall Receive

Here are perks offered in connection with the 1997 Republican National Committee's fund-raising gala tonight, based on the total amount an individual either gives or raises:

\$250,000	■ Dais seating at gala	\$100,000	■ Preferential seating at gala dinner with "VIP of your choice"
■ Breakfast and photo opportunity with Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott and House Speaker Newt Gingrich		■ Otherwise same as for \$250,000 total	
■ Luncheon with GOP Senate and House Leadership and GOP Senate and House Committee chairman "of your choice"		\$45,000	■ Same as for \$100,000 total excluding breakfast and photo opportunity
■ Private pre-gala reception with GOP governors		\$15,000	■ Preferential seating with choice of VIP
			■ VIP reception at gala with GOP members of Senate and House leadership

Source: Republican National Committee

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
TUESDAY, MAY 13, 1997

'All-Out Assault' Planned To Improve Food Safety

\$43 Million Initiative Follows Several Outbreaks of Illness

By John Schwartz
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Clinton administration yesterday proposed a \$43 million plan to improve the safety of the American food supply.

If fully funded by Congress, the initiative could help prevent some of the nearly 9,000 food-poisoning deaths that occur annually in the United States, administration officials said.

The plan calls for instituting high-tech food inspection and monitoring systems from farm to market, educating food industries and consumers about how to more safely process and prepare food, and creating a nationwide network of food safety "sentinel sites" to quicken and improve the government's reaction to disease outbreaks.

"When children reach for a piece of food, parents deserve to have peace of mind," Vice President Gore said at a news conference announcing the five-step proposal. The program would use \$43.2 million in the fiscal 1998 budget.

The plan comes in response to a string of incidents involving food-borne illness, including an outbreak of *E. coli* in hamburger served by Jack-In-The-Box restaurants in 1993 and in apple juice distributed by Odwalla last year. A cryptosporidium outbreak in Milwaukee's water supply in 1993, which sickened hundreds of thousands of people, and cyclospora on imported raspberries last year also heightened public concerns.

President Clinton announced in January that he would request \$43.2 million for food safety initiatives in the coming budget and called for a report from the Agriculture Department, Health and Human Services and the Environmental Protection Agency that would draw together recommendations on ways to improve the food safety system. That 50-page report was released yesterday.

HHS Secretary Donna E. Shalala said that although the U.S. food supply is the world's safest, "an all-out assault" on food health risks was still needed. She called the announcement "a very special public health victory."

The administration's approach is a combination of wide-ranging moves and tinkering with existing food safety measures.

The cornerstone of the effort is broad implementation of a science-based food safety and inspection system called Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point systems (HACCP). The system, developed within the food-processing industries, is based on seven principles, which begin with identifying likely hazards in a product and finding "critical control

points" in food preparation processes where the hazards can be headed off. HACCP then calls for safety measures to prevent the hazards, and monitoring to make sure the safety measures are working, as well as detailed record-keeping to trace problems when they do occur.

The administration's new food safety plan would allow the Food and Drug Administration to add inspectors to its HACCP inspection team, and to expand its program to better monitor the safety of imports, officials said.

The FDA first implemented HACCP in 1994 when the agency announced plans to apply the rules to seafood. The Agriculture Department followed with a 1996 HACCP plan that would cover meat and poultry. Yesterday, Gore announced that the FDA would extend the use of HACCP system oversight to fruit and vegetable juices.

The administration also provided further details on the National Early Warning System Clinton announced in January.

The growing FoodNet monitoring system already has new "sentinel sites" in New York and Maryland, which brings the current total to seven. These sites are part of an emerging national network designed to detect food-borne outbreaks of disease early and to test contaminated foods to find the source of each outbreak quickly.

The administration plan also calls for increased funding for research that could lead to better tests for contaminants such as *E. coli*, salmonella, cryptosporidium and hepatitis A, which was discovered in shipments of Mexican strawberries earlier this year. The research would also help explain how pathogens become resistant to antibiotics and get around other safety measures.

John Cady, head of the National Food Processors Association, said his member companies had worked "long and hard" with the government to help come up with the plan.

"We look at this as a plus for consumers, a plus for industry and a plus for government," he said. But he criticized any plan to pay for such a program with fees on industry, saying it should come from general appropriations.

Consumer advocates hailed the plan.

"It's not perfect, but it's a great start," said Heather Klinkhamer, program director for Safe Tables Our Priority, a food safety advocacy group that was formed in the wake of the 1993 hamburger incidents, which resulted in hundreds of cases of illness and four deaths. "The tone of government on food safety has changed significantly—it's such a difference since we started almost five years ago."

The Washington Post

TUESDAY, MAY 13, 1997

Saying Farewell to College-Bound Children

By Joan Mitric

Special to The Washington Post

Nothing can be more traumatic than the lump-in-the-throat anxiety a parent feels on the first day of preschool as the teacher peels your child off your leg and whisks her into the Learning Center. Right?

Well, not necessarily. Try preparing her for college.

Each fall, about 2.2 million American teenagers leave home for the first time to enroll in college, according to the Department of Education.

"It's worse than dropping them at day care," said M.J. Canale of Northwest Washington. "At least back then you were in control and you knew you'd see them at the end of the day. When they leave for college, you're not sure they will come back or that anything will ever be quite the same again."

High school seniors and their parents, including the family living at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, are gearing up for a major change in their lives and their relationships. As these soon-to-be graduates made their decisions about colleges, many struck a blow for independence, and it is transition that can be difficult for even the most understanding parents. Consider Bill and Hillary Clinton's reactions to daughter Chelsea's announcement that she will attend Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif.—an entire continent away from Washington.

"Well, the planes run out there and the phones work out there. The e-mail works out there. So we'll be all right," her father announced. Her mother's reactions were more subdued. "I'm lining up all the support systems I can in the Palo Alto area," she was quoted as saying. "It's so far away."

Jayne Bridge-Taylor, who runs a catering business in Northwest Washington, remembers wearing dark glasses to the grocery store to hide the fact that she had been crying the week her son left for college in upstate New York. Anne Scoffier, a World Bank staffer and mother of three college-age sons, said she was "totally excited" dropping her first-born off at Yale University until "that last walk across the Quad and waving goodbye. Then it hit me like a ton of bricks." Soon, Scoffier was a basket case. She pulled off the highway and took refuge in a McDonald's. No sooner had she slid into a booth when another red-eyed woman spotted her, came over and asked, "Have you also just left someone?" The two strangers consoled each other over a cup of coffee and then parted ways.

For some families, the sense of impending loss and mourning can start weeks before graduation.

In fact, many psychologists and counselors recognize the last year of high school as a traumatic and psychologically difficult time for families. Most area schools try to offer coping strategies to seniors while they make their final college choices and get ready to say goodbye to familiar hallways and high school sweethearts.

Some even offer "separation seminars" for seniors and their parents as preparation for emptying the nest.

"I've seen parents go through great withdrawal when a child leaves," said Jack McKeon, a counselor at Paint Branch High School in Montgomery County who has guided families through this transition for more than 20 years.



ASSOCIATED PRESS/STANFORD DAILY, LAURA HESTER

Come fall, Chelsea Clinton will be off to Stanford University; last September she and her mother toured the campus with student Jenny Abramson.

Still, most parents and children handle the transition well, taking pride in the student moving on to a new, exciting time of life. And for some parents, there is even a bit of relief that some of the intensity of parenting is lifted. After all, when the phone rings, it might actually be for the parent. And weekends can focus on something other than school and sports events. For most families, the difficulties are greatest when the first or the last child leaves home, McKeon and other counselors said.

Judith Viorst, the author of "Necessary Losses," a psychological study of human development and the losses that occur in life, said most families "will tell you that preparing a child to leave for college is a wrenching experience," no matter how solid the parent-child bond.

"Separation and loss are part of the requirements of life. You cannot be fully human unless you experience these feelings," Viorst said. "But it can hurt, it's difficult; it's scary. If you're a kid, you wonder if you will make it. If you're the one left at home, you may feel deprived. . . . But separation is a crucial stage

in the development of the parent-child relationship."

The situation is compounded because parents at midlife are especially vulnerable as they take inventory of their own accomplishments and dreams. "Just as their children are going off to explore the world, parents are coming face-to-face with their own physical and intellectual limitations," said family counselor Madge Lawrence Treeger of St. Louis.

Treeger, a coauthor of the book "Letting Go: A Parents' Guide to Understanding the College Years," said: "More than anything, senior year is about ambivalence. Parents and children are both trying to maintain the relationship they had since childhood and shift it to adulthood."

One school that takes this developmental milestone seriously is the Maret School in Northwest Washington. Since about 1984, the school has run a special "separation seminar" each year in January for seniors and their parents.

It all started in the late 1970s, when Maret faculty and administrators tried to figure out what to do about some second-semester seniors

who appeared distracted or mildly depressed, said Leonard King, dean of seniors.

What King and others noticed was more the so-called "Senior Slump," which often undermines serious work the last semester of high school. "We saw kids test a favorite teacher or coach or begin to wonder aloud why they hadn't applied somewhere closer to home," he said.

Enlisting the help of psychiatrist Michael Brody and his wife, Shelly, who taught cent psychology at the school, Maret put together a format for the seminar, which became its own senior-year tradition.

The seminar opens with a short talk to the ice and let parents and seniors know that they are not alone. "It just plugs into where people are," said Brody, who goes through a litany of behaviors typical of seniors facing imminent departure. He also encourages parents to let go: to stop doing laundry, making canceling appointments, paying their kids' parking tickets and library fines or calling their college counselors for them. "Kids need to be making some judgments by now. They also need to have a sense of financial insecurity," he said.

He even suggests second semester is a good time to stop setting curfews, an idea that is obviously very popular with seniors but angers many parents.

Brody said the idea is to get parents to acknowledge that soon they won't have any control over the what, where and when of their child's life. "I tell seniors to consult their parents and to be considerate in making curfew decisions," he said.

At one point during the assembly, parents and seniors separate to discuss issues that are giving them the most trouble. During this time apart both groups are also asked to answer questions such as:

- What do you think will happen to your child's room/your parents?
- What excites you most about going to college/your child leaving?
- What is the worst thing about going/seeing your child leave?
- What is the best/worst thing about the extra freedom/responsibilities you or your child will have?
- If there is one thing you could tell your senior/parent, what would it be?

The groups come back together and the answers are summarized and shared, especially the last one.

"Invariably we hear a strange mix of humor and pathos, love and anxiety," King said. Parents typically stress personal safety while kids worry about the social adjustment to college.

Some kids tell their parents, "Don't get divorced"; others say, "Don't change my room or throw away my baseball card collection."

Basically, the purpose of the seminar is to get all the ambivalent feelings on the table and "to start a dialogue that will continue in the car on the way home," King said.

King speaks from experience. When he got home after his freshman year, his mother had taken down his beloved basketball hoop and instead put a pool table in the room. "I didn't have a room anymore or a place to hang out with my friends," he recalled. "And I didn't even like to play pool."

The Washington Post

TUESDAY, MAY 13, 1997

White House seeks \$43 million for safer juices

By Samuel Goldreich
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

After several bacterial outbreaks that have sickened children and adults across the nation, the White House has proposed a \$43 million initiative to make foods and juices safer.

The effort has the backing of consumer and industry groups, but it could fall apart over a dispute on funding that has been complicated by the lack of details in the budget accord struck by President Clinton and Republican leaders.

"Today, we're able to act to protect our children from invisible hazards in their food," Vice President Al Gore said yesterday as he unveiled a report to the president recommending a five-point plan to improve food safety.

The study would require the juice industry to set up a means of inspecting and testing for contamination and allow federal inspectors to ensure the rules are followed. It would mirror food-safety practices in place for meat, poultry and seafood.

The Agriculture Department has also proposed extending the safety program to cover egg products, and the Food and Drug Administration has recommended that all juice be pasteurized, a step that the fresh-juice industry says could threaten its existence.

Millions of Americans become sick each year from eating tainted foods, according to the report to the president. As many as 9,000, most of them very young or old, die as a result of complications from food-borne diseases. Most recently, hundreds of Michigan schoolchildren and teachers were stricken with the hepatitis A virus last month when they ate contaminated frozen strawberries.

The new safety program is based on the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) program, which is used in other industries. The proposal to extend it to the juice industry was praised by industry and consumer representatives alike during a White House news conference.

"Food-borne illness is an issue that has been shoved to the back of the shelf for too long," said Carol Tucker Foreman, coordinator of the Safe Food Coalition and a former assistant secretary of agriculture.

"The Clinton-Gore administration has dragged it out of the cupboard, tossed out old, ineffectual methods, and applied the disinfectant of good modern science to fight food poisoning."

Expanding the safety program will allow industry to develop the best controls where they are most needed, said John Cady, the president of the National Food Processors Association.

"Our goal is to get HACCP in every processing plant where it's needed

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through standards developed by industry associations, not government," he said.

But even before leaving the White House, Mr. Cady objected to Mr. Clinton's plans to finance the program, which appears to be intertwined with his proposal to support FDA research by imposing user fees on the food industry.

"We cannot agree to user fees," Mr. Cady said. "We don't get any use out of the FDA. If their research is so important, then it should be part of the regular budget appropriation."

That's exactly what the White House intended by coordinating the food-safety news conference with an announcement that Sen. Spencer Abraham, Michigan Republican, and Rep. Vic Fazio, California Democrat, will lead appropriations support for the \$43 million program.

"We expect to get strong support on Capitol Hill," Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman said. "Food safety is a bipartisan issue."

Money for the program will be raised under the routine Agriculture Department appropriations process, Mr. Fazio said. But he warned that the administration will have a hard time imposing new user-fees, whatever their purpose.

Mr. Gore said the money Mr. Clinton asked for in his budget message in March was part of the deal he struck with GOP leaders last month.

But the appropriations request cannot be separated from the user fees because Mr. Clinton also proposes reducing the FDA's budget by the same amount, said a Republican aide to the House Ways and Means Committee.

"The climate is going to be real cool to any revenue raising over here," the aide said.

The Safe Food Coalition agrees that user fees should not be imposed to support the food initiative.

"We urge Congress to provide the \$43 million requested for the initiative and to do so without resorting to user fees," Ms. Foreman said. "It would simply undercut the confidence that the initiative is intended to be bringing to the American public if the industry was paying for its own inspections through user fees."

The Washington Times

TUESDAY, MAY 13, 1997

MAKING FOOD SAFER

The White House has proposed a \$43 million safety initiative intended to reduce illness-causing bacteria in juice and other foods. The plan calls for:

- Adding inspections. The Food and Drug Administration would hire more inspectors for seafood plants and expand preventive measures already in place in the meat, poultry and seafood industries to cover fruit and vegetable juices.
- Increasing research. Federal agencies and local food safety officials would find ways to detect the Hepatitis A virus, cyclospora and other pathogens.
- Establishing an early warning system. The FDA, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Centers for Disease Control will expand from 5 to 8 the number of regional "sentinel sites" that identify foodborne diseases and warn the nation about their causes.
- Educating food handlers. Federal safety officials and the Department of Education will join industry and consumer groups in teaching food workers and the public how to avoid the spread of bacteria.
- Improving coordination among agencies. The USDA, FDA, CDC and the Environmental Protection Agency will create a task force to develop a strategic plan for responding to outbreaks of disease.

Consultants' work slammed

Memo cites a lack of bang for the buck

By Vincent S. Morris
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

D.C. Office of Budget and Planning managers warned in February that the city was getting only a "marginal" return on some of the \$11.9 million in consulting contracts awarded by Chief Financial Officer Anthony A. Williams.

Four managers of the office said Philadelphia-based Public Financial Management Inc., which was hired to help the city prepare its annual budget, had provided only proofreading, desktop publishing and maintaining a "model" for writing the budget.

"We have found PFM's contribution in analyzing our budget and our programs to be very marginal, at best. Their consultants have visited with us... and have generally faded away," the four said in a memo to Jalal Greene, a top deputy to Mr. Williams.

"In general, [PFM's] entire approach to our budget has been superficial, and has lacked the depth of analysis and breadth of ideas that one would normally expect from a firm with PFM's reputation. Clearly such non-innovation is unacceptable," it said. "Paying consultants to proof-read and produce budget narratives, two tasks which can be clearly done in-house, is not a wise use of hard-earned District dollars."

But PFM officials defended their performance yesterday and Mr. Williams defended his heavy use of consultants.

The Washington Times first reported Saturday that since he came to work for the District 19 months ago, Mr. Williams has paid 13 consulting and law firms nearly \$11.9 million.

Many of the contracts — his staff has not been able to say exactly which ones — were executed on a sole-source basis without the customary competitive bidding process. And many of them went to the same company.

For example, Arthur Andersen & Co. got 45 contracts valued at \$3.8 million from Mr. Williams' office. KPMG Peat Marwick received 10 contracts worth \$1.7 million.

Those totals do not include all of the contracts executed by the D.C. inspector general, the D.C. schools or other parts of the city government outside Mr. Williams' domain.

Mr. Williams says the consulting is justified as part of a larger effort to restore order and stability to the District's dysfunctional financial system. He says the consulting tab will level off as he installs a basic framework for guiding the city's fiscal operations.

"It's been ready, fire, aim on a lot of these things," said Mr. Williams. "I've had to do this on the run. When you do it that way, you end up with a lot of contracting."

The memo complaining about PFM was signed by four employees of the Office of Budget and Planning, including budget analyst Charles Jefferson, a 23-year employee of the District who has worked in several city agencies. He said yesterday that he stands by the message of the memo, but that overall he thinks PFM helped the District.

"The proof was in the final package. It was a good product," said Mr. Jefferson.

F. John White, the chief executive officer of PFM, yesterday defended his firm's performance and said its work is critical to helping the city get its budget in



Anthony A. Williams

order.

"We are providing a hard-edge analysis of what the financial problems are for the long-term basis," said Mr. White. "I don't want to sound boastful but we've contributed a lot to this process."

PFM, founded in 1975, is best known for its work with local governments and counts the cities of Philadelphia, Miami and New Haven, Conn., as clients, in addition to the District. It has 155 employees in 14 offices around the country.

It was co-founded by G. Edward DeSeves, the comptroller of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, who has recently played a key role in shaping President Clinton's proposed \$3.9 billion aid package for the D.C. government. Mr. DeSeves was dispatched on several occasions to the Wilson Building to lobby local officials to sign the memorandum of understanding on Mr. Clinton's plan.

A divided D.C. Council grudgingly agreed to sign on to that memorandum late Friday, although it differed with the White House plan to phase out the annual federal payment to the District in exchange for a federal takeover of some city services.

The Washington Times

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