

Module 1: Overview of FSIS Food Safety Goal and Strategy

Americans have become increasingly concerned about food safety. Incidences of food borne illness have received more attention as consumers have become more aware of new pathogens that threaten all of us.

As they did in 1906, the American people, through their representatives in Congress, turned to the Executive Branch of the Federal Government for help in improving the safety of meat and poultry products in the U.S. July 1996 marked a milestone in the history of American Food Safety. It was then that FSIS published new regulations designed to lead the meat and poultry industries toward a more scientific approach to food safety. The Pathogen Reduction and HACCP Regulations were created in response to the public's expectations of a safe food supply.

A major factor in the implementation of the Rule is a shift toward reliance on systems rather than individual defect.

A major focus of the new HACCP system is "Farm to Table". This concept ensures that the public consumes safe meat and poultry products because the product is followed from the farm through slaughter and processing and finally to the consumer's table. In short, everyone is responsible for safe food products.

As FSIS Inspection Personnel, you're probably wondering just how all of these changes will affect your job. In many ways, you'll rely on time-tested experience and knowledge. On the other hand, some of your roles and responsibilities will change.

Perhaps the greatest effect of all these changes will be on the food-consuming public.

Finally, a very important component of the HACCP system is the change between past and future regulatory oversight.

This overview has discussed the FSIS food safety goal, how FSIS meets public and Congressional expectations for food safety, a brief history of the implementation of the Pathogen Reduction and HACCP rule, the public health advantages of this rule, and the major changes between past and future regulatory oversight.

In the next module, we'll look specifically at the Principles of HACCP.