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June 17, 2010

Mr. Alfred Almanza, Administrator  
Food Safety and Inspection Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Washington, DC 20250-3700

Dear Mr. Almanza:

The Conference for Food Protection (CFP) is an organization of food safety professionals from the regulatory, food service, retail food store, food vending, and food manufacturing sectors, as well as academics and consumer representatives. Our goal is to promote food safety through collaboration. We strive for the enactment of science-based retail food laws and regulations throughout the United States.

I am writing at this time to encourage USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA-FSIS) to promulgate regulations requiring that packers or processors of mechanically tenderized beef cuts label these products to identify that they have been pinned, bladed, or otherwise mechanically manipulated in a way that tenderizes the meat by penetrating the intact muscle. CFP is requesting that USDA-FSIS adopt these requirements because of outbreaks of foodborne illness that have occurred from consumption of mechanically tenderized beef cuts. Multi-state outbreaks have occurred in recent years and are well known to USDA-FSIS.

At the recently concluded biennial meeting of CFP in Providence, Rhode Island, an Issue (2010-I-005) called for modification of an existing consumer health advisory addressing consumption of animal proteins that are served raw or less than thoroughly cooked, so that it would also apply to beef cuts that are mechanically tenderized.

The US Food and Drug Administration's **Food Code** is a model retail food law adopted by many local and state retail food safety programs and followed by many in the retail food industry. In Council it was determined that existing language in the **FOOD CODE** would require that such raw animal proteins would be subject to thorough cooking requirements if labeled as mechanically tenderized, and recommended no action be taken on the Issue. The Assembly of delegates overturned the Council recommendation, and sent the Issue to the CFP Executive Board for disposition. The Executive Board is directing this letter to you on behalf of the CFP.

June 17, 2010

Alfred Almanza

Existing provisions of the **Food Code** call for foods of animal origin to be thoroughly cooked according to prescribed methods. An exception is made for whole, intact cuts of beef (e.g. steaks) because contamination of the meat below the surface is significantly reduced relative to mechanically tenderized or comminuted beef cuts . Existing USDA-FSIS regulations do not require that packages bear labeling that specifies when beef cuts have been mechanically tenderized. In many cases mechanically tenderized beef cuts appear to be whole, intact muscle, especially when frozen. Without clear labeling as to mechanical tenderization, food retailers, including restaurants and retail stores, and consumers do not have necessary information to safely prepare these products. In addition, consumers are not adequately advised of the potential increased health risk posed by consumption of less than thoroughly cooked mechanically tenderized beef cuts if they cannot identify them by labeling.

CFP is confident that mandatory labeling of mechanically tenderized beef cuts will reduce the incidence of foodborne illness in the US, a goal we share with USDA-FSIS. CFP is proud of the longstanding participation of USDA-FSIS on our Executive Board, committees, and Councils. Our partnership has facilitated communication between stakeholders and USDA-FSIS, increased understanding of our mutual roles and responsibilities, and given retail food professionals the tools they need to prepare and serve food safely.

If you have any questions please contact our Executive Director, Jeff Lineberry at (916) 645-2439 or [jlcfp@surewest.net](mailto:jlcfp@surewest.net).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mary Fandrey". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Mary Fandrey  
Conference Chair

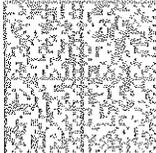


Conference  
for FOOD  
PROTECTION

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Mr. Alfred Almanza, Administrator  
Food Safety and Inspection Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Washington, DC 20250-3700

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