

# **National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection**

## **Issue Paper for consideration by Sub-Committee**

### **Developing a Data Depository to help FSIS Anticipate Food Borne Hazards**

#### **Purpose:**

FSIS is seeking the Committee's recommendation on how to encourage meat, poultry and egg products processors and other interested parties (states, academia, consumer groups, and other federal agencies) to contribute information to the Agency in a format that can be used for strengthening Agency risk assessments; be readily analyzed to improve the identification of foodborne disease hazards; be used to link foodborne disease to specific meat, poultry and egg products; and to effectively target FSIS inspection resources. FSIS is considering whether there would be benefit in creating a third party data depository. Consideration would need to be given to mechanisms to assure data quality and rationales to remove information that would identify the entity that is the source of the information.

#### **Discussion:**

FSIS is exploring innovative methods to enhance its capability to anticipate public health risks involving meat, poultry and egg products. Access to quality data from all sources, particularly from industries that produce meat, poultry and egg products, is necessary for the Agency to accomplish the goal of accurately determining the extent and nature of these risks. Once risks, and factors that contribute to them, are identified and understood, FSIS can use the information to develop more effective policies and risk communications, and target its inspection and enforcement resources to improve public health.

The Agency is examining its regulatory data to identify conditions that have consistently preceded significant foodborne disease outbreaks. Inspection personnel now use this data to make decisions and alert establishments so that they can implement corrective and preventive action. Data collected by establishments and other sources, if fully available to the Agency, could add robustness to regulatory information and improve the quality and validity of risk based determinations. FSIS believes that access to data in addition to data that are collected by FSIS could be used to anticipate and mitigate foodborne hazards. Although large amounts of information are collected by industry, much of the data itself are not shared with the Agency. Access to this data would help FSIS to optimize

resource allocation to prevent foodborne illnesses that are transmitted by FSIS regulated products. In order to achieve this, FSIS needs to establish the most acceptable process to encourage industry officials and researchers working with meat, poultry, and egg products to make this data available.

FSIS is considering the creation of an independent center to which such data can be submitted and mechanisms for removing information that would identify the entity that is the source of the information. The agency would like to identify methods to encourage voluntary industry and academic participation in this data depository project. FSIS seeks feedback from industry and researchers on whether they would participate in the development of an independent data depository and the types of data they anticipate contributing. Further FSIS seeks feedback on how to encourage processors of meat, poultry and egg products to support and contribute data to a depository that integrates industry, state and public health information. FSIS envisions a resource that would make risk assessment more robust; improve hazard identification; facilitate industries to adopt effective process controls, and more optimally allocate FSIS inspection resources.

Advice is needed on terms under which meat, poultry and egg products producers would submit data and methods to assure high data quality standards. Stringent criteria for accessing data would need to be defined. The Agency asks for guidance on conditions for access, to include review of expertise and protocols. Initially, a pilot project could focus on one foodborne pathogen. This would limit the scope of the project while the Agency developed basic systems for the data depository.

The goal of the data depository is to provide a mechanism for identifying and addressing hazards involved in the production of meat, poultry and egg products to prevent foodborne illness. FSIS asks the Committee for recommendations to guide the Agency in defining the best ways FSIS could encourage data exchange while satisfying confidentiality concerns of industry.

### **Questions:**

1. How can FSIS encourage processors of meat, poultry and egg products and other interested parties (states, academia, consumer groups, and other federal agencies) to contribute information in a form that the Agency can use to conduct risk assessments; identify foodborne disease hazards and prevent foodborne illnesses transmitted by specific meat, poultry and egg products through policies that optimally allocate inspectional and laboratory resources?
2. Would it help to develop a depository that enabled information to be transmitted without identifiers (information that would identify the entities that are the source of the information)? What incentives can FSIS use to encourage participation in this data depository project?

3. What controls can be used to assure the quality and reliability of data? Should protocols be required to define the sample design? Who would evaluate data quality?
4. Would the Committee recommend a pilot project to develop a data depository for a single pathogen associated with a product as an initial activity?

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**Attachments**

[http://www.ocio.usda.gov/qi\\_guide/regulatory.html](http://www.ocio.usda.gov/qi_guide/regulatory.html)

11/03 NACMPI Meeting:

Issue Paper – *What is the best use of data to support risk-based inspection?*  
Sub-Committee Report on this Issue