

1 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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5 NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON
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7 MICROBIOLOGICAL CRITERIA FOR FOODS
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10
11 March 28, 2012

12 2:00 pm to 3:12 pm

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14 Plenary Meeting by Teleconference
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16 **MODERATOR:** GERRI RANSOM, M.S.

17 Executive Secretary

18 **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

19 ELIZABETH A. HAGEN, M.D., Chair

20 MICHAEL LANDA, J.D., Vice-Chair

21 ARTHUR P. LIANG, M.D., M.P.H., CDC Liaison

22 ELISA L. ELLIOTT, PH.D., FDA Liaison

23 E. SPENCER GARRETT, M.S., Commerce Dept. Liaison

24 DAVID GOLDMAN, M.D., M.P.H., FSIS Liaison

25 GERRI RANSOM, M.S., Executive Secretary

26 KAREN THOMAS, Advisory Committee Specialist
27

28 **COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

29 DR. WAFA BIRBARI, Sara Lee Corporation

30 DR. V. KELLY BUNNING, HHS/FDA/CFSAN

31 DR. UDAY DESSAI, USDA/FSIS

32 MAJ ROBERT DOLE, DOD/SADVC

33 DR. DANIEL ENGELJOHN, USDA/FSIS

34 DR. KATHLEEN GLASS, University of Wisconsin

35 DR. DAVID GOLDEN, University of Tennessee

36 MR. E.SPENCER GARRETT, U.S. Department of Commerce

37 MS. SUSAN GROOTERS, STOP Foodborne Illness, Consumer Representative

38 DR. MARGARET HARDIN, Institute for Environmental Health & Consulting
39 Group

40 DR. DALLAS HOOVER, University of Delaware

41 DR. LEE JOHNSON, West Liberty Foods, LLC

42 DR. NANDINI NATRAJAN, Keystone Foods, LLC

43 MS. ANGELA RUPLE, U.S. Department of Commerce

44 DR. ROBERT TAUXE, CDC

45 DR. ROBERT WHITAKER, Produce Marketing Association

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Gerri Ransom: Good afternoon and welcome to today's plenary meeting of the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods, or NACMCF. I am Gerri Ransom, NACMCF Executive Secretary, with FSIS Microbiology Division, and we are going to start today by hearing from our chair, Dr. Elizabeth Hagen.

Elizabeth Hagen: Good afternoon, thanks Gerri. And I'd like to also welcome everybody to today's call. I am Dr. Elizabeth Hagen, USDA's Undersecretary for Food Safety, and Chair of the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods, or NACMCF. With me here today is Mr. Mike Landa, the Director of the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, and our NACMCF Vice-chair. This meeting is our plenary meeting for 2012. This is to be our first full meeting by phone, taking advantage of technology. This is an important meeting, as the Committee is coming together to deliberate on recommendations regarding food safety questions from the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), to support ground beef purchase for the School Lunch Program. The plan is for NACMCF to adopt final recommendations for AMS by the close of this meeting today. Our Micro Criteria Subcommittees has been working intensely on this project for the last two months in

74 order to have those recommendations ready to support the AMS
75 2012-2013 school year purchase. On behalf of USDA and the Food
76 Safety and Inspection Service, the Food and Drug Administration,
77 and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, of the
78 Department of Health and Human Services, and the National Marine
79 Fisheries Service of the US Department of Commerce, and the
80 Veterinary Service Activity of the US Department of Defense, we
81 thank each of you for lending your expertise to this project. We
82 especially recognize Spencer Garrett, Subcommittee members, and
83 assisting experts, for their commitment and hard work that went
84 into this project. The entire NACMCF team is to be commended for
85 their monumental effort on this important project that had a
86 very tight timeline. You've heard me say that at USDA we're
87 working to advance the science-based public health agenda. This
88 project supporting the School Lunch Program is an example of
89 where NACMCF has been able to apply science to help strengthen
90 and focus an important food safety program, and support public
91 health. Children's health is a top priority for USDA, and
92 Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack has much appreciated that
93 NACMCF has been able to assist AMS with their school lunch
94 purchase program. As I have kept up with the progress of your
95 work, I've seen firsthand how your perspective, your insight,
96 and your ideas have come together to help strengthen our food

97 safety system. We understand that there is a future part two to
98 this project, so we're extremely pleased that NACMCF will be
99 able to provide continued input to the AMS on school lunch
100 issues. With us today we have Dr. Craig Morris, Deputy
101 Administrator of the Livestock and Seed Program at AMS. He's
102 going to give us some background on the ground beef purchase
103 program for the Federal Food and Nutrition Assistance Program,
104 and on the AMS charge to this committee. So I want to thank you
105 again for serving on NACMCF, and for your work on this project.
106 You serve a very important advisory role, and your contributions
107 help us to build a better food safety system. Thanks so much for
108 your time, and for your dedication to food safety and public
109 health, and I certainly look forward to today's discussion. Now
110 I'd like to turn the floor over to Mr. Mike Landa, the director
111 of FDA's CFSAN, and the NACMCF Vice-chair. Mr. Landa?

112 Mike Landa: Thanks, Dr. Hagen. Good afternoon and I'd like to
113 welcome our members and guests to our plenary session today. Two
114 NACMCF subcommittees have work underway. These are the
115 Subcommittee on Control Strategies for Reducing Foodborne
116 Norovirus Infections. This group is jointly chaired by Drs.
117 Kelly Bunning, FDA, and Uday Dessai, FSIS, who are both with us
118 today. This topic is a concern to all the participating Agencies
119 of NACMCF, because advancing control of the transmission of

120 Norovirus through food is critical to the public health. Our
121 other group is the Subcommittee on the Study of Microbiological
122 Criteria as Indicators of Process Control, or Insanitary
123 Conditions. This Subcommittee is chaired by Spencer Garrett of
124 the National Marine Fisheries Service. This work area is
125 critical to the Department of Defense for ensuring the safety of
126 foods being purchased outside of the US for military personnel.
127 The information gleaned from this project will be applicable to
128 all US food safety agencies. This Subcommittee has spent time
129 during the last two months responding to a second expedited
130 charge, by USDA's Agriculture Marketing Service, to support
131 ground beef purchase for the School Lunch Program. This
132 afternoon we will deliberate on the report and recommendations
133 of the Subcommittee. I'm aware of the work of our members have
134 put into this project thus far, and look forward to hearing and
135 participating in discussion. As Dr. Hagen remarked, the plan is
136 for the full Committee to adopt final recommendations for AMS by
137 the close of this meeting. I said at the last meeting, but I
138 want to repeat here, because people may not have heard it. I
139 come at the work of this Committee from a slightly different
140 perspective. I'm a lawyer, not a scientist. And at the FDA we
141 think of three basic components to our work. The statute, of
142 course, binds us. I say that not only as a lawyer, I think, but

143 as a citizen, a strong believer in the rule of law. The other
144 components are policy-making and the science. And I will say
145 that although I am a lawyer, and some lawyers may well tell you
146 that the law is the most important thing, and some policymakers
147 may tell you that the policy is the most important thing, I
148 actually think science is the most important thing here. That
149 is, getting the science right. And that's because I think you
150 can have bad or less than good or less than ideal policy, and
151 still muddle through whatever matter is before you. I think you
152 can have a less than generous, or a crappy, or maybe even wrong
153 interpretation of the law and still muddle through. But I think
154 if you don't get the science right, you're not going to be able
155 to muddle through, because that's the sort of - the most
156 important part of the foundation. And that's why I think of the
157 work of this Committee as an example. It's so vital to the
158 success of every agency in this country that deals with food
159 safety. Let me also acknowledge something I feel as well as
160 think, and I believe others share that view. And that is that
161 the unique and important strength of NACMCF is the public
162 process. It does matter to us... each of us what the other thinks,
163 as well as what the public thinks. I was listening to a radio
164 program the other day about a Brazilian philosopher, of whom it
165 was said he was always alive to the possibility of learning

166 something from someone, which is, I think, a wonderful thing to
167 be said. I suppose it might ordinarily be said about some
168 philosopher. What else would a philosopher be alive to, but the
169 possibility of learning? Nonetheless, I think it's a useful
170 guide here as well. This Committee is sponsored and led by five
171 agencies that are housed in four departments, and they've come
172 together to develop overarching charges and associated questions
173 that are critical to food safety and public health. So focus of
174 course again is to return to - is on the science. The state of
175 the science, expert opinion, and broader stakeholder opinion on
176 the issue and whatever it may be. What typically emerges is a
177 report that attempts to answer the charge with recommendations,
178 and data or research gaps, a national plan, if you like. The
179 value of the broad scientific membership, the consumer member,
180 the assistance of technical expert volunteers, and the public
181 interest of all stakeholders, scientific, consumer input, has
182 been strength in the past to NACMCF. That strength, I think, is
183 our calling card as we participate in the ongoing charges
184 mentioned earlier today, and as we consider whether to adopt
185 this important report, and as we look to future NACMCF charges
186 under development. In light of the passage of this report and
187 new technologies to subtyping pathogens, supporting our existing
188 approaches, NACMCF is a very dedicated - very much a dedicated

189 advisory group, and again, on behalf of the partner Agencies, I
190 want to express my appreciation and thanks for your time and
191 willingness to share your food safety expertise. I'd now like to
192 turn the floor back to Gerri Ransom.

193 Gerri Ransom: Thank you, Mr. Landa. Now that we've heard from both
194 our Chair and Vice-chair, I'd like to go through our official
195 roll call for the record. I'm going to begin first with folks in
196 the room with me here today who haven't spoken yet, so we can
197 get them on the record. We can go ahead and start. Please state
198 your name and affiliation.

199 DR: Dan Engeljohn, with USDA Food Safety Inspection Service.

200 DR: Uday Dessai, with USDA Food Safety Inspection Service.

201 DR: David Goldman, Food Safety Inspection Service.

202 MR: Craig Morris, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service.

203 DR: Kelly Bunning, Food and Drug Administration, Center for Food
204 Safety and Applied Nutrition.

205 MS: Nicole Nelson Miller, Agricultural Marketing Service.

206 DR: Kerry Smith, Agricultural Marketing Service.

207 MR: Marty O'Connor, Agricultural Marketing Service.

208 DR: Mickey Parrish, FDA Center for Food Safety and Applied
209 Nutrition.

210 DR: Elisa Elliot, FDA Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition.

211 Gerri Ransom: Can I have additional members of the NACMCF Executive
212 Committee please state your name and affiliation?

213 Spencer Garrett: This is Spencer Garrett with the National Oceanic
214 and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries
215 Service.

216 Dr: Art Liang, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

217 DR: Okay. Margaret Hardin, Institute for Environmental Health
218 Laboratories and Consulting Groups.

219 Gerri Ransom: Okay, thank you Margaret, we're starting with the
220 NACMCF Executive Committee members and - I've got one request,
221 Art, could you please repeat?

222 Mr: Sure. This is Art Liang, Arthur Liang, Centers for Disease
223 Control and Prevention, in Atlanta.

224 Gerri Ransom: We'll continue with the NACMCF members on the line.

225 DR: Nandini Natrajan, Keystone Foods.

226 DR: Wafa Birbari, Sara Lee Foods.

227 DR: Lee Johnson, West Liberty Foods.

228 MAJ: Major Bob Dole, Department of Defense.

229 DR: Kathleen Glass, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

230 DR: Dallas Hoover, University of Delaware.

231 DR: Bob Whitaker, Produce Marketing Association.

232 MS: Susan Grooters, Stop Foodborne Illness.

233 Dr: Robert Tauxe, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
234 Atlanta.

235 MS: Angela Ruple, NOAA Fisheries.

236 MR: Spencer Garrett, NOAA Fisheries.

237 Gerri Ransom: David Golden, are you on?

238 DR: Yes, sorry. David Golden, University of Tennessee.

239 Gerri Ransom: Okay. And Stephen Knabel? Okay, thank you, we're
240 missing Steve at this point. Can I now have the assisting experts to
241 the AMS project log in?

242 DR: Calvin Walker, with NOAA Fisheries.

243 DR: Scott Brooks, with Yum! Brands, Inc.

244 MS: Stephanie Mickelson, with USDA Food and Nutrition Service.

245 DR: Joseph Madden, Neogen Corporation, Lansing, Michigan.

246 FS: Brenda Halbrook, USDA Food and Nutrition Service.

247 DR: Tommy Wheeler, USDA Agriculture Research Service.

248 Gerri Ransom: Okay, at this time, can we please have our guests,
249 members of the audience, the public; please let us know who's on
250 the line?

251 DR: This is Mark Powell with USDA Office of Risk Assessment and Cost
252 Benefit Analysis, I spoke over Tommy.

253 Gerri Ransom: Okay, I'm sorry, Mark. We missed you. Mark is another
254 assisting expert.

255 MOD: Go ahead, caller, your line is unmuted. Please state your name
256 and affiliation.

257 FS: This is Lisa Keefe, with Meeting Place.

258 MR: Tim Lawruck, SDIX.

259 DR: Sean Fox, Kansas State University.

260 FS: Evelyne Mbandi, FSIS.

261 FS: Skye Doerscher, Agricultural Marketing Service.

262 FS: [unidentified] Calbon [ph.], [unidentified] Scientific.

263 Gerri Ransom: Okay, for the rest of the folks we're going to defer
264 to the written record. This is Gerri Ransom. I'm going to
265 continue. Before we continue with the program, though, I want to
266 make some business announcements. Most importantly, I wanted to
267 let everyone know who's linked in with us, I wanted to alert you
268 that we have a new version of the document that was released
269 this morning. Spencer's group has received some comments from
270 NACMCF members, and those are in the document in track changes.
271 This document with some new track changes inserted into it is on
272 the FSIS website, so please go to www.fsis.usda.gov, and on the
273 left-hand side enter in NACMCF, N-A-C-M-C-F, or use the link
274 that Karen Thomas-Sharp provided to you, and you will have
275 access to this version of the document. Okay. I also wanted to
276 announce that we do have a Federal Register Notice that came out
277 last week, soliciting nominations for membership on the 2012-
278 2014 NACMCF committee. The current membership term expires on
279 May 11, 2012, with the exception of our consumer slot, and that

280 position runs until 2013. Eligible NACMCF members will have the
281 opportunity to renew their membership, and I've spoken to most
282 of you about this, but I still need to touch base with a couple
283 of folks. NACMCF members may serve for up to two consecutive
284 two-year terms. We would like to have the next NACMCF committee
285 in place as soon as possible after the current term expires, so
286 we are going to be working hard to get the next committee
287 appointed. Please check the FSIS website for this announcement.
288 We are accepting nominations of qualified scientists through
289 April 23rd. We are planning for 30 members to serve on the next
290 NACMCF committee. I also wanted to mention that our current
291 NACMCF charter is on our website. The charter expires November
292 1, 2012. Very soon we will begin work to renew this charter so
293 that we do not have a lapse. Another item of mention is that our
294 NACMCF subcommittee, the Subcommittee on Control Strategies for
295 Reducing Foodborne Norovirus Infections, has an upcoming in-
296 person meeting scheduled in May. That will be May 8-10, and
297 we'll have information on our website about that meeting soon.
298 The group is going to be working here in Washington, DC. Next, I
299 wanted to say that our meeting today has a public comment period
300 listed on the program. Please note that we are soliciting
301 comments only related to the AMS project and report that Spencer
302 Garrett is going to cover today. We are not asking for comments

303 beyond the scope of the NACMCF report being discussed today. For
304 guests wishing to make public comment please let your operator
305 know that you want to comment, and we will take you in turn
306 during our public comment period, and you've already been
307 instructed on how to get in the queue for that. Please limit
308 your comments to five minutes. The last thing that I wanted to
309 say is that Spencer and the Micro Criteria Subcommittee and
310 assisting experts worked extremely hard on this project.
311 Everyone just stepped up to the plate to make this happen. I
312 just wanted to give many, many thanks for your efforts on this,
313 especially to the assisting experts. Now, I wanted to move on to
314 our AMS speaker today, Dr. Craig Morris, Deputy Administrator of
315 the Livestock and Seed Program. He is up next to give us some
316 background on the federal purchase of ground beef for the School
317 Lunch Program, and on the AMS charge to NACMCF, and let me now
318 turn the floor over to Dr. Morris.

319 Craig Morris: Thank you, and I would also like to thank Dr. Hagen
320 and everyone on the National Advisory Committee on
321 Microbiological Criteria for Foods, or I'll refer to it for the
322 rest of the time as NACMCF, for the opportunity to be with you
323 today, to discuss this important partnership between
324 Agricultural Marketing Service, or AMS, and the NACMCF. Before I
325 begin, as I know there have been a number of questions

326 pertaining to this over the past couple of weeks, I want to
327 clarify for those listening in, the NACMCF current charge does
328 not include a review of the inclusion of lean, finely-textured
329 beef, or LFTB, into the National School Lunch Program, or NSLP,
330 ground beef items, and this issue will not be discussed during
331 this teleconference. Also, the testing of non 0157 Shiga toxin
332 producing E. coli, or STEC, was not evaluated by NACMCF during
333 this current charge, and therefore will not be discussed during
334 this teleconference either. However, NACMCF will be reviewing
335 the testing of non-0157 STECs in the future for possible
336 inclusion in program requirements. AMS is seeking NACMCF's
337 advice on two separate work charges. The recommendations
338 presented today are in response to the smaller and first of
339 these two requests, representing AMS's priorities to assist in
340 the purchase of ground beef for the 2012-2013 school year. This
341 will allow AMS to modify the purchase document requirements
342 prior to the agency industry meeting that will be held April 19-
343 20, 2012, when AMS will present any changes for purchases
344 delivered starting July 1, 2012. The larger work request, the
345 second request, will cover all food safety requirements of the
346 Federal Ground Beef Purchase Program, and will be submitted to
347 NACMCF at a later date. USDA intends to use the report as a road
348 map to continue to strengthen its specification development

349 processes. AMS purchases ground beef for USDA's NSLP, which
350 provides nutritionally-balanced, subsidized or no-cost meals to
351 over 31 million children each school day. For fiscal year 2011,
352 our purchases totaled some 165 million pounds of items, ranging
353 from bulk coarse ground beef to cooked beef patties. Regardless
354 of the item, the safety of foods purchased for the NSLP and
355 other federal feeding and nutrition-assistance programs is a top
356 priority at USDA. First and foremost, USDA's federal purchase
357 ground beef food safety requirements are in direct compliance
358 with all applicable Food Safety and Inspection Service, or FSIS,
359 regulations, notices, and directives. FSIS is primarily
360 responsible for the safety of meat and poultry products, whether
361 purchased by USDA, or for use in restaurants or grocery stores.
362 The Federal Purchase Ground Beef Program is built on these FSIS
363 requirements. Since the 1990s, AMS has coordinated technical
364 requirements, development, and modifications with FSIS and the
365 Food Nutrition Service, or FNS, for food safety and nutritional
366 requirements respectively. AMS signed a memorandum of
367 understanding, or MOU, on February 2, 2010, to further ensure
368 effective, efficient, and coordinated activities promoting food
369 safety and public health at regulated firms that supply products
370 to the NSLP and other federal food and nutrition assistance
371 programs. The Agencies now provide a wider range of information

372 and intelligence sharing than they previously did, particularly
373 as it relates to real-time food safety issues. AMS entered into
374 another formalized agreement with the Agricultural Research
375 Service, or ARS, in April of 2010, to systematically review all
376 food safety requirements for each of the specific items
377 purchased by AMS. There have been multiple reviews conducted
378 across different commodity lines, with modifications being made
379 as a result of the recommendations. In December 2010, the
380 National Research Council, or NRC, of the National Academy of
381 Sciences, or NAS, released their report, which USDA requested,
382 on the food safety requirements of the USDA Ground Beef Purchase
383 Program. NRC concluded that the current robust specification
384 requirements for ground beef have been protective of the health
385 of the recipients in Federal Food and Nutrition Assistance
386 Programs over the past decade. The findings and recommendations
387 clearly indicate that there is no single scientifically valid
388 solution to ensure food safety, although we were encouraged to
389 develop a formalized relationship with the NACMCF, to ensure we
390 have a very transparent and robust review of our program. So
391 that leads us to today, and the result of their review. We look
392 forward to the Committee's discussion, and the NACMCF's final
393 recommendations to AMS. We appreciate the commitment of the

394 Committee members and technical experts to this important
395 charge. Thank you very much.

396 Gerri Ransom: Thank you, Dr. Morris, for the background. You set the
397 stage for Spencer to begin. Next on our agenda is Mr. Spencer
398 Garrett, chair of our Subcommittee of Microbiological Criteria
399 of Indicators of Process Control or Insanitary Conditions.
400 Spencer's group has brought a final draft report on the AMS food
401 safety questions to NACMCF today, and we're going to consider
402 this report for adoption. Spencer?

403 Spencer Garrett: Thank you, Gerri, and it's indeed a pleasure and
404 singular honor to have worked with this group to address this
405 important issue. Just a few housekeeping issues as we move
406 forward. Everybody should have the latest draft, which is March
407 28, 2012. And on this draft, you'll see there are lined - the
408 lines are numbered. What I would like to do is for everybody
409 just to make sure, because oftentimes when you print something
410 out, the lines may not be the same among and between different
411 printers. So what I would everybody - would like to do, let's
412 just do a reality check here. And I'm going to throw out a few
413 line numbers, and if you would, let's see if they say the same
414 thing on your copy. For example, line 185. Line 185 should
415 indicate the USDA-AMS, working with the Food Nutrition Service,
416 FNS, the food safety. Does that correlate with most people?

417 FS: Yes.

418 Spencer Garrett: Okay. Now.

419 Spencer Garrett: How about other members or expert committee
420 members? Okay, without exception, then, let's move to... Let's
421 move to line 408. 408. In my copy, that's actually on page 10.
422 And that line indicates, " screen positive results may be
423 confirmed with cultural or non-cultural tests," lower-case a.

424 Gerri Ransom: We see it, Spencer.

425 Spencer Garrett: Does anybody not see it? That's as much ground-
426 truthing as I want to go through. The second point that I want
427 to make out is that we're actually in - we actually occupy here,
428 in Pascagoula, Mississippi, the newest federal laboratory that's
429 been constructed. And everything works, except the telephones.
430 And what happens oftentimes is we may have up to a 20- to a 30-
431 second silence. We can hear you, but you cannot hear us. So
432 we'll just work through that, and remember, we can hear you, but
433 you can't hear us. Okay? The second thing that doesn't seem to
434 work too well is, we had our second fire alarm system yesterday
435 - or last Friday, rather, and it didn't work either. So we're
436 working on both of these - both of these anomalies. Then, if we
437 look at the title page, it's my intention to go through this
438 document page by page. And our - our telephone facilitator has
439 indicated to you what you would - what she would like for you to

440 do about raising your hand and so forth, and it's my
441 understanding she'll - she'll refer those questions to us, or
442 you can - she'll log those questions in. The first page is - oh,
443 and let me say two other things, before we begin. The school
444 lunch program - the National School Lunch Program, and I've been
445 with the government now for 46 years. And in my entire career,
446 it seems to me that this is one of the most outside-reviewed
447 programs in the United States government. It's received numerous
448 GAO reports, as Dr. Morris said, it's the... The National Research
449 Council reviewed, they've had their own Inspector General review
450 that have their own departmental in their - internal compliance
451 review, control review. And so it's a well-reviewed program.
452 Because of that, we were able to make the very tight deadline
453 for this expedited review, because many others have already
454 looked at many of the same issues that we looked at, and we
455 either confirmed them, or we made some recommendations for some
456 modifications. So what I intend to do is go through page by
457 page, and we'll see what happens. Now, the first page is just
458 merely the title page. I presume we all can agree with that. The
459 second point that I want to make as well, is until the entire
460 Committee adopts this report, and it's released by the - because
461 we will be making some modifications, I'm sure, until the final
462 report is released by the Executive Secretariat of NACMCF, this

463 document is a pre-decisional NACMCF draft document, and it
464 should not be quoted or attributed to. Page two is merely the -
465 page i, rather, lower-case i, is merely the table of contents.
466 Without exception, then, we'll move forward to page one. Which
467 is the Executive Summary. And I would point out that within the
468 Executive Summary itself, on line... 78... That the Committee agreed
469 in the overarching conclusion that regardless of adverse
470 speculation relative to the USDA National School Lunch Program,
471 NSLP, it's past tenure food safety record has been exemplary.
472 And moving down from there are the three specific charges that
473 AMS asked NACMCF to review. And then beginning on line 100, we
474 made - in the Executive Summary, we just carried forward the
475 recommendations. And in question one, you'll see our
476 recommendations relative in lines 102 through 107, inclusive.
477 Excuse me. Without exception, then, we'll go to page two.
478 Beginning with line 109 in page two, you'll see question two,
479 recommendations... Beginning with line 135 on page two, you'll see
480 the recommendations - the beginning of the recommendations
481 pertaining to question three. On page three, beginning on lines
482 146, going down to line 182, are the recommendations relating -
483 the remaining recommendations relating to question three... Moving
484 on to page four, there's an indication of the background,
485 relative to what led AMS requesting NACMCF assistance,

486 specifically indicating what the National Research Council
487 provided. And in fact, others who've reviewed - have reviewed
488 the program, such as GAO, the Inspector General, and others,
489 have had similar - have indicated similar recommendations
490 relative to ensuring that the science that supports the School
491 Lunch Program is reviewed periodically with a determination as
492 to its efficacy. Moving on to page 5, again, now, we're getting
493 out of the Executive Summary, and in the report we're indicating
494 specifically what the three charges were again. And you've seen
495 that earlier. Moving down to line 250 on page five, you'll see
496 the first question. AMS is considering eliminating the
497 requirement to test for *Staphylococcus aureus* from the Federal
498 Purchase Ground Beef Program, and AMS asked NACMCF to provide
499 considerations and scientific discussions regarding this action,
500 with respect to public health. Moving on to page six, then, we
501 begin our findings in line 256. And we begin indicating what
502 those findings were, relative to question one, beginning on line
503 257... Moving on to page seven... You'll note table one indicates
504 the total samples positive for >10 colony-forming units per gram
505 for coagulates positive *Staph. aureus*, using the Baird-Parker
506 plating method, and different types and kinds of sampling, and
507 so forth. You'll also note that the Committee did, during our
508 deliberations; the question was raised, should the program be

509 looking at methycillin-resistant *Staph. aureus*, or MRSA staph,
510 as an emerging public health concern? It indicates that MRSA is
511 known for causing pyroderma and other soft tissue infections,
512 like cuts, wounds, and abrasions, but the Committee also
513 recognized that while the MRSA has been isolated from raw beef
514 in the United States in Table 2, which indicates the sampling
515 location for those isolations, and recognizes although cross-
516 contamination with antibiotic-resistant *S. aureus* may be a
517 pathway concern in the future, at this time ingestion is not a
518 recognized pathway for MRSA infections, and therefore is not a
519 relevant microorganism, to be included in the raw beef purchase
520 specifications. It also concluded, based on the above, that
521 eliminating *Staph. aureus* specific testing will not negatively
522 impact the safety and quality. Exclusion of such will not affect
523 the safety and quality of ground beef in the National School
524 Lunch Program. Moving on to page eight, the second question is,
525 should AMS consider the use of alternative screening procedures
526 beyond those stipulated in the FSIS Microbiology Guidebook, in
527 parenthesis, the MLG. And if so, would the AMS testing program
528 results be comparable to FSIS's verification testing programs,
529 and therefore useful to FSIS? What should be considered in
530 distinguishing acceptable and unacceptable alternative screening
531 procedures? Is it appropriate to allow alternative sampling

532 preparation - sample preparation procedures, such as portion
533 size, enrichment broth, portion-to-broth ratio, enrichment
534 times, and temperatures, and so forth, which differed from the
535 MLG, or which differed from by AMS's designated laboratories.
536 You can see the findings there, which go from line 321 through
537 line 342, and we'll continue on the next page, page nine. We're
538 all agreed, on page 343 - I'm hearing a repeat of myself. Did
539 somebody have their hand up? Excuse me.

540 MOD: No, I don't believe so.

541 Spencer Garrett: Okay, thank you. I just heard - I heard somebody
542 else, but it was me. Part of my split personality, I suppose. On
543 line 343, then down through line 380... Moving on to page 10, from
544 380 down to line 407. Then beginning with line 408, down through
545 line 418 on page ten, it indicates what the - excuse me, FSIS
546 guidance is. Essentially, relative to method comparability.
547 Moving on to page 11... That goes through line 423. The
548 conclusions then drawn, relative to question two, are from line
549 426 down to 445. And they are contained in those five bulleted
550 items under the conclusions subheading on line 425... Then the
551 recommendations relative to question two begin on line 448, on
552 page two. And go through line 470 on page 12. And the
553 recommendations are contained in those five bulleted items... Also
554 on page 12, it was thought that we needed to include some

555 definitions... Because people oftentimes perhaps misuse
556 definitions, or actually have different scientific or technical
557 notations. So we felt that it would be helpful for at least -
558 for people reading and understanding this document, what the
559 definitions were relative to question two. You'll see some more
560 in question three. Which takes us to page 13. In page 13, on
561 page 13 rather, question three is repeated on line 490 through
562 494. And our Subcommittee, in beginning to address question
563 three, thought that perhaps it should be clarified somewhat for
564 ease of - restructured to - for ease of examination and
565 discussion. And that is - clarification is line 496 down through
566 and including 503... We have one question here, from Susan, that
567 the... That the lot should be sampling for 1 and 5, and it needs
568 to be made clear what the n is, the n in 5 is, for a lot or a
569 subplot. And I think that could be handled with the - the
570 approval of the Committee in the editing process that this final
571 document must go through. And so that - that should - that
572 comment should be accepted. Without exception then, we'll move
573 on to page 14. Again, Susan indicated on line 549 and 550, n =
574 5, collected every 15 minutes - excuse me, n = 4, collected
575 every 15 minutes. Still would clarify - are four sample units
576 taken every 15 minutes, or 1 sample every 15 minutes? That
577 becomes n = 4 after an hour. This needs to be made crystally

578 clear. Without exception, I would suggest that we handle that
579 during the - during the editing process... Without exception,
580 then, moving on to page 15. It is recommended that lines - line
581 565, where it begins, "In addition to FSIS inspection, all
582 donated meat," et cetera, through line 569, be deleted... Again,
583 without exception then, we'll delete that. Moving on to page 16,
584 then, in line beginning 599, the subheading "Prevalence of
585 Salmonella and *E. coli* O157:H7". Again in line 631, at the very
586 end, which... Indicates 2010. Susan again has a comment. Any
587 information from the study on cross-contamination? I would
588 mention the findings here, especially since we mention that as
589 an argument for why our recommendations are justified for the
590 concerns in the raw product. Hearing no objection, we'll take
591 care of that during the editing process. Moving to then page 17,
592 beginning with line 637, and for ground-truthing again, line 637
593 should read, "Through the Federal Purchase Ground Beef Program,
594 '(NAS 2010)'. Similarly, no confirmed." Does anybody have a
595 document that does not say that in line - that does not indicate
596 that, rather, in line 637? Sensing no objection, moving on to
597 page 18. Susan has another comment. In line 692... And she
598 indicates, after plan, somewhere in this paragraph is a where
599 citation is needed to explain why they're putting an entire
600 day's production, from cleanup to cleanup, is not

601 microbiologically justified. That hotspots work their way out of
602 a system, and therefore help justify the shoulder diverting
603 only.

604 Gerri Ransom: Spencer, can you hear us?

605 Spencer Garrett: Yes.

606 Gerri Ransom: Okay, we're just doing a test. Somehow, we - we were
607 muted. But we're back.

608 Spencer Garrett: Oh, would you like to take us back to a previous
609 page?

610 Gerri Ransom: No, no. Luckily, we were okay.

611 Spencer Garrett: Okay. Again, I suggest this be taken care of
612 during the editing process. Moving on to page 19, then. I want
613 to read... Again in line 712 and 713. 712 says, "Compliance and
614 the consequence of non-compliance. Therefore, identifying an
615 appropriate" continuing on line 713, "sampling plan is not
616 purely a statistical matter." I trust everyone's line - 712 and
617 713 indicates that. Moving on to page 20... Without exception,
618 moving on to page 21. Without exception, moving on to page 22.
619 Without exception, moving on to page 23. Without exception,
620 moving on to page 24.

621 Gerri Ransom: Spencer, this is Gerri. We're getting word that
622 there's a - you possibly skipped page 21.

623 Spencer Garrett: No, I didn't think I did.

624 Gerri Ransom: Okay, we have a report - we heard you go 20 to 22, so
625 maybe you just were going fast.

626 Spencer Garrett: Yeah, it very well could have -

627 Gerri Ransom: That's what happened, the phone went out.

628 Spencer Garrett: Yeah, exactly.

629 Gerri Ransom: Okay. You had a period of silence.

630 Spencer Garrett: For 20 seconds.

631 Gerri Ransom: We missed a page during your silence.

632 Spencer Garrett: Do you have a comment on that page? Without
633 exception, then, page 22 again. Without exception, then, page
634 23. Moving on to page 24, which begins the recommendations. Or,
635 excuse me, which includes recommendations, starting on line 907...

636 Gerri Ransom: Spencer, we lost you again to a period of silence. I
637 apologize to everyone on the phone.

638 Spencer Garrett: That's okay. I believe you had a... Let me look
639 here. Seems to me like you had a question here. That goes back
640 to -

641 Gerri Ransom: Spencer, who had a question?

642 Spencer Garrett: I believe it was Dan, and actually, it went back
643 to the Executive Summary, so let's just park that boat in a
644 marina and we'll go back, okay? Remember, I'm the fish guy. I'll
645 take us back there. Moving on to page 25, then... And also I want
646 you to know, beginning on - to notice, rather, on line 956,

647 again we have definitions for how different words and phrases
648 and sentences are - are used. And number two there I want to
649 repeat. Confidence statements. Confidence applies to an event
650 after the event has occurred. For example, suppose a lot has
651 been sampled and rejected because a pathogen has been detected
652 in the sample units. For that rejected lot, and based on the
653 sampling plan used, one can state with 95% confidence that, for
654 example, 0.5% or more of the sample units in the entire lot will
655 test positive for that pathogen. Note: this is an example of a
656 confidence statement, not a probability statement, because the
657 lot is known to have been rejected. Table three in the text
658 provides confidence statements about rejected/accepted lots, not
659 probability statements. Strike-out accepted. And we'll need to
660 take care of that in the editing process. Then, if you'll move
661 forward to page 26, without exception. In line 972, the
662 definition of probability statements occurs. Probability applies
663 to an event before the event occurs. For example, suppose a lot
664 has a 1% prevalence of a certain pathogen. It could be shown
665 that there's a sampling plan that will detect, with 95%
666 probability, the presence of that pathogen in the lot. Note:
667 This is an example of a probability statement, because the event
668 of sampling and testing has not yet occurred. Frequently in
669 practice, 95% probability is replaced with 95% confidence, which

670 is technically incorrect. See confidence statement, above. So we
671 wanted to clarify that again. That's something that sometimes
672 not necessarily misunderstood, but misstated. Then moving on,
673 when - for the references, beginning on page - on line 998 for
674 question one. Those references continue on from sentence - from
675 line 1011 through line 1023, on page 27. The references for
676 question two that are quoted begin on line 1025, and goes
677 through line 1043. Question three, the quoted references begin
678 on line 1045 and go through to the next page, line - page 28,
679 and also pages - page 29, all the way down through line 1114.
680 Madam Chair, Mr. Vice-chair, with the reading of this report,
681 and noting the edits that need to be made, I would move that the
682 report be adopted by the Committee.

683 Elizabeth Hagen: Thank you, Spencer. Do we have a first and a
684 second motion from the Committee to adopt this document as final
685 with the edits that we've agreed upon?

686 FS: This is Angela Ruple. I'd make the motion that we accept the
687 document, as agreed upon by this Committee.

688 FS: Kathy Glass, University of Wisconsin, Madison. I second the
689 motion.

690 Elizabeth Hagen: Okay. The first and the second motions have made,
691 and there's the document adopted. So thanks, Spencer. The work
692 that you and the Subcommittee did is very, very much

693 appreciated. Congratulations on the adoption of this final
694 document. So Spencer, what are our next steps here?

695 Spencer Garrett: Well, the next steps then, of course, would be -
696 Madam Chair, would be to make the edits here, and then issue the
697 document, and then I'm sure the document through the Executive
698 Secretariat's office would be perhaps re-edited, relative for
699 publication in a journal, such as the Journal of Food
700 Protection, and so forth. And then, relative to our
701 Microbiological Criteria Subcommittee, the next steps there -
702 remember, we deferred working on the DOD work so we could get
703 this expedited review through for the fiscal year 12-13
704 purchasing session for the National School Lunch Program. So
705 what we begin to do, then, is revert back to and pick up where
706 we left off on the DOD charge. And given the time, and the fact
707 that when the charter runs out and so forth, what I would
708 consider doing, what I would wish you and Mr. Landa would
709 consider agreeing to, would be to let us go ahead and have a
710 phone conversation in a couple of weeks relative to that
711 document, and we have - we have done quite a bit of work on
712 that. And I would like to institutionalize that, so when the
713 next Committee comes on board they can pick up where we left
714 off, and continue to complete that.

715 Elizabeth Hagen: Okay. That makes a lot of sense, Spencer. I think
716 that we can - we can arrange that. So Gerri, you want to move us
717 into the next part of our program here?

718 Gerri Ransom: Okay, we are now going to move on to our public
719 comment section of the meeting. Please be reminded that we are
720 soliciting comments only related to the project and document
721 Spencer just covered. I will ask our operators to bring on our
722 folks who would like to make comments. Emily, can you let us
723 know how many folks do we have that wish to make comments at
724 this time?

725 MOD: At this time, there is one person. Just a reminder, if you'd
726 like to ask a question or add a comment, you can dial *1 and
727 you'll be notified when your line is unmuted.

728 MS: Yes. This is Tim Lawruk, from SDIX, and I had a question or a
729 point of clarification for line 437, that addresses the
730 enrichment and sample preparation procedures. And it states that
731 the Committee needs additional time and data to address the
732 appropriateness of changes to enrichment and sample preparation.
733 So I guess, my point of clarification is, does this then assume
734 that sample enrichment and preparation still has to follow the
735 MLG?

736 Spencer Garrett: The answer to that question is yes.

737 MS: Okay. Thank you.

738 MOD: We have one more comment, if you have time.

739 Gerri Ransom: Yes we do. We'd like to take additional comments.

740 MS: Good afternoon. This is Jim Byron with XGenex. It is recognized
741 in the industry that AOAC RI validation requirements for O157:H7
742 test kits are actually a lower-performance standard compared
743 with FSIS published guidelines for test-kit validations. I would
744 just ask that you consider the lines 118a and 358b, where AOAC
745 validation is accepted, and consider that - reconsider that
746 until such time as AOAC-validated methods have been demonstrated
747 in independent third-party laboratory validations to perform at
748 least equal to methods meeting FSIS test-kit published
749 guidelines.

750 Spencer Garrett: The note's duly made.

751 MS: Thank you.

752 Spencer Garrett: And the way that would happen, let me - I think I
753 should explain that. Is there's going to be a follow-on group
754 with us, because we're almost done now on this particular
755 document. But that will probably be addressed - that would be
756 addressed there.

757 Gerri Ransom: Thank you, Spencer.

758 MOD: I am seeing no further comments.

759 Gerri Ransom: Going once, going twice. Do we have additional public
760 comment?

761 MOD: No hands.

762 Spencer Garrett: Well, let me just say then in conclusion that I
763 certainly appreciate all that have worked so diligently on this.
764 I certainly appreciate the... the debate and the discussions that
765 we had, and the enrichment of those discussions by everybody
766 that contributed. And I think it's a job well done in a short
767 time.

768 Elizabeth Hagen: All right, so we're at the close of this NACMCF
769 plenary meeting. Congratulations, everybody, on the adoption of
770 this final report, and my thanks especially again to Spencer,
771 and to the whole team that worked on this and everybody who
772 participated. This is really important work that we've completed
773 here, and we really, truly appreciate it. Gerri, is there
774 anything else?

775 Gerri Ransom: Thank you for everyone's participation today. And I'm
776 going to go ahead and call the meeting adjourned. This closes
777 our March 28, 2012 NACMCF plenary session.

778 MOD: This concludes our program. You may now disconnect.