

## Issue

# What is the Best Use of Data to Support Risk-Based Inspection?

National Advisory Committee on  
Meat and Poultry Inspection  
November 5-6, 2003

## Purpose

FSIS seeks the Committee's input on the types of data that the Agency can and should collect, sources of data to which the Agency should gain access, and ways to analyze the data that is made available to the Agency as a result, so that the Agency can maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of its efforts to ensure the safety of meat, poultry, and egg products.

## Discussion

Since FSIS adopted the Pathogen Reduction/Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) rule, the Agency has sought to maximize the effectiveness of its efforts to protect the public health by utilizing its resources based on an assessment of hazard and risk. This is the essence of HACCP itself. An establishment is required to identify, and to exercise particular control over, the points in its process where hazards are reasonably likely to occur, and the Agency's efforts are directed at verifying that establishments are fulfilling this obligation.

The Agency has been increasing its use of the risk analysis process to focus its efforts. The results of the risk assessment that the Agency did on *Listeria monocytogenes* informed the regulation that the Agency promulgated in June. The rule on this pathogen became effective in October. Moreover, a risk-based approach has informed the Agency's two most recent directives on *Listeria monocytogenes*. A risk assessment also informed the regulatory strategy that the Agency has pursued with respect to *E. coli* O157:H7 since October of 2002. For example, considerations of risk informed the Agency's decision last year to require all establishments that process beef to reassess their HACCP plans and helped to determine the order in which FSIS visited establishments to verify that they had done so.

These are just a few of the ways in which FSIS has begun to factor considerations of hazard and risk into the design of its strategy to ensure that meat, poultry and egg products are safe. Now the Under Secretary for Food Safety is challenging FSIS to go further. In the food safety vision paper, Enhancing Public Health: Strategies for the Future, Dr. Elsa Murano states that "...it is necessary for us to pursue a course of action that will help us attain the next level of prevention, which is to predict, or anticipate, problems as much as possible before they arise." By anticipating problems, FSIS can be more efficient as well as effective by focusing its resources to address those problems. Significantly, Dr. Murano goes on to state, to anticipate hazards involving meat and

poultry products, FSIS must have the access to the best available data. She points out that there is a need to improve the Agency's access to, and analysis of, food safety data from all reliable sources.

Thus, we seek the National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection's advice on how FSIS can improve its collection, access, and use of food safety data to improve how the Agency protects the public health.

**Questions**

1. What reliable sources of data should the Agency ensure that it is utilizing to help achieve Dr. Murano's vision?
2. Is there data that the Agency is collecting, or that it could be collecting, of which FSIS is not taking full advantage?
3. Are there methods of analysis that the Agency may not be using, or that the Agency should be using, that would enhance its ability to anticipate hazards?