Safe Food Council

SAFE FOOD COALITION

888 Seventeenth Street, NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20006 (202) 822-8060

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
AUGUST 25, 1998

CONTACT: Christopher Gould
202/822-8060

SAFE FOOD COALITION PRAISES ADMINISTRATION'S FOOD SAFETY COUNCIL; CALLS FOR CONGRESS TO ACT

(WASHINGTON) The Safe Food Coalition today praised the Clinton Administration for its decision to create a President's Council on Food Safety and urged Congress to act on recommendations by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to designate a single federal official with responsibility for federal food safety activities.

"The Clinton Administration has done an excellent job in raising the public policy profile of food safety issues," said Carol Tucker Foreman, Coordinator of the Safe Food Coalition and former Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Food and Consumer Services. "The food safety council will help improve coordination even more."

Last week, the NAS released a report which recommended revising current food safety statutes so that they are uniformly driven by scientific estimates of risk to human health. Among other recommendations, the report called for designating a single federal official with both responsibility for federal food safety activities and authority to allocate resources based on risk to human health. The Safe Food Coalition has long endorsed the creation of a single food safety agency.

"The creation of the council is a productive step toward improving the safety of America's food supply," said Foreman. "It can take steps to coordinate the use of existing resources. However, most of the recommendations made by the Committee to Ensure the Safety of Food from Production to Consumption require congressional action. The Committee was established at the direction of Congress. Now the Committee has given Congress a clear and appropriate set of steps that must be taken to address foodborne illness. Congress should act on those recommendations immediately. We expect that the President Council on Food Safety will encourage and provide leadership for the additional steps that must be taken."

- 30 -

The Safe Food Coalition is a group of consumer, public health, senior citizen and labor organizations that have worked together since 1986 to improve the nation's food safety system. The organization was instrumental in persuading the federal government to revise the hundred year old meat and poultry inspection system.

SAFE FOOD COALITION

888 Seventeenth Street, NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20006 (202) 822-8060

EMBARGOED FOR 12:00 NOON
AUGUST 20, 1998

CONTACT: Christopher Gould
202/822-8060

SAFE FOOD COALITION PRAISES NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES REPORT

Urges Congress to Act on Recommendation to Designate a Single Federal Official with Responsibility for Federal Food Safety Activities

(WASHINGTON, Aug. 20, 1998) The Safe Food Coalition today praised the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report, *Ensuring Safe Food from Production to Consumption*, and urged Congress to take the steps recommended by the committee to improve the safety of the nation's food supply. Following is a statement regarding the NAS report by Carol Tucker Foreman, coordinator of the Safe Food Coalition and former Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Food and Consumer Services:

"The National Academy of Sciences has conducted its study as directed by Congress. Its recommendations are clear and appropriate, and mostly require congressional action. The committee has done an admirable job in a very short period of time -- they've told Congress what it must do to reduce food-borne illness. Now Congress must act.

"Every American who has suffered from food poisoning or knows someone who has -- and every mother who has nursed a sick child through a bout of *salmonella* or *E. coli* O157:H7 poisoning -- should demand that Congress act immediately to institute the changes that are needed to improve food safety. The most important of those changes recommended by the committee are:

- Revise current food safety statutes so that they are uniformly driven by scientific estimates of risk to human health;
- Establish by statute a unified and central framework for managing federal food safety programs, headed by a single federal official who has both authority and control of resources necessary to manage food safety efforts; and
- Allocate the necessary resources to carry out the programs vital to protecting public health.

- more -

"The Safe Food Coalition has earlier endorsed creation of a single food safety agency. Creation of such an agency is the most organizationally effective method for achieving the NAS recommendations.

"Congress can respond to the NAS report this year by adding language to the FY 1999 Agricultural Appropriations Committee Report establishing a committee to explore the details of establishing an appropriate structure and advising the President and Congress on language necessary to change existing food safety laws to respond to the NAS Committee's report.

"In addition, Congress should act this year to pass the Clinton Administration's proposals to improve the safety of imported fruits and vegetables and to institute improved enforcement authority, including recall of contaminated meat and poultry and institution of civil penalties in meat and poultry processing."

- 30 -

The Safe Food Coalition is a group of consumer, public health, senior citizen and labor organizations that have worked together since 1986 to improve the nation's food safety system. The organization was instrumental in persuading the federal government to revise the hundred year old meat and poultry inspection system.

Comment Requests

Request to comment	Name		Call-in Date	Organization	Phone Number	Fax Number
Yes						
	Bob	Garfield	8/28/98	American Frozen Food Institute	703-821-0770	703-821-1350
	Susan	McNight	8/28/98	Quality Flow Inc.	847-291-7674	847-291-7679
	Patrick	Boyle	9/2/98	AMI	703-841-2400	703-527-0938
	Jill	Hollingsworth	9/2/98	Food Marketing Institute	202-429-8238	202-429-8272
	Theresa	Stretch	9/3/98	C-FAR	217-244-4232	217-244-8594
	Barbara	Stowe	9/8/98	Borden Human Sciences	202-675-4511	202-675-4512
	Tim	Hammonds	9/11/98	Food Marketing Institute	202-452-8444	202-429-8282
	Joseph	Corby	9/14/98	Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO)	518-457-5382	518-485-8986
	Tom	Devine	9/14/98	GAP	202-408-0034	202-408-9855
	Jesse	Privett	9/14/98	USDA/FSIS	806-839-3195	806-839-2148
	Caroline	Smith Dewall	9/14/98	CSPI	202-332-9110	202-265-4954

Request to comment	*Name*	*Call-in Date*	*Organization*	*Phone Number*	*Fax Number*
Randy	Wurtele	9/17/98	National Joint Council of Food Inspector Locals	503-728-3814	503-728-4782
Felicia	Nestor	9/21/98	GAP	202-408-0034ex.132	202-408-9855
Rosetta	Newsome	9/21/98	Institute of Food Technologists	312-782-8424	312-782-8348
Randy	Warhaw	9/21/98	Cornell University	315-787-2279	315-787-2284
Lisa	Boral	9/23/98	ELASTIC	610-436-4801	610-436-1198
Nancy	Donley	9/23/98	S. T. O. P.	718-246-2739	718-624-4267
Heather	Klinkhamer	9/23/98	S. T. O. P.	718-246-2739	718-624-4267
Beth	Resnick	9/27/98	NACCHO	202-783-5550	202-783-1583
Lester	Friedlander	9/28/98	Veterinarian	717-746-3072	717-746-7731
Kelly	Johnson	9/28/98	National Food Processors Association	202-637-8060	202-637-8476

Tom Montgomery 10/1 United Egg Associates 2/842-2345

october 2

Last Name	*First Name*	*Organization Name*	*Phone Number*	*Fax Number*
Allison	Richard	Food Safety Council	301-530-7052	
Alonso-Zaldwar	Ricardo	Los Angeles Times, Washington Bureau	202-861-9295	
Anderson	Donald	DWA	919-541-5804	
Anderson	Steve	American Frozen Food Institute	703-821-0770	703-821-1350
Balwin's	Diana	Maryland Department of Agriculture	410-841-5769	410-841-2765
Best	Wanda	USDA/CSREES	202-401-3357	202-401-5179
Boral	Lisa	ELASTIC	610-436-4801	610-436-1198
Boyle	Patrick	AMI	703-841-2400	703-527-0938
Carroll	Kathy	American Dietetic Association	312-899-4860	312-899-7458
Cates	Sheri	DWA	919-541-5804	
Clap	Steve	Food Reg. Weekly	703-295-8637	
Corby	Joseph	Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO)	518-457-5382	518-485-8986
Datoc	Marylynn	FDA	301-827-0413	301-827-0482
Datoc	Marylynn	FDA	301-827-0413	301-827-0482
Devine	Tom	GAP	202-408-0034	202-408-9855
Dieteman	Kathryn	Shandwick Public Affairs	202-383-9700	202-383-0079
Dimatteo	Catherine	Organic Trade Association	413-774-7511	413-774-6432
Donley	Nancy	S. T. O. P.	718-246-2739	718-624-4267
Earl	Robert	International Food Informational Council	202-296-6540	202-296-6547
Finelli	Mary	Humane Society	301-258-3056	301-258-3081
Fong	George	Florida Department of Agriculture	850-488-9670	850-922-9110
Friedlander	Lester	Veterinarian	717-746-3072	717-746-7731

Last Name	*First Name*	*Organization Name*	*Phone Number*	*Fax Number*
Garfield	Bob	American Frozen Food Institute	703-821-0770	703-821-1350
George	Bernat	IICA	202-458-6955	
Gould	Chris	Safe Food Coalition	202-822-8060	202-822-9088
Grove	Tina	Taf-Environ	703-516-2394	703-516-2390
Grover	Steven	National Resturant Association	202-331-5986	202-973-3671
Hahn	Robert	Public Voice for Food & Health Policy	202-347-6200	202-347-6261
Hammonds	Tim	Food Marketing Institute	202-452-8444	202-429-8282
Hodges	Jim	AMI	703-841-2400	703-527-0938
Hollingsworth	Jill	Food Marketing Institute	202-429-8238	202-429-8272
Holmes	Marty	North American Meat processors	703-443-9181	202-758-8001
Huffman	Dale	Auburn University	334-821-3648	334-502-6171
Iescheid	Keith	Embassy of Chile	202-785-1746ext.124	
Iwanicki	Stan	Agrilink Foods, Inc.	716-264-3192	716-383-1281
Jatib	Maria	Iica	202-458-3767	202-458-6335
Johnson	Kelly	National Food Processors Association	202-637-8060	202-637-8476
Jolly	Bill	New Zealand Embassy	202-328-4861	202-332-4309
Kantor		University of Maryland	0	301-314-9327
Klinkhamer	Heather	S. T. O. P.	718-246-2739	718-624-4267
Kosty	Lynn	NCBA	202-347-0228	202-638-0607
Lautiner	Beth	National Pork Processors Council	515-223-2623	515-223-2646
Lee	Rebecca	USDA/FSA/PDD	202-690-2534	202-690-1809
Leonard	Rodney	Commision on Nutrution Institute	202-776-0595	202-776-0599
Lister	Sarah	Senator Thom Harkin, Senate At. Committee	202-224-5929	202-224-9287
Locher-Bussard	Connie	C-FAR	217-244-4232	217-244-8594

Last Name	*First Name*	*Organization Name*	*Phone Number*	*Fax Number*
McElvaine	Michael	USDA	202-720-8121	
McNight	Susan	Quality Flow Inc.	847-291-7674	847-291-7679
Melnick	Amy	American Society for Microbiology	202-942-9296	202942-9335
Mennecier	Paul	Embassy of France	202-944-6358	202-944-6303
Miller	Peter	Australian Embassy	202-797-3319	202-797-3049
Montgomery	Tom	United Egg Association	202-842-2345	202-682-0775
Natrajan	Nandini	Keystone Foods	610-534-5316ext.229	610-586-1665
Nestor	Felicia	GAP	202-408-0034ex.132	202-408-9855
Newsome	Rosetta	Institute of Food Technologists	312-782-8424	312-782-8348
Ontko	David	Walt Disney World Company	407-934-6697	407-828-6015
Phillips	Terry	Johns Hopkins University	240-228-4831	240-228-5353
Pretanik	Stephen	National Broiler Council	202-262-2662	202-293-4005
Privett	Jesse	USDA/FSIS	806-839-3195	806-839-2148
Prout	Terry	SMC Corporation	202-956-5213	202-956-5235
Ralph	Andrew	Meat & Livestock Australia	212-486-2405	212-355-1470
Resnick	Beth	NACCHO	202-783-5550	202-783-1583
Rice	Kim	AMI	703-841-2400	703-527-0938
Robbins	Robyn	United Food & Commercial Workers International Un.	202-466-1505	202-466-1562
Roberts	Cindy	USDA/AG Library	301-504-6409	
Sadib	Mario	Argentina Embassy	202-238-6446	202-332-1324
Sanders	Lee	American Bakers Association	202-789-0300	
Santos	Edwardo	Embassy of Chile	202-785-1746ext.124	
Sarasin	Leslie	American Frozen Food Institute	703-821-0770	703-821-1350

Last Name	*First Name*	*Organization Name*	*Phone Number*	*Fax Number*
Schwemer	Brett	Olson, Frank & Weda	202-518-6359	202-234-1560
Sell	Kyla	Sunkist Growers	202-879-0256	202-628-8233
Serade	Kirk	National Pork Producers Council	202-347-3600	202-347-5265
Sharal	Amilia	USDA/FSIS/SDB	202-720-0107	202-205-0080
Sheehan	Mary	Minnesota Department of Health	651-215-0861	651-215-0977
Slert	Patricia	Johns Hopkins University	240-228-4831	240-228-5353
Smith Dewall	Caroline	CSPI	202-332-9110	202-265-4954
Smolenski	Mark	SRI International	703-247-8472	703-247-8569
Snowden	Jill	Egg Nutrition Center	202-833-8850	202-463-0102
Stowe	Barbara	Borden Human Sciences	202-675-4511	202-675-4512
Stretch	Theresa	C-FAR	217-244-4232	217-244-8594
Takeginchi	Clyde	Phoenix Regulatory Associates	703-406-0906	703-406-9513
Tate	Michael	Tate-Francheca Company	703-907-5592	703-907-5565
Thayer	Dennis	National Resturant Association	202-331-5986	202-973-3671
Thomas	Carol	USDA/FSIS/SDB	202-720-0107	202-205-0080
Tresenfeld	Leslie	HOLE Foods Market	301-263-9686	301-263-9685
Tucker-Foreman	Carol	Safe Food Coalition	202-822-8060	202-822-9088
Turetsky	Joan	USDA/AMS	202-720-4486	
Veallos	Juan	Iica	202-458-3767	202-458-6335
Voit	Donna	CRS Congressional Research Service	202-707-7285	202-707-7000
Walsh	Hedy	Meat & Livestock Australia	212-486-2405	212-355-1470
Ward	Elise	Community Health in Focus	301-986-5706	301-656-2683
Warhaw	Randy	Cornell University	315-787-2279	315-787-2284
Wenning	Tom	National Grocer's Association	703-437-5300	703-437-7768

Last Name	*First Name*	*Organization Name*	*Phone Number*	*Fax Number*
Willard	Tim	National Food Processors Association	202-637-8060	202-637-8476
Wilson	Geoffrey	John Hopkins Applie Physics Laboratory	240-228-4831	
Wilson	Robert	CIFT	202-835-1571-202	202-296-2736
Wozniak	Chris	EPA/OPP/BPPD	703-605-0513	703-308-7026
Wurtele	Randy	National Joint Council of Food Inspector Locals	503-728-3814	503-728-4782
Yablonski	Cindy	International Bottled Water Association	703-683-5213	703-683-4074
Yamada	Al	Fresh Produce Association of the Americas	202-296-4484	202-293-3060
Zawel	Stacey	Grocery Man. Of America	202-295-3943	202-337-4508

We only got a 9.

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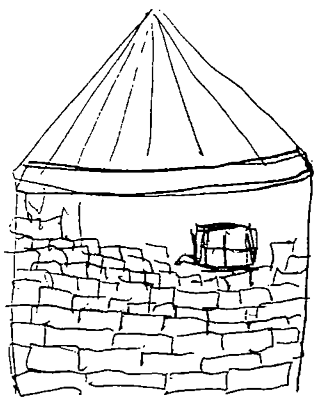

Do your [illegible] hate [illegible]
Should we move 'em to do fruit [illegible] inspections?

Vision Statement:

Consumers can be confident that food is safe, healthy and affordable. We work within a seamless food safety system that uses farm-to-table preventive strategies and integrated research, surveillance, inspection, and enforcement. We are vigilant to new and emergent threats and consider the needs of vulnerable populations. We use science- and risk-based approaches along with public/private partnerships. Food is safe because everyone understands and accepts their responsibilities.

Questions:

1. Does the vision statement accurately depict an achievable food safety system vision? What modifications, if any, would you make?

2. What are the barriers to pursuing this vision? What gaps currently exist in the food safety system that impede achievement of this vision?

3. To Make the vision a reality, what changes are needed for: a)government agencies at the Federal, State, and local level; b) industry; c) public health professionals; d) consumers; and e) others?

4. What should be the short-term goals and critical steps to realize this vision? What should be the long-term goals and steps?

5. What is the best way to involve the public in development of a long-term food safety strategic plan? What additional steps besides public meetings would be beneficial?

6. What are your comments on the conclusions and recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences' report, "Ensuring Safe Food From Production to Consumption"?

OPTIONAL FORM 99 (7-90)
FAX TRANSMITTAL # of pages ▸ 2
To Cliff Gabriel
Dept./Agency
From Torrie Matthews
Phone # 2/501-7654
Fax # 202-456-6627
Fax # 2/501-7642
NSN 7540-01-317-7368 5099-101 GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

President's Council on Food Safety
Food Safety Strategic Plan

October 2, 1998
Arlington, Virginia
DRAFT for internal use only

8:30-9:30 **Registration**

9:30-9:40 **Welcome**

Dr. Neal Lane
Assistant to the President for Science and Technology, Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy

9:40-9:50 **Importance of Food Safety, Accomplishments and Successes**

Donna Shalala
Secretary of Health and Human Services

Richard Rominger
Deputy Secretary of Agriculture

9:50-9:55 **Introduction of Panel Members--Dr. Neal Lane**

Dr. Catherine E. Woteki, Under Secretary for Food Safety, USDA
James A. O'Hara, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health, HHS
Dr. Lynn R. Goldman, Assistant Administrator for Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances, EPA
Thomas J. Billy, Administrator, Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA
Joseph Levitt, Director, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, FDA, HHS
Dr. Morris Potter, Assistant Director for Foodborne Diseases, CDC, HHS

9:55-10:10 **Agency Visions**

A Safe & Affordable Food Supply--**Dr. Lynn R. Goldman**
Assuring Food Safety Requires Everyone to Play a Role--**James A. O'Hara**
Protecting the Food Supply Must Be Grounded in Sound Science--**Dr. Catherine E. Woteki**

10:10-10:25 **Break**

10:25 - 11:45 **Discussion of the Vision/Strategic Plan**

10:25-10:45 1. Does the vision statement accurately depict an achievable food safety system vision? What modifications, if any, would you make?

10:45-11:45 2. What are the barriers to pursuing this vision? What gaps currently exist in the food safety system that impede achievement of this vision?

3. To make the vision a reality, what changes are needed for: a) government agencies at the Federal, State, and local level; b) industry; c) public health professionals; d) consumers; and e) others?

11:45-12:30 **Lunch**

12:30-2:30 **Discussion of Vision**

12:30-1:15 4. What should be the short-term goals and critical steps to realize this vision? What should be the long-term goals and steps?

1:15-1:30 5. What is the best way to involve the public in development of a long-term food safety strategic plan? What additional steps besides public meetings would be beneficial?

1:30-2:30 6. What are your comments on the conclusions and recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences' report, "Ensuring Safe Food From Production to Consumption"?

2:30-4:15 **Public Comment**

4:15 **Closing Remarks**

12:10

The Ellipse Conference Center at Ballston

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association
4301 Wilson Boulevard · Arlington, Virginia 22203

The Ellipse Conference Center at Ballston is located on the Plaza Lobby level of the NRECA Headquarters Building at 4301 Wilson Boulevard in Arlington, Virginia.

Ladies and mens lounges, public telephones, and a coat room are conveniently located inside the Conference Center foyer.

Transportation and Parking

At the corner of Wilson Boulevard and North Taylor Street in the heart of Arlington's Ballston district, the Ellipse Conference Center is easily accessible by public transportation or automobile. ***From Metro's Orange Line****, exit at Ballston; NRECA is one block southwest from the Ballston Station. A covered walkway is available from the Metro Station Plaza to the Ballston Common Mall; NRECA is less than one block northwest from the mall exit.* ***From I-66****, take the Glebe Road/Ballston Exit. Follow North Fairfax Drive to North Taylor Street; turn right onto Taylor. The NRECA building is less than one block up on the right. The building's four level parking garage is accessible from the Taylor Street ramp. Rates start at $ 2.50 per hour. Two shuttle elevators operate from each garage level to the Plaza Lobby.*

Access for the Disabled

The NRECA building and Ellipse Conference Center meet all ADA requirements and are completely accessible to the disabled.

Refreshments and Meals

For breakfast or lunch "on your own", Mary's Cafe - located in the opposite wing of the Plaza Lobby from the Conference Center - offers freshly prepared breakfast and lunch entrees including executive sandwiches, homemade soups, and a Hot/Cold Food Bar. Mary's is open weekdays from 7am to 4pm. A variety of restaurants and fast food shops are also readily available at the Ballston Common Mall and the Metro Station Plaza.

Concierge Services

The Concierge at the lobby desk will be pleased to assist you in any way possible. See the Concierge for local directions, cab service, messages, security-related assistance such as lost and found items, and other special requests. The Concierge's direct line is (703) 907-5939

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association is a smoke-free building.

Federal Register
Vol. 63, No. 166
Thursday, August 25, 1998

Presidential Documents

Title 3—

The President

Executive Order 13100 of August 25, 1998

President's Council on Food Safety

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to improve the safety of the food supply through science-based regulation and well-coordinated inspection, enforcement, research, and education programs, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. *Establishment of President's Council on Food Safety.* (a) There is established the President's Council on Food Safety ("Council"). The Council shall comprise the Secretaries of Agriculture, Commerce, Health and Human Services, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Assistant to the President for Science and Technology/Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, and the Director of the National Partnership for Reinventing Government. The Council shall consult with other Federal agencies and State, local, and tribal government agencies, and consumer, producer, scientific, and industry groups, as appropriate.

(b) The Secretaries of Agriculture and of Health and Human Services and the Assistant to the President for Science and Technology/Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy shall serve as Joint Chairs of the Council.

Sec. 2. *Purpose.* The purpose of the Council shall be to develop a comprehensive strategic plan for Federal food safety activities, taking into consideration the findings and recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences report "Ensuring Safe Food from Production to Consumption" and other input from the public on how to improve the effectiveness of the current food safety system. The Council shall make recommendations to the President on how to advance Federal efforts to implement a comprehensive science-based strategy to improve the safety of the food supply and to enhance coordination among Federal agencies, State, local, and tribal governments, and the private sector. The Council shall advise Federal agencies in setting priority areas for investment in food safety.

Sec. 3. *Specific Activities and Functions.* (a) The Council shall develop a comprehensive strategic Federal food safety plan that contains specific recommendations on needed changes, including measurable outcome goals. The principal goal of the plan should be the establishment of a seamless, science-based food safety system. The plan should address the steps necessary to achieve this goal, including the key public health, resource, and management issues regarding food safety. The planning process should consider both short-term and long-term issues including new and emerging threats and the special needs of vulnerable populations such as children and the elderly. In developing this plan, the Council shall consult with all interested parties, including State and local agencies, tribes, consumers, producers, industry, and academia.

(b) Consistent with the comprehensive strategic Federal food safety plan described in section 3(a) of this order, the Council shall advise agencies of priority areas for investment in food safety and ensure that Federal agencies annually develop coordinated food safety budgets for submission to the OMB that sustain and strengthen existing capacities, eliminate duplication, and ensure the most effective use of resources for improving food

safety. The Council shall also ensure that Federal agencies annually develop a unified budget for submission to the OMB for the President's Food Safety Initiative and such other food safety issues as the Council determines appropriate.

(c) The Council shall ensure that the Joint Institute for Food Safety Research (JIFSR), in consultation with the National Science and Technology Council, establishes mechanisms to guide Federal research efforts toward the highest priority food safety needs. The JIFSR shall report to the Council on a regular basis on its efforts: (i) to develop a strategic plan for conducting food safety research activities consistent with the President's Food Safety Initiative and such other food safety activities as the JIFSR determines appropriate; and (ii) to coordinate efficiently, within the executive branch and with the private sector and academia, all Federal food safety research.

Sec. 4. *Cooperation.* All actions taken by the Council shall, as appropriate, promote partnerships and cooperation with States, tribes, and other public and private sector efforts wherever possible to improve the safety of the food supply.

Sec. 5. *General Provisions.* This order is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch and is not intended to, nor does it, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers or any person. Nothing in this order shall affect or alter the statutory responsibilities of any Federal agency charged with food safety responsibilities.

THE WHITE HOUSE,
August 25, 1998.

[FR Doc. 98-23258
Filed 8-26-98; 8:45 am]
Billing code 3195-01-P

Clinton Administration Accomplishments In Improving Food Safety

The Administration has put into place improved safety standards for meat, poultry, and seafood products, and has begun the process of developing enhanced standards for fruit and vegetable juices. The Administration also has expanded research, education, and surveillance activities throughout the food safety system.

*August 1998. President Clinton signs an Executive Order creating the President's Council on Food Safety, which will develop a comprehensive strategic plan for federal food safety activities and ensure that federal agencies annually develop coordinated food safety budgets.

*July 1998. President creates a Joint Institute of Food Safety Research which will develop a strategic plan for conducting and coordinating all federal food safety research activities, including with the private sector and academia.

*February 1998. Administration announces its proposed food safety budget, which requests an approximate $101 million increase for food safety initiatives.

*May 1997. Administration announces comprehensive new initiative to improve the safety of nation's food supply --"Food Safety from Farm to Table" -- detailing a $43 million food safety program, including measures to improve surveillance, outbreak response, education, and research.

*January 1997. President announces new Early-Warning System to gather critical scientific data to help stop foodborne disease outbreaks quickly and to improve prevention systems.

*August 1996. President signs Safe Drinking Water Act of 1996. The law requires drinking water systems to protect against dangerous contaminants like Cryptosporidium, and gives people the right to know about contaminants in their tap water.

*August 1996. President signs Food Quality Protection Act of 1996, which streamlines regulation of pesticides by FDA and EPA and puts important new public-health protections in place, especially for children.

*July 1996. President announces new regulations that modernize the nation's meat and poultry inspection system for the first time in 90 years. New standards help prevent E.coli bacteria contamination in meat.

*December 1995. Administration issues new rules to ensure seafood safety, utilizing HACCP regulatory programs to require food industries to design and implement preventive measures and increase the industries' responsibility for and control of their safety assurance actions.

*1994. CDC embarks on strategic program to detect, prevent, and control emerging infectious disease threats, some of which are foodborne, making significant progress toward this goal in each successive year.

*1993. Vice-President's National Performance Review issues report recommending government and industry move toward a system of preventive controls.

PRESIDENT CLINTON SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER
CREATING COUNCIL ON FOOD SAFETY
August 24, 1998

President Clinton today will sign an Executive Order to create a President's Council on food Safety, which will develop a comprehensive strategic plan for federal food safety activities and ensure that federal agencies annually develop coordinated food safety budgets. The President also will sign a directive to the Council to review the recently issued National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report, "Ensuring Safe Food from Production to Consumption," and to report back with its response to the report, including appropriate additional actions to improve food safety.

President's Council on Food Safety. The President signs an Executive Order establishing a President's Council on Food Safety (Council). The Council will have three primary functions, including: (1) developing a comprehensive strategic federal food safety plan; (2) advising agencies of priority areas for investment in food safety and ensuring that federal agencies annually develop coordinated food safety budgets; and (3) overseeing the recently established Joint Institute for Food Safety Research and ensuring that it addresses the highest priority research needs.

- **Comprehensive strategic federal food safety plan.** The Council will develop a comprehensive plan to improve the safety of the nation's food supply by establishing a seamless, science-based food safety system. The plan will address the steps necessary to achieve this improved system, focusing on key public health, resource, and management issues and including measurable outcome goals. The planning process will consider both short and long-term issues including new and emerging threats and the special needs of vulnerable populations such as children and the elderly. In developing this plan, the Council will consult with all interested parties, including state and local agencies, tribes, consumers, producers, industry, and academia.

- **Coordinated federal food safety budgets.** Consistent with the comprehensive strategic federal food safety plan, the Council will advise agencies of priority areas for investment in food safety and ensure that federal agencies annually develop coordinated food safety budgets. This coordinated food safety budget process will sustain and strengthen existing activities, eliminate duplication, and ensure the most effective use of resources for improving food safety.

- **Oversight of federal food safety research efforts.** The Council will ensure that the Joint Institute for Food Safety Research addresses the highest priority food safety research gaps. The Institute will report, on a regular basis, to the Council on its efforts to conduct and coordinate food safety research activities and will receive direction from the Council on research needed to establish the most effective possible food safety system.

Review of NAS Report. The President will direct the Council, as one of its first orders of business, to review the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report, "Ensuring Safe Food from Production to Consumption." After providing opportunity for public comment, including public meetings, the Council will report back to the President within 180 days with its response to the NAS report. The Council's report will consider appropriate additional actions to improve food

safety, including proposals for legislative reform of the food safety system.

Public Meeting to Develop Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Federal Food Safety Activities. The Clinton Administration will publish notice of the first public meeting, to be held on October 2 in Arlington, Virginia, to begin development of the Council's comprehensive strategic plan for federal food safety activities. The meeting will engage consumers, producers, industry, food service providers, retailers, health professionals, State and local governments, Tribes, academia, and the public in the strategic planning process.

Ensuring Safe Food

From Production to Consumption

Committee to Ensure Safe Food from Production to Consumption

INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE

NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

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The National Academy of Sciences is a private, nonprofit, self-perpetuating society of distinguished scholars engaged in scientific and engineering research, dedicated to the furtherance of science and technology and to their use for the general welfare. Upon the authority of the charter granted to it by the Congress in 1863, the Academy has a mandate that requires it to advise the federal government on scientific and technical matters. Dr. Bruce Alberts is president of the National Academy of Sciences.

The National Academy of Engineering was established in 1964, under the charter of the National Academy of Sciences, as a parallel organization of outstanding engineers. It is autonomous in its administration and in the selection of its members, sharing with the National Academy of Sciences the responsibility for advising the federal government. The National Academy of Engineering also sponsors engineering programs aimed at meeting national needs, encourages education and research, and recognizes the superior achievements of engineers. Dr. William A. Wulf is president of the National Academy of Engineering.

The Institute of Medicine was established in 1970 by the National Academy of Sciences to enlist distinguished members of the appropriate professions in the examination of policy matters pertaining to the health of the public. In this, the Institute acts under both the Academy's 1863 congressional charter responsibility to be an adviser to the federal government and its own initiative in identifying issues of medical care, research, and education. Dr. Kenneth I. Shine is president of the Institute of Medicine.

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Ensuring Safe Food

From Production to Consumption

Executive Summary

Adequate, nutritious, safe food is essential to human survival, but food can also cause or convey risks to health and even life itself. Although estimates vary widely, there is agreement that foodborne illness is a serious problem. In the United States, as many as 81 million illnesses (Archer and Kvenberg, 1985) and up to 9,000 deaths (CAST, 1994) per year have been attributed to food-related hazards. Estimates of the annual cost of medical treatment and lost productivity vary widely, from $6.6 billion to $37.1 billion from seven major foodborne pathogens (Buzby and Roberts, 1997).

The nation's agriculture and food marketing systems have evolved to provide food to a growing and increasingly sophisticated population. Complex processes built on advances in science and technology have been developed to evaluate and manage the risks associated with the changing nature of the food supply. Well-established systems control many food risks, but serious hazards to public health remain.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

As a result of the continuing concern about the food safety system in the United States, Congress commissioned the National Academy of Sciences, through the Agricultural Research Service of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), to undertake the study that resulted in this report. The charge to the committee was twofold. The committee was asked to (1) assess the effectiveness of the current system to ensure safe food, and (2) provide recommendations on scientific and organizational changes needed to increase the effectiveness of the food safety system. Over a 6 month period, the committee held three meetings as well as two open forums where agency representatives and relevant stakeholders discussed the food safety system. The committee reviewed many documents, including reports on how other countries are reshaping their systems.

This report summarizes the committee's review of food safety in the United States by (1) describing the current US system for food safety and the changing nature of concerns which it encounters, (2) outlining an effective food safety system, (3) identifying the ways in which the current food safety system is inadequate, and (4) providing recommendations to move toward the scientific foundation and organizational structure of a more effective food safety system.

Protecting the safety of food requires attention to a wide range of potential hazards. Food safety is not limited to concerns related to foodborne pathogens, toxicity of chemical substances, or physical hazards, but may also include issues such as nutrition, food quality, labeling, and education. While the scope of this study includes all of these components, this committee's immediate concern focuses on food-related hazards.

1. The Current US Food Safety System

The US food supply is abundant and affordable and is judged by many to present an acceptable level of risk to health. The system has evolved from one that provided consumers with minimally processed basic commodities that were predominantly for home preparation to today's system of highly processed products designed either to be ready-to-eat or to require minimal preparation in the home. As a result of many technological advances, the food system has progressed dramatically from traditional food preservation processes such as salting and curing to today's marketplace with frozen ready-to-eat meals and take-out foods. Likewise, distribution systems for foods have changed greatly.

While these developments have provided the American consumer with a wide array of food products with a high degree of safety, a more diverse food supply carries additional risks as well as benefits. The availability of new food choices such as "minimally processed" vegetable products (for example, prebagged and chopped leaf lettuce mixes) presents new risks for microbial contamination. The globalization of the food system brings food from all parts of the world into the US marketplace, and with it the potential for foodborne infection or other hazards not normally found in the United States.

The current US food safety system has many of the attributes of an effective system. The nature of food safety concerns has changed due to past successful efforts to control the use of unidentified or misrepresented food ingredients and problems with the appearance and wholesomeness of food products; microbiological and chemical hazards now present new and in some cases increasingly serious challenges which cannot be detected using traditional inspection methods. The introduction of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) monitoring systems in meat, poultry, and seafood products is an example of the introduction of science-based process control methodology into food safety regulation and enforcement.

Many Americans now eat in ways that increase risk, including consuming more raw or minimally processed fruits and vegetables and eating fewer home-prepared meals. A smaller number of food processing and preparation facilities provide food to increasingly larger numbers of US consumers, enhancing the extent of harm that can arise from any one incident. Simultaneously, increasing numbers of Americans have compromised immune systems because of age, illness, or medical treatment. The development of genetically modified foods and modified macronutrients are two examples of new products or technologies that require new ways of evaluating the safety of substances added to the food supply.

The federal government has usually addressed these developments by adding new structures and processes or adjusting old ones. These incremental adjustments have created a number of inefficiencies and apparent conflicts within the system. Some have been addressed (for example, pesticides have been exempted from the Delaney clause's ban on carcinogens), but others remain. USDA is obligated by statute to maintain the system of continuous on-site factory inspection by government inspectors that has been the hallmark of meat and poultry regulation. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), meanwhile, with a more varied industry to regulate, has relied on selective monitoring, in which far fewer inspectors periodically visit settings where food is produced, processed, or stored to verify compliance with or to uncover violations of its requirements. A result is that in some cases inspectors from these two agencies oversee food processing in the same processing facility at the same time due to the different enabling statutes. Agencies are at times precluded by statute from implementing monitoring or enforcement practices that are based in science.

The size and complexity of the US food system require significant involvement of government at all levels—federal, state, and local; of the food industry—ranging from the producer to food server; of universities; of the news media; and, most importantly, of the consumer, to address adequately the multitude of issues that arise in ensuring safe food. At the federal level, the efforts are currently fragmented, with at least 12 agencies[1] involved in the key functions of safety: monitoring, surveillance, inspection, enforcement, outbreak management, research, and education. Efforts to coordinate federal activities have intensified over the last two years with the National Food Safety Initiative. There are over 50 memoranda of agreement between various agencies related to food safety. The recent proposal to create a Joint Food Safety Research Institute between USDA and FDA is an obvious outgrowth of such efforts. Notwithstanding these relatively recent activities, however, there still exist significant barriers to full integration.

Summary Findings: The Current US System for Food Safety

- has many of the attributes of an effective system;
- is a complex, inter-related activity involving government at all levels, the food industry from farm and sea to table, universities, the media, and the consumer;
- is moving toward a more science-based approach with HACCP and with risk based assessment;
- is limited by statute in implementing practices and enforcement that are based in science;
- is fragmented by having 12 primary federal agencies involved in key functions of safety: monitoring, surveillance, inspection, enforcement, outbreak management, research, and education; and
- is facing tremendous pressures with regard to:
  - — emerging pathogens and ability to detect them;
  - — maintaining adequate inspection and monitoring of the increasing volume of imported foods, especially fruits and vegetables;
  - — maintaining adequate inspection of commercial food services and the increasing number of larger food processing plants; and
  - — the growing number of people at high risk for foodborne illnesses.

2. An Effective Food Safety System

Mission

The committee defines safe food as food that is wholesome, that does not exceed an acceptable level of risk associated with pathogenic organisms or chemical and physical hazards, and whose supply is the result of the combined activities of Congress, regulatory agencies, multiple industries, universities, private organizations, and consumers. The mission of a food safety system should be stated as an operational charge that uses and reflects that definition. After reviewing the missions presented by some of the lead federal agencies involved in the US food safety system, the committee defined an overall mission as follows:

The mission of an effective food safety system is to protect and improve the public health by ensuring that foods meet science-based safety standards through the integrated activities of the public and private-sectors.

Attributes of an Effective Food Safety System

The attributes of a model food safety system can be summarized in five major components. First, it should be science-based, with a strong emphasis on risk analysis, thus allowing the greatest priority in terms of resources and activity to be placed on the risks deemed to have the greatest potential impact (see Box ES-1). Adjusting effort to risk depends on being able to identify hazards, evaluate the dose-response characteristics of the hazards, estimate or measure exposures, and then determine the likely frequency and severity of effects on health resulting from estimated exposure. Hazards are properties of substances that can cause adverse consequences. Hazards associated with food include microbiological pathogens, naturally occurring toxins, allergens, intentional and unintentional additives, modified food components, agricultural chemicals, environmental contaminants, animal drug residues, and excessive consumption of some dietary supplements. In addition, improper methods of food handling and preparation in the home can contribute to increases in other hazards.

The limited resources available to address food safety issues direct that regulatory priorities be based on risk analysis, which includes evaluation

of prevention strategies where possible. This approach enables regulators to estimate the probability that various categories of susceptible persons (for example, the elderly, or nursing mothers) might acquire illness from eating specific foods and thereby allows regulators to place greater emphasis and direct resources on those foods or hazards with the highest risk of causing human illness. Risk analysis provides a science-based approach to address food safety issues. Comprehensive human and animal disease surveillance must be an integral part of any risk analysis in order to estimate exposure.

The second component in a model system is to have a national food law that is clear, rational, and comprehensive, as well as scientifically based on risk. Scientific understanding of risks changes, so federal food safety efforts must be carried out within a flexible framework. US regulatory agencies are moving toward science-based HACCP programs[2]. This is a major step toward a science-based system, but other steps remain critical. An ideal system would be preventive and anticipatory in nature, and thus designed with integrated national surveillance and monitoring along with education and research required to support these activities woven into the fabric of the system. A reliable and accurate system of data collection, processing, evaluation, and transfer is the foundation for scientific risk analysis. Research should have both applied and basic components and be targeted at the needs of producers, processors, consumers, and regulatory decision-makers and other scientists.

Box ES-1. What is the Meaning of Science-Based?

A science base for ensuring safe food encompasses many elements. When utilized, these elements improve the ability to identify, reduce, and manage risks; minimize occurrence of foodborne hazards; gather and utilize information; enhance knowledge; and improve overall food safety. Several examples of science-based actions that have been implemented in the US food safety system that are readily recognized as positive elements of the system include:

- implementation of low-acid canned food processing technology, which reduces the risk of botulism;
- implementation of HACCP systems and risk assessment in decision-making;
- approval of irradiation technology for use in spices, pork, beef, poultry, fruits and vegetables;
- prohibition of the use of lead-based paints on utensils that come in contact with food;
- estimation of maximum allowable exposure levels to pesticides;
- development of standards for allowable practices associated with transport of foods following transport of pesticides in the same containers;
- use of labeling as a device to warn consumers who are sensitive to potential food allergens of the content of the allergen; and
- requirements that meat and poultry products at the retail level carry consumer information related to safe food handling practices.

While the approaches above are important successful science-based tools in food production and processing, these are only examples of implementation of the scientific basis for food safety. An effective food safety system also integrates science and risk analysis at all levels of the system, including food safety research, information and technology transfer, and consumer education.

Third, a model food safety system should also have a unified mission and a single official who is responsible for food safety at the federal level and who has the authority and the resources to implement science-based policy in all federal activities related to food safety. This would allow for effective and consistent regulation and enforcement. Similar risks require similar planning, action, and response. Thus the intensity, nature, and frequency of inspection should be similar for foods posing similar risks. A central voice is critical to effective marshaling of all aspects of the food safety system to create a coordinated response to foodborne disease outbreaks. Control of resources is also critical in order to encourage movement toward science-based food safety provisions and to ensure that research and education are targeted toward efforts that will produce the greatest benefit for a given cost of improving food safety.

The fourth essential feature of an ideal federal food safety system is that it be organized to be responsive to and work in true partnership with nonfederal partners. These include state and local governments, the food industry, and consumers. The food safety system must function as an integrated enterprise. It must be agile, fluid, connected, integrated, and transparent, with well-defined accountability and responsibility for each partner in the system. It must frame approaches to risk management that recognize the importance of public perception of risks as well as assessments conducted by experts.

Finally, an effective food safety system must be supported by funding adequate to carry out its major functions and mission—to promote the public's health and safety. Moving toward science-based risk analysis as the underpinning of the system should allow reallocation of resources to areas identified as critical to an integrated, focused effort to ensure safe food.

Summary Findings: An Effective Food Safety System

- should be science-based with a strong emphasis on risk analysis and prevention thus allowing the greatest priority in terms of resources and activity to be placed on the risks deemed to have the greatest potential impact;
- is based on a national food law that is clear, rational, and scientifically based on risk;
- includes comprehensive surveillance and monitoring activities which serve as a basis for risk analysis;

- has one central voice at the federal level which is responsible for food safety and has the authority and resources to implement science-based policy in all federal activities related to food safety;

- recognizes the responsibilities and central role played by the non-federal partners (state, local, industry, consumers) in the food safety system; and

- receives adequate funding to carry out major functions required.

3. Where Current US Food Safety Activities Fall Short

Statutory revision is essential to the development and implementation of an effective and efficient science-based food safety system. Major aspects of the current system are in critical need of attention in order to move toward a more effective food safety system. Food safety in the United States lacks integrated Congressional oversight, allocation of funding based on science, and sustained political support. Statutory impediments interfere with implementation of a more effective food safety system. More than 35 primary statutes regulate food safety. Statutory revision is essential to the development and implementation of an effective and efficient science-based food safety system. The meat and poultry inspection laws mandate a form of compliance monitoring that is largely unrelated to the magnitude or the types of risks that are now posed by those foods. This diverts efforts and perhaps resources from actual risks and other hazards. Inconsistent food statutes often inhibit the use of science-based decision-making in activities related to food safety, including lack of jurisdiction to evaluate food handling practices in countries of origin for some types of imported foods.

The federal government response to food safety issues is too often crisis-driven. Management decisions, emphasis, and agency culture are driven by the primary concerns of each agency and special initiatives. One result is fragmentation, which causes a lack of coordination and consistency among agencies in mission, food safety policies, regulation, and enforcement. The fact that some agencies have dual responsibilities (regulation of the quality of food products while marketing them via promotional activities) makes their actions more vulnerable to criticism regarding possible conflicts of interest and may bias their approach to food safety.

In addition to fragmented and overlapping authorities, federal activities are not well-integrated with state and local activities. This results in overlapping responsibilities, gaps in responsibilities, and inefficiencies. Although FDA recommended minimum food handling standards in a Food Code issued in 1993, the Code has not been adopted in its entirety by most state and local authorities. Surveillance efforts currently in place (such as FoodNet) have been designed to provide data representative of national trends with regard to seven indicator foodborne pathogens yet are not designed to identify trends within smaller geographic areas or communities. Similarly, there are conflicts between US requirements and those of other nations and international bodies. These inadequacies have serious implications for both food imports and food exports.

The multi-faceted federal framework of the US food safety system lacks direction from a single leader who can speak for the government when confronting food safety issues and providing answers to the public. There is no single voice in the government to communicate with stakeholders regarding food safety issues. The lack of clear leadership at the federal level impedes the federal role in the management of food safety. Leadership is needed to set priorities, deploy resources, and integrate a consistent policy into all levels of the system.

A significant impediment to moving toward a science-based food safety system is the lack of adequate emphasis on and integration of surveillance activities that provide timely information on current and potential foodborne disease and related hazards. This timely information is critical if the food safety system is to move from a mode of reaction to prevention. FDA's lack of resources to maintain adequate inspection and monitoring of commercial food facilities and of fresh fruits and vegetables, both domestic and imported, using statute-driven methods of monitoring and enforcement, increases the threat of foodborne disease and related hazards in the food supply.

The committee found that the resource base for research and surveillance was not adequate to achieve the goals identified as necessary for an effective system. Furthermore, there is not an adequately coordinated effort on the scale required to analyze risk and respond to the challenges of the changing nature of American food hazards related to increases in consumption of imported foods and of food eaten outside the home.

With respect to consumer education, the committee found two major problems: in some instances, consumer knowledge is inadequate or erroneous; and even where knowledge is adequate, it often fails to influence behavior.

Summary Findings: Where the US Food Safety System Falls Short

- inconsistent, uneven and at times archaic food statutes that inhibit use of science-based decision-making in activities related to food safety, including imported foods;

- a lack of adequate integration among the 12 primary federal agencies that are involved in implementing the 35 primary statutes that regulate food safety;

- inadequate integration of federal programs and activities with state and local activities;

- absence of focused leadership: no single federal entity is both responsible for the government's efforts and given the authority to implement policy and designate resources toward food safety activities;

- lack of similar missions with regard to food safety of the various agencies reviewed;

- inadequate emphasis on surveillance necessary to provide timely information on current and potential foodborne hazards;

- resources currently identified for research and surveillance inadequate to support science-based system;

- limited consumer knowledge, which does not appear to have much impact on food handling behavior; and
- lack of nationwide adherence to appropriate minimum standards.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations Needed to Improve the US Food Safety System

Given the concerns outlined above, the committee came to three primary conclusions:

I. An effective and efficient food safety system must be based in science.

II. To achieve a food safety system based on science, current statutes governing food safety regulation and management must be revised.

III. To implement a science-based system, reorganization of federal food safety efforts is required.

To accomplish these objectives, the committee recommends that the following measures be taken regarding the scientific and organizational changes needed to improve the US food safety system:

Recommendation I:

Base the food safety system on science.

The United States has enjoyed notable successes in improving food safety. One example is the joint government-industry development of low-acid canned food regulations, based on contingency microbiology and food engineering principles, that has almost eliminated botulism resulting from improperly processed commercial food. Similarly, the passage of the 1958 Food Additives Amendment to the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act of 1938 was a "technology forcing" event that improved the evaluation of the safety of added and natural substances and reduced the risks associated with the use of food additives. In a like manner, the Delaney clause of that amendment resulted in increased attention to carcinogenic substances in the food supply. With increasing knowledge, many rational, science-based regulatory philosophies have been adopted, some of which rely on quantitative risk assessment. Adoption of such a science-based regulatory philosophy has been uneven and difficult to ensure given the fragmentation of food safety activities, and the differing missions of the various agencies responsible for specific components of food safety. This philosophy must be integrated into all aspects of the food safety system, from federal to state and local.

Recommendation IIa:

Congress should change federal statutes so that inspection, enforcement, and research efforts can be based on scientifically supportable assessments of risks to public health.

Limitations on the resources available to address food safety issues require that food safety activities operate with maximal efficiency within these limits. This does not require full-scale, cost-benefit analysis of each issue, but it does require that costs, risks, and benefits be known with some precision. Thus, where feasible, regulatory priorities should be based on risk analysis which includes evaluation of prevention strategies where possible. The greatest strides in ensuring food safety from production to consumption can be made through a science-based system that ensures that surveillance, regulatory, and research resources are allocated to maximize effectiveness. This will require identification of the greatest public health needs through surveillance and risk analysis, and evaluation of prevention strategies. The state of knowledge and technology defines what is achievable through the application of current science. Public resources can have the greatest favorable effect on public health if they are allocated in accordance with the combined analysis of risk assessment and technical feasibility. However, limiting allocation of resources to *only* those areas where high priority hazards are known can create a significant problem: other hazards with somewhat lower priority but with a much greater probability of reduction or elimination might not be addressed due to limited resources. Thus both the marginal risks and marginal benefits must also be considered in allocating resources.

Not all agencies responsible for monitoring the safety of imported food are authorized to enter into agreements with the governments of exporting countries in order to reciprocally recognize food safety standards or inspection results. Uniform or harmonized food safety standards and practices should be established, and officials allowed to undertake research, monitoring, surveillance, and inspection activities within other countries. This should permit inspection and monitoring efforts to be allocated in accordance with science-based assessments of risk and benefit. Changes in federal statute that would foster and enhance science-based strategies are shown in Box ES-2.

Box ES-2. Changes in Federal Statute that Would Foster and Enhance Science-based Strategies:

- eliminate continuous inspection system for meat and poultry and replace with a science-based approach which is capable of detecting hazards of concern;
- mandate a single set of science-based inspection regulations for all foods; and
- mandate that all imported foods come from only countries with food safety standards deemed equivalent to US standards.

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Recommendation IIb:

Cong and the administration should require development of a comprehensive national f safety plan. Funds appropria for f safety programs (including research and education programs) should be allocated in accordance with science-based assessments of risk and potential benefit.

Changes in statutes or organization should be based on a rational, well-developed national food safety plan formulated by current federal agencies charged with food safety efforts and with representation from the many stakeholders involved in ensuring safe food. Such a plan, as shown in Box ES-3, should serve as the blueprint for strategies designed to determine priorities for funding, to determine what the needs are, and to ensure that they are incorporated into activities and outcome evaluation.

Box ES-3. The National Food Safety Plan should:

- include a unified, science-based food safety mission;
- integrate federal, state, and local food safety activities;
- allocate funding for food safety in accordance with science-based assessments of risk and potential benefit;
- provide adequate and identifiable support for the research and surveillance needed to:
  - — monitor changes in risk or potential hazards created by changes in food supply or consumption patterns, and
  - — improve the capability to predict and avoid new hazards;
- increase monitoring and surveillance efforts to improve knowledge of the incidence, seriousness, and cause-effect relationships of foodborne diseases and related hazards;
- address the additional and distinctive efforts required to ensure the safety of imported foods;
- recognize the burdens imposed on state and local authorities that have primary front-line responsibility for regulation of food service establishments; and
- include a plan to address consumers' behaviors related to safe food-handling practices.

Recommendation IIIa:

To implement a science-based system, Congress should establish, by statute, a unified and central framework for managing federal food safety programs, one that is headed by a single official and which has the responsibility and control of resources for all federal food safety activities, including outbreak management; standard-setting, inspection, monitoring, surveillance, risk assessment, enforcement, research, and education.

The committee was asked to consider organizational changes that would improve the safety of food in the United States. During the 6 months of active review of information and deliberation, the committee identified characteristics needed in an organizational structure that would provide for an improved focus for food safety in the United States. The committee found that the current fragmented regulatory structure is not well-equipped to meet the current challenges. The key recommendation in this regard is that in order for there to be successful structure, one official should be responsible for federal efforts in food safety and have control of resources allocated to food safety.

This recommendation envisions an identifiable, high-ranking, presidentially-appointed head, who would direct and coordinate federal activities and speak to the nation, giving federal food safety efforts a single voice. The structure created, and the person heading it, should have control over the resources Congress allocates to the food safety effort; the structure should also have a firm foundation in statute and thus not be temporary and easily changed by political agendas or executive directives. It is also important that the person heading the structure should be accountable to an official no lower than a cabinet secretary and, ultimately, to the President.

Many members of the committee are of the view that the most viable means of achieving these goals would be to create a single, unified agency headed by a single administrator—an agency that would incorporate the several relevant functions now dispersed, and in many instances separately organized, among three departments and a department-level agency. However, designing the precise structure and assessing the associated costs involved are not possible in the time frame given the committee, nor were they included in its charge. The committee did discuss other possible structures; while it ruled out some, it certainly did not examine all possible configurations and thus the examples provided in Box ES-4 are only illustrative of possible overall structures that could be considered.

Box ES-4. Some Examples of Possible Organizational Structures to Create a Single Federal Voice for Food Safety:

- a Food Safety Council with representatives from the agencies with a central chair appointed by the President, reporting to Congress and having control of resources,
- designating one current agency as the lead agency and having the head of that agency be the responsible individual,
- a single agency reporting to one current cabinet-level secretary, and

• an independent single agency at cabinet level.

Note: These examples are provided for illustrative purposes and many other configurations are possible. It is strongly recommended that future activities be directed toward identifying a feasible structure that meets the criteria outlined.

The committee does not believe that the type of centralized focus envisioned can be achieved through appointment of an individual with formal coordinating responsibility but without legal authority or budgetary control for food safety, a model similar to a White House-based 'czar'. Nor, in the committee's view, can this goal be achieved through a coordinating committee similar to that currently provided via the National Food Safety Initiative. In evaluating possible structures, the committee realized that past experience with other structures or reorganizations, including the creation of new agencies, such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), should inform any final judgment. Further, it is quite possible that other models may now exist in government that can serve as templates for structural reform. Whether or not a single agency emerges, the ultimate structure must provide for not just delegated responsibility, but also for control of resources and authority over food safety activities in the federal government.

Recommendation IIIb:

Congress should provide the agency responsible for food safety at the federal level with the tools necessary to integrate and unify the efforts of authorities at the state and local levels to enhance food safety.

This report specifically addresses the federal role in the food safety system, but the roles of state and local government entities are equally critical. For integrated operation of a food safety system, officials at all levels of government must work together in support of common goals of a science-based system. The federal government must be able to ensure nationwide adherence to minimal standards when it is deemed appropriate. The work of the states and localities in support of the federal mission deserves improved formal recognition and appropriate financial support. Statutory tools required to integrate state and local activities regarding food safety into an effective national system are shown in Box ES-5.

Box ES-5. The Statutory Tools Required to Integrate Local and State Activities Regarding Food Safety into an Effective National System:

• authority to mandate adherence to minimal federal standards for products or processes,

• continued authority to deputize state and local officials to serve as enforcers of federal law,

• funding to support, in whole or in part, activities of state and local officials that are judged necessary or appropriate to enhance the safety of food,

• authority given to the federal official responsible for food safety to direct action by other agencies with assessment and monitoring capabilities, and

• authority to convene working groups, create partnerships, and direct other forms and means of collaboration to achieve integrated protection of the food supply.

MOVING TOWARD A MODEL SYSTEM

It is recognized that these recommendations will need significant review and discussion. The committee focused on the need for a centrally managed federal system to ensure coordination and direction in food safety programs and policy, and to serve as a single voice with authority and resources to suggest and implement legislation. It had insufficient time to review all the possible organizational structures that could accomplish this goal. A successor study could focus on this. Of critical importance, though, are the first two recommendations: the first, to base the system on science, and the second, that of rewriting the current patchwork of federal food statutes that in many cases do not serve to ensure a scientifically supportable and risk-based food safety system, and certainly prevent it from being more cost effective.

Regardless of the organizational structure chosen, a revamped federal food statute is critical to being able to reallocate resources toward risks that have or will have the greatest significance to the public's health. Implementation of these recommendations should not be looked at as a cost-cutting measure, but rather as a way to design a well-defined integrated system to ensure safe food. This system may well be able to demonstrate effectively a need for additional resources to address important and specific problems. Although the National Food Safety Initiative properly seeks to alleviate problems inherent in the present decentralized structure, experience indicates that any ad hoc administrative adjustments and commitments to coordination will not suffice to bring about the vast cultural changes and collaborative efforts needed to create an integrated system.

Changing hazards associated with food and changing degrees of acceptance of risk are factors that impact the nation's ability to protect public health and ensure safe food. Risk acceptance and foodborne hazards will continue to change and evolve with new technologies and consumer demands. Federal food safety efforts must be designed to deal with those changes. This report is not a comprehensive and all-inclusive discussion of these issues. Adoption of the recommendations in this report will not end the effort to make food safer. They should, however, contribute to ensuring the safety of our food while providing a blueprint for a truly integrated system.

NOTES

[1]The major federal agencies involved include: the Agricultural Marketing Service, the Animal and Plant l h Inspection Service, the Agricultural F ch Service, the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, the Economic Research Service, the Food Safety and Inspection Service, and the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration of the United States Department of Agriculture; the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Food and Drug Administration, and the National Institutes of Health of the Department of Health and Human Services; the National Marine Fisheries Service of the Department of Commerce; and the Environmental Protection Agency.

[2]The implementation of the science-based HACCP strategy is perhaps the most notable recent advance. In contrast to the traditional reactive food safety strategies, the HACCP system focuses on preventing hazards that could cause foodborne illness by applying science-based control processes at each step, rom raw mateial to finished product.

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REPORT HOME PAGE	

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. 98–045N]

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Food and Drug Administration

[Docket No. 97N–0074]

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[Docket No. OPP–00550A; FRL–6034–3]

Food Safety Initiative Strategic Plan

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA; Research, Education, and Economics, USDA; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, HHS; Food and Drug Administration, HHS; Environmental Protection Agency.

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are announcing additional public meetings, under the auspices of the President's Council on Food Safety, to discuss and begin development of a comprehensive strategic Federal food safety plan. The purpose of the strategic plan is to reduce the annual incidence of acute and chronic foodborne and waterborne illness by further enhancing the safety of the nation's food supply. The Council is also soliciting comments on the recent National Academy of Sciences' report, "Ensuring Safe Food from Production to Consumption." The USDA, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the EPA have established public dockets to receive comments about the Food Safety Initiative's strategic planning process, the strategic plan and the NAS report.

DATES: The meetings will be held on October 20, 1998, November 10, 1998 and December 8, 1998. Comments should be submitted by January 7, 1999.

ADDRESSES: The meetings will be held at:

Meeting Address	Date and Time
Radisson Hotel Sacramento 500 Leisure Lane Sacramento, CA 95815 Telephone: (916) 922–2020	Tuesday, October 20, 1998, 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. PST

Meeting Address	Date and Time
Schaumburg Marriott 50 North Martingale Rd. Schaumburg, IL 60173 Telephone: (847) 240–0100	Tuesday, November 10, 1998, 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. CST
Holiday Inn Select L.B.J. Northeast 11350 L.B.J. Freeway @ Jupiter Rd. Dallas, TX 75238 Telephone: (214) 341–5400	Tuesday, December 8, 1998, 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. CST

For instructions on the submission of written and electronic comments, refer to Unit II. of this document.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: To register for the meetings, contact Ms. Traci Phebus, of USDA, at (202) 501–7136, fax: (202) 501–7642, e-mail: foodsafetymeeting@usda.gov. Participants may reserve time for public comments when they register. Space will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Participants are encouraged to submit a disk along with their written statements in Wordperfect 5.1/6.1 or ASCII file format.

Questions regarding general arrangements and logistical matters should be addressed to Ms. Jennifer Callahan. Additionally, participants who require a sign language interpreter or other special accommodations should contact Ms. Jennifer Callahan, of USDA, no later than 10 days prior to the meeting, at (202) 501–7136, fax: (202) 501–7642, e-mail: Jennifer.Callahan@usda.gov.

Information about the National Academy of Sciences' report on "Ensuring Safe Food from Production to Consumption" can be found at the following web site: http://www.nas.edu.

For questions about the meeting or to obtain copies of the report, "Food Safety From Farm to Table: A National Food Safety Initiative," contact Ms. Karen Carson, of FDA, at (202) 205–5140, fax: (202) 205–5025, e-mail: kcarson@Bangate.fda.gov. Copies of the report also are available from the following web sites:

FDA at http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/fsreport.html

CDC at http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/foodsafe/report.htm

EPA at http://www.epa.gov/opptsfrs/home/nfssuppt.htm

Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) at http://www.fsis.usda.gov

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

On January 25, 1997, the President issued a directive to the Secretaries of USDA and HHS and the Administrator of EPA to work with consumers, producers, industry, States, Tribes, universities, and the public to identify ways to further improve the safety of our food supply, and to report back to him in

90 days. The Federal food safety agencies, working with their colleagues in the States, in the food industries, in academia, and with consumers, initially focused on the goal of reducing illness caused by microbial contamination of food and water. This goal was to be reached through systematic improvements in six key components of the food safety system: foodborne outbreak response coordination, surveillance, inspections, research, risk assessment, and education. The plan for meeting this goal was presented to the President in May 1997, in "Food Safety From Farm to Table: A National Food Safety Initiative." In October 1997, the President issued an additional directive to ensure the safety of domestic and imported fresh produce and other imported foods. This second directive was incorporated into the National Food Safety Initiative (NFSI).

In less than 2 years, the agencies have taken significant strides forward in building a strengthened national food safety system. Building blocks for the infrastructure are in place: increased and targeted surveillance through FoodNet and PulseNet; coordination of Federal, State and local responses to outbreaks by the Foodborne Outbreak Response Coordinating Group (FORCG); expanded reliance on preventive controls (such as the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) based inspection systems for meat, poultry and seafood, and Good Agricultural and Good Manufacturing Practices guidance for produce); coordination of Federal food safety research; cooperation on risk assessment through the interagency Risk Assessment Consortium; leveraging inspection resources; and innovative public/private education partnerships. These efforts provide a common ground for moving forward.

On July 3, 1998, the President created a Joint Institute for Food Safety Research (JIFSR) to coordinate Federal food safety research efforts. On August 25, 1998, the President issued an Executive Order establishing a President's Council on Food Safety to develop a comprehensive strategic plan for Federal food safety activities, ensure the most effective use of Federal resources through the development and submission of coordinated food safety budgets, and oversee the Joint Institute for Food Safety Research. At the same time, the President directed the Council to, after providing opportunity for public comment, report back to him within 180 days with its views on the recommendations of the NAS report.

The food safety agencies had already made a commitment to prepare a 5–year comprehensive strategic plan, with the participation of all concerned parties. The President's Council on Food Safety will now be responsible for the development of this strategic Federal food safety plan. A coordinated food safety strategic planning effort is needed to build on the common ground, and to tackle some of the difficult public health, resource, and management questions facing Federal food safety agencies. The strategic plan will focus on not just microbial contamination, but the full range of issues (e.g., chemical hazards) and actions necessary to ensure the safety of the food and water Americans use and consume. The charge is to develop a strategic long-range plan that can be used to help set priorities, improve coordination and efficiency, identify gaps in the current system and mechanisms to fill those gaps, continue to enhance and strengthen prevention and intervention strategies, and identify measures to show progress. In developing the plan, the Council will consider the conclusions and

recommendations of the NAS report on "Ensuring Safe Food from Production to Consumption" and the review of Federal food safety research currently being developed by an interagency working group under the auspices of the National Science and Technology Council.

The food safety agencies have already taken the first steps to lay the groundwork for development of the strategic plan, which the Council will now develop, by participating in interagency strategic planning sessions. The result is the following draft statement encompassing the agencies' vision for the U.S. food safety system and the roles of all those involved in food safety.

Draft Vision Statement

Consumers can be confident that food is safe, healthy, and affordable. We work within a seamless food safety system that uses farm-to-table preventive strategies and integrated research, surveillance, inspection, and enforcement. We are vigilant to new and emergent threats and consider the needs of vulnerable populations. We use science- and risk-based approaches along with public/private partnerships. Food is safe because everyone understands and accepts their responsibilities.

The next step is to engage consumers, producers, industry, food service providers, retailers, health professionals, State and local governments, Tribes, academia, and the public in the strategic planning process. The first public meeting on the strategic plan will be held on October 2, 1998, in Arlington, VA and was announced in the **Federal Register** of August 27, 1998 (63 FR 45922) (FRL–6019–9). The series of meetings announced today, in addition to the October 2nd meeting, will assist the Council with development of a long-term strategic plan that addresses the important food safety challenges and makes the best use of the agencies' limited resources. They will also assist the Council in responding to the President on the NAS recommendations. Additional public meetings may be held later in the strategic planning process and will be announced in the **Federal Register** prior to the date of each meeting.

The purpose of these meetings, along with the October 2nd meeting, is to obtain the public's view on a long-term vision for food safety in the U.S. and to identify a strategic planning process, goals, and critical steps as well as potential barriers to achieving that vision. The Council is interested in comments on the draft vision statement, suggestions for goals and how they might be achieved, and comments on how to best structure a strategic planning process that involves all interested parties. The Council is also soliciting comments on the conclusions and recommendations of the NAS report, "Ensuring Safe Food from Production to Consumption." Some questions to help frame the discussion follow.

1. Does the vision statement accurately depict an achievable food safety system vision? What modifications, if any, would you make?

2. What are the barriers to pursuing this vision? What gaps currently exist in the food safety system that impede achievement of this vision?

3. To make the vision a reality, what changes are needed for: (a) government agencies at the Federal, State, and local level; (b) industry; (c) public health professionals; (d) consumers; and (e) others?

4. What should be the short-term goals and critical steps to realize this vision? What should be the long-term goals and steps?

5. What is the best way to involve the public in development of a long-term food safety strategic plan? What additional steps besides public meetings would be beneficial?

6. What are your comments on the conclusions and recommendations of the NAS report "Ensuring Safe Food from Production to Consumption"?

II. Public Dockets and Submission of Comments

The agencies have established public dockets about the Food Safety Initiative Strategic Plan and the NAS report, "Ensuring Safe Food from Production to Consumption." Comments submitted to the dockets are to be identified with the appropriate docket number. For those comments directed to USDA, use Docket No. 98–045N, and for comments directed to FDA, use Docket No. 97N–0074. Commenters are encouraged to submit a disk along with their written comments in Wordperfect 5.1/6.1 or ASCII file format. Submit written comments (in triplicate) to either:

USDA/FSIS

USDA/FSIS Hearing Clerk, 300 12th St., SW., Rm. 102 Cotton Annex, Washington, DC 20250–3700

FDA

Dockets Management Branch (HFA–305), Food and Drug Administration, 12420 Parklawn Drive, Rm. 1-23, Rockville, MD 20857

Electronic Comments

Comments may also be submitted electronically to: oppts.homepage@epa.gov. All comments and data in electronic form must be identified by the docket number "OPP–00550." Electronic comments must be submitted as an ASCII file avoiding the use of special characters and any form of encryption.

Transcripts

Transcripts of the public meetings may be requested in writing from the Freedom of Information Office (HFI-35), Food and Drug Administration, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rm. 12A-16, Rockville, MD 20857, approximately 15 working days after the meeting at a cost of 10 cents per page. The transcripts of the public meetings will be available for public examination at the FDA Dockets Management Branch (address above) between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. Transcripts of the meetings will also be available on the internet at: http://www.fda.gov/ohrms/dockets/default.htm and http://www.epa.gov/opptsfrs/home/nfssuppt.htm.

Electronic Docket

The public docket in its entirety will be available on the internet at: http://www.epa.gov/opptsfrs/home/rules.htm#docket.

List of Subjects

Environmental protection, Food safety.

Dated: Catherine E Woteki SEP 24 1998

Catherine E. Woteki,

Undersecretary for Food Safety, United States Department of Agriculture.

Dated: [signature] SEP 24 1998

James A. O'Hara,

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health, Department of Health and Human Services.

Dated: Lynn R. Goldman SEP 24 1998

Lynn R. Goldman

Assistant Administrator for Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances, Environmental Protection Agency.

[FR Doc. 98–????? Filed ?–??–98; 8:45 am]

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Helen M. Green
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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

[Docket No. 98–045N]

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Food and Drug Administration

[Docket No. 97N–0074]

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[Docket No. OPP–00550; FRL–6019–9]

President's National Food Safety Initiative

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA; Research, Education, and Economics, USDA; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, HHS; Food and Drug Administration, HHS; Environmental Protection Agency.

ACTION: Notice: public meeting; establishment of public dockets.

SUMMARY: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are announcing a public meeting to discuss and begin development of a comprehensive strategic Federal food safety plan. The purpose of the strategic plan is to reduce the annual incidence of acute and chronic foodborne and waterborne illness by further enhancing the safety of the nation's food supply. USDA, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and EPA are also establishing public dockets to receive comments about the Food Safety Initiative's strategic planning process and the plan.

DATES: The meeting will be held on October 2, 1998, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Comments should be submitted by [insert date 90 days after date of publication in the **Federal Register**].

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, 4301 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA.

For instructions on the submission of written and electronic comments, refer to Unit II. of this document.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: To register for the meeting, contact Ms. Traci Phebus, of USDA, at (202) 501–7136, fax: (202) 501–7642, e-mail: foodsafetymeeting@usda.gov. Participants may reserve time for public comments when they register. Space will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Participants are encouraged to submit a disk along with their written statements in Wordperfect 5.1/6.1 or ASCII file format.

Questions regarding general arrangements and logistical matters should be addressed to Ms. Torrie Mattes. Additionally, participants who require a sign language interpreter or other special accommodations should contact Ms. Torrie Mattes, of USDA, no later than 10 days prior to the meeting, at (202) 501-7136, fax: (202) 501-7642, e-mail: T.Mattes@usda.gov.

For questions about the meeting or to obtain copies of the report, "Food Safety From Farm to Table: A National Food Safety Initiative," contact Ms. Karen Carson, of FDA, at (202) 205-5140, fax: (202) 205-5025, e-mail: kcarson@Bangate.fda.gov. Copies of the report also are available from the following web sites:

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Information about the National Academy of Sciences' report on "Ensuring Safe Food from Production to Consumption" can be found at the following web site: http://www.nas.edu.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

On January 25, 1997, the President issued a directive to the Secretaries of USDA and HHS and the Administrator of EPA to work with consumers, producers, industry, States, Tribes, universities, and the public to identify ways to further improve the safety of our food supply, and to report back to him in 90 days. The Federal food safety agencies, working with their colleagues in the States, in the food industries, in academia, and with consumers, initially focused on the goal of reducing illness caused by microbial contamination of food and water. This goal was to be reached through systematic improvements in six key components of the food safety system: foodborne outbreak response coordination, surveillance, inspections, research, risk assessment, and education. The plan for meeting this goal was presented to the President in May 1997, in "Food Safety From Farm to Table: A National Food Safety Initiative." In October 1997, the President issued an additional directive to ensure the safety of domestic and imported fresh produce and other imported foods. This second directive was incorporated into the National Food Safety Initiative (NFSI).

In less than 2 years, the agencies have taken significant strides forward in building a strengthened national food safety system. Building blocks for the infrastructure are in place: increased and targeted surveillance through FoodNet and PulseNet; coordination of Federal, State and local responses to outbreaks by the Foodborne Outbreak Response Coordinating Group (FORCG); expanded reliance on preventive controls (such as the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) based inspection systems for meat, poultry and seafood, and Good Agricultural and Good Manufacturing Practices guidance for produce);

coordination of Federal food safety research; cooperation on risk assessment through the interagency Risk Assessment Consortium; leveraging inspection resources; and innovative public/private education partnerships. These efforts provide a common ground for moving forward.

In the May 1997 report, the food safety agencies made a commitment to prepare a 5-year comprehensive strategic plan, with the participation of all concerned parties. The President recently issued an Executive Order establishing a President's Food Safety Council which will now be responsible for development of a comprehensive strategic Federal food safety plan. A coordinated food safety strategic planning effort is needed to build on the common ground, and to tackle some of the difficult public health, resource, and management questions facing Federal food safety agencies. The strategic plan will focus on not just microbial contamination, but the full range of issues and actions necessary to ensure the safety of the food and water Americans use and consume. The charge is to develop a strategic long-range plan that can be used to help set priorities, improve coordination and efficiency, identify gaps in the current system and how to fill those gaps, enhance and strengthen prevention and intervention strategies, and identify measures to show progress. In developing the plan, the agencies will consider the conclusions and recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences' report on "Ensuring Safe Food from Production to Consumption" and the review of Federal food safety research and the research plan currently being developed by an interagency working group under the auspices of the National Science and Technology Council.

The food safety agencies have already taken the first steps to lay the groundwork for development of the strategic plan, which the Council will now develop, by participating in interagency strategic planning sessions. The result is the following draft statement encompassing the agencies' vision for the U.S. food safety system and the roles of all those involved in food safety.

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The next step is to engage consumers, producers, industry, food service providers, retailers, health professionals, State and local governments, Tribes, academia, and the public in the strategic planning process, beginning with a discussion of the draft vision statement and how to structure a strategic planning process that involves all interested parties and best addresses the important food safety challenges and makes the best use of the agencies' limited resources. This October 2nd meeting is the first of several public meetings to assist with development of a long-term strategic plan. Additional public meetings will be announced in the **Federal Register** prior to the date of each meeting.

The purpose of the October 2nd meeting is to obtain the public's view on a long-term vision for food safety in the U.S. and to identify a strategic planning process, goals, and critical steps as well as potential barriers to achieving that

vision. The Council is interested in comments on the draft vision statement and suggestions for goals and how they might be achieved. Some questions to help frame the discussion follow.

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5. What is the best way to involve the public in development of a long-term food safety strategic plan? What additional steps besides public meetings would be beneficial?

II. Public Dockets and Submission of Comments

The agencies are announcing the establishment of public dockets about the Food Safety Initiative Strategic Plan. Comments submitted to the dockets are to be identified with the appropriate docket number. For those comments directed to USDA, use Docket No. 98–045N, and for comments directed to FDA, use Docket No. 97N–0074. Commenters are encouraged to submit a disk along with their written comments in Wordperfect 5.1/6.1 or ASCII file format. Submit written comments (in triplicate) to:

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USDA/FSIS Hearing Clerk, 300 12th St., SW., Rm. 102 Cotton Annex, Washington, DC 20250–3700

FDA

Dockets Management Branch (HFA–305), Food and Drug Administration, 12420 Parklawn Drive, Rm. 1-23, Rockville, MD 20857

Electronic Comments

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Transcripts

Transcripts of the public meetings may be requested in writing from the Freedom of Information Office (HFI-35), Food and Drug Administration, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rm. 12A-16, Rockville, MD 20857, approximately 15 working days after the meeting at a cost of 10 cents per page. The transcripts of the public meetings will be available for public examination at the FDA Dockets Management Branch (address above) between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. Transcripts of the meetings will also be available on the internet at: http://www.fda.gov/ohrms/dockets/default.htm and http://www.epa.gov/opptsfrs/home/nfssuppt.htm.

Electronic Docket

The public docket in its entirety will be available on the internet at: http://www.epa.gov/opptsfrs/home/rules.htm#docket.

List of Subjects

Environmental protection, Food safety.

Dated: AUG 20 1998

Catherine E. Woteki

Catherine E. Woteki,
Undersecretary for Food Safety, United States Department of Agriculture.

Dated: AUG 20 1998

James A. O'Hara

D.T. 8/20

James A. O'Hara,
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health, Department of Health and Human Services.

Dated: 20 August 1998

Lynn R. Goldman

Lynn R. Goldman,
Assistant Administrator for Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances, Environmental Protection Agency.

[FR Doc. 98–????? Filed ?–??–98; 8:45 am]
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Helen M. Green
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