Terri Nintemann was appointed Deputy Administrator for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) in April 2020. In this role, Nintemann assists the Administrator with overseeing FSIS’ public health mission and leading a dedicated team of employees. These efforts directly support the Agency’s Strategic Goals: Goal 1: Prevent Foodborne Illness and Protect Public Health; Goal 2: Modernize Inspection Systems, Policies, and the Use of Scientific Approaches; and Goal 3: Achieve Operational Excellence.

Nintemann has held several senior leadership roles in FSIS since she joined the Agency in 2003. She most recently served as the Acting Deputy Administrator from March 2020 to April 2020. Prior to this role, she was the Assistant Administrator for the Office of Policy and Program Development, leading the development of Agency policies, including regulations, instructions to the field, and guidance to industry. Previously, Nintemann was the Assistant Administrator for the Office of Planning, Analysis and Risk Management, the Office of Data Integration and Food Protection and the Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Education.

In her career at FSIS, Nintemann spearheaded efforts to modernize the Agency’s use of data, analytical tools and analysis and sharing of data with employees and stakeholders. She enhanced collaboration and strengthened partnerships at all levels. Nintemann also led and managed the FSIS enterprise governance process, a corporate approach to decision making, ensuring it continued to evolve as the process and structure matured.

Before joining FSIS, Nintemann was a professional staff member and legislative director for the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. She also served as a Legislative Director in the House of Representatives and a Legislative Assistant in the U.S. Senate. Nintemann’s passion for public service is rooted in her participation in FFA and 4-H as a young adult. She earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Animal Science and a minor in Ag Economics from the University of Minnesota.
Mindy Brashears  
*Under Secretary for Food Safety*

Dr. Mindy M. Brashears was confirmed on March 23, 2020 as the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) 5th Senate-confirmed Under Secretary for Food Safety, the highest-ranking food safety official in the United States. In this role, Dr. Brashears will continue to lead the Office of Food Safety at USDA, overseeing the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), which has regulatory oversight for ensuring that meat, poultry and processed egg products are safe, wholesome and accurately labeled. She also serves as chair of the U.S. CODEX Policy Committee and offers expert scientific guidance to the CODEX Program, an international food standards-setting body of 188 member countries that protects consumer health and sets international food standards.

Dr. Brashears is committed to working closely with FSIS’ leadership to lead with science, build relationships, and influence behavior change to protect and promote public health. Under Dr. Brashears’ leadership, the FSIS has finalized rulemaking for the modernization of swine inspection, is in the process of implementing pathogen reduction performance standards through the public rulemaking process and is actively seeking new ways to influence positive behavior change to reduce food borne illnesses.

On January 29, 2019, Dr. Brashears was sworn in as the USDA’s deputy under secretary for food safety by Secretary Sonny Perdue. Prior to joining USDA, she was a professor of food safety and public health and the director of the International Center for Food Industry Excellence at Texas Tech University. Dr. Brashears has spent her career improving food safety standards to make an impact on public health through research, outreach and education. She is a Fellow of the National Academy of Inventors and has received numerous awards including the International Association for Food Protection (IAFP) Laboratorian Award, the American Meat Science Association (AMSA) Distinguished Research Award, the AMSA Distinguished Industry Service Award, AMSA Achievement Award and was listed in the National Provisioner’s Top 25 Future Icons in the Meat Industry. She has an extensive publication record in peer-reviewed journals and also holds many patents for her innovative approaches to improving food safety in the food supply.
Carol Blake was appointed as the Assistant Administrator for the Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Education (OPACE) in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) in November 2011. In this role, Blake leads efforts to ensure that all customers receive valuable and consistent food safety information. Her extensive communications experience with FSIS and USDA provides a solid foundation to lead OPACE initiatives. As Assistant Administrator of OPACE, Blake oversees the strategic communication programs that inform and educate a variety of audiences, including Congress, media, consumer and industry stakeholder organizations on FSIS policy and public health activities, foodborne illness prevention efforts, and safe food handling. She also oversees the communication strategies to the Agency’s nearly 9,500 employees nationwide. During her time with USDA, she has seen a wide range of technology advancements that have helped raise the profile of FSIS in the ever-evolving world of 21st century communications. Under her leadership, FSIS has led innovative outreach using traditional and social media, including a multi-million-dollar Ad Council campaign, as well as modernized its website into a mobile-friendly public health tool.

In her current role, she leads efforts that directly link to FSIS’ three strategic goals—Goal 1: Prevent Foodborne Illness and Protect Public Health; Goal 2: Modernize Inspection Systems, Policies, and the Use of Scientific Approaches; and Goal 3: Achieve Operational Excellence. One of Blake’s missions is to increase the number of consumers who follow safe food handling practices through education and awareness campaigns. She has been instrumental in securing behavior research studies that are used to influence consumer messaging and ensures that the public can receive critical food safety information through a variety of social media. She leads the Agency in its development of mobile apps and consumer tools and pursues partnerships with government and non-government organizations to strengthen awareness of FSIS priorities and food safety issues. In August 2008, Blake was named the Director of FSIS’ Congressional and Public Affairs Office. Since joining FSIS in 1999, she held positions that include press officer and deputy director over the correspondence and Freedom of Information Act functions. Before joining FSIS, Blake handled media and communication initiatives for USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service and the Office of Communications.

Though Blake didn’t set out determined for a career at USDA, she feels a strong connection with the Department, as her grandfather was the head of what is now USDA’s Office of Budget and Program Analysis. Blake’s earliest formal experience at USDA entailed working as a clerk with the Forest Service during college breaks. She graduated from Randolph-Macon College with a degree in English.
Shelley Feist is Executive Director of the non-profit Partnership for Food Safety Education. At the Partnership she has focused on delivery of evidence-based food safety information to consumers, on developing networks of health and food safety educators, and on organizational development and effectiveness.

She has appeared on NBC’s Today Show and other media on the topic of safe food handling for consumers. Prior to joining the Partnership, Shelley was with the Pew Charitable Trusts. She has worked for two U.S Senators, focusing on appropriations and domestic policy, and was Director of Government Liaison for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.
Dr. Rob Tauxe

Director of the Division of Foodborne, Waterborne and Environmental Diseases
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Dr. Robert Tauxe is Director of the CDC Division that is charged with prevention and control of foodborne, waterborne and fungal infections. The Division monitors the frequency of these infections in the United States, investigates outbreaks, and develops strategies to reduce the disease, disability and deaths that they cause.

Dr. Tauxe graduated from Yale University in 1975 and received his medical degree from Vanderbilt Medical School in Nashville, Tennessee. He holds a Masters in Public Health degree from Yale and completed an internal medicine residency at the University of Washington. He then trained at CDC in the Epidemic Intelligence Service for two years and joined CDC staff in 1985.

His interests include bacterial enteric diseases, epidemiology and pathogenesis of infectious diseases, epidemiologic and clinical consequences of bacterial genetic exchange, antimicrobial use and resistance to antimicrobial agents, and teaching epidemiologic methods. His faculty appointments include the School of Public Health and the Department of Biology at Emory University, Atlanta.

Dr. Tauxe has written/co-authored 290 journal articles, letters and book chapters.
Frank Yiannas
Deputy Commissioner for Food Policy and Response
FDA, HHS

Frank Yiannas is the Deputy Commissioner for Food Policy and Response, a position he assumed in December of 2018. He is the principal advisor to FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn in the development and execution of policies related to food safety, including implementation of the landmark FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). His leadership role within the Agency covers a broad spectrum of food safety priorities, such as outbreak response, traceback investigations, product recall activities, and supply chain innovation across the full spectrum of FDA-regulated products.

Mr. Yiannas is, in effect, the Agency’s chief ambassador to reduce food safety risks and achieve high rates of compliance with FDA food safety standards, working to develop innovative collaborations with external partners and stakeholders and effective relationships with government and industry leaders, as well as consumer groups.

A renowned food safety expert and author, Mr. Yiannas came to FDA from leadership roles with two industry giants: Walmart and the Walt Disney Company. Through his career, he’s been recognized for his role in elevating food safety standards and building effective food safety management systems based on modern science and risk-based prevention principles. The recipient of numerous awards, in 2007, he received the National Science Foundation’s International Lifetime Achievement Award for Leadership in Food Safety. He is also the recipient of the Collaboration Award by FDA in 2008 and he was named the 2015 Industry Professional Food Safety Hero Award by STOP Foodborne Illness, a consumer advocacy group.

Mr. Yiannas is a past president of the International Association for Food Protection and a past vice-chairman of the Global Food Safety Initiative. He is also an adjunct Professor in the Food Safety Program at Michigan State University, and in 2017 was awarded the MSU Outstanding Faculty Award. A microbiologist, Mr. Yiannas received a B.S. in microbiology from the University of Central Florida and a Master of Public Health degree from the University of South Florida.
Greg Hale is the Vice President and Chief Safety Officer of Worldwide Safety & Health at Disney Parks, Experiences and Products. He leads a global team of engineering, safety, operations, training and technology professionals that keep Disney on the leading edge of theme park safety and technology advancements.

Hale recently served as the 2017 Chairman of the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions.

He has been an active member of the National Safety Council (NSC) where he served on the Board of Directors, Board of Delegates, Community Safety Committee, and Off the Job Safety Committee. Hale received NSC’s Distinguished Service to Safety Award in 2005, the highest honor bestowed on an individual, in recognition of outstanding service in the field of safety.

Hale has contributed to numerous innovations and inventions that have advanced accessibility for persons with disabilities. Some of these include handheld captioning for the deaf and audio descriptions for the blind that for the first time provide captioning and audio descriptions on moving rides and attractions. In addition, he holds patents for numerous safety inventions and is a co-inventor and patent holder for Disney’s FASTPASS®, eliminating long lines at Disney theme park rides and attractions. Hale holds over 85 U.S. and foreign patents.
Christopher ("Chris") Bernstein is the Director for Food Safety Education at USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). In this capacity he serves as the manager of the Food Safe Families Campaign, a national public service advertising campaign designed to educate and empower Americans to prevent foodborne illness. The campaign highlights the four key safe food handling behaviors: Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill. He also manages FSIS’ Meat and Poultry Hotline, a phone line, chat and email service to answer consumer questions on food safety topics. He has served as a spokesperson for the agency during more than 200 interviews, including national outlets such as NBC news, ABC news, CBS news, The Washington Post, BBC World News, Time Magazine, People Magazine, and many more.
Dr. Benjamin Chapman is a Professor and Food Safety Extension Specialist at North Carolina State University. As a teenager, a Saturday afternoon viewing of the classic cable movie, Outbreak, sparked his interest in pathogens and public health. With the goal of less foodborne illness, his group designs, implements, and evaluates food safety strategies, messages, and media from farm-to-fork. Through reality-based research, Dr. Chapman investigates behaviors and creates interventions aimed at amateur and professional food handlers, managers, and organizational decision-makers; the gatekeepers of safe food. Dr. Chapman co-hosts a bi-weekly podcast called Food Safety Talk and tries to further engage folks online through Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and, maybe not surprisingly, Pinterest. Follow on Twitter @benjinchapman.
Food Safety and Inspection Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Barbara Chamberlin
Professor
New Mexico State University
Consumer and Environmental Sciences Specialist
New Mexico Cooperative Extension

Dr. Barbara Chamberlin directs research and games development at the Learning Games Lab in New Mexico State University’s Innovative Media Research and Extension department. The award-winning creates research-based apps, games, animations, videos and programs. Her appointment is with the Extension service, and food safety is a specific content area for development in their studio. Materials developed by the studio were accessed more than 9 million times in 2019 and continue to provide important access to education with the increase in online learning brought by COVID.
Dr. Conrad Choiniere is the Director of the Office of Analytics and Outreach at the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition. Dr. Choiniere provides executive leadership for a broad portfolio of scientific and regulatory functions including risk and decision analysis, social and behavioral sciences, epidemiology, bio statistics and informatics, education and outreach, and food defense. Dr. Choiniere has a Ph.D. in Agricultural and Resource Economics from the University of Maryland and a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering from The Johns Hopkins University.
Dr. Amanda Garcia-Williams is a Behavioral Scientist in the Waterborne Disease Prevention Branch in the Division of Foodborne, Waterborne, and Environmental Diseases (DFWED) at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Her work focuses on applying social and behavioral science to the prevention and control of shigellosis in the United States, and to promoting community hand hygiene related behaviors in domestic settings. Dr. Garcia-Williams received a BS in Biology from Tufts University, and an MPH and Ph.D. in Behavioral Sciences and Health Education from Emory University. She joined CDC in 2015 as an Epidemic Intelligence Service Officer in the Division of Violence Prevention and she joined DFWED in 2017. Dr. Garcia-Williams has supported multiple CDC wide responses, including the Zika, Ebola, and COVID-19 responses. During the COVID-19 response, she led the Social and Behavioral Science Unit on the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Team and initiated multiple studies exploring hygiene related behaviors during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Carletta Ooton is Amazon’s Vice President for Product Assurance, Risk & Security. She oversees the company’s Product Assurance, Food Safety, Trade Services, Product Safety & Recalls, Transportation Risk & Compliance, Dangerous Goods, Global Security Operations and Environmental Assurance & Protection teams worldwide.

Her responsibilities include establishing global standards and policies, managing emerging issues, developing and deploying global programs and ensuring effective risk identification and mitigation worldwide. Ooton has been actively involved with industry and government collaboration across many of her areas of responsibility.

Before joining Amazon, Ooton worked at The Coca-Cola Company where she served as the company’s Chief Quality, Safety & Sustainable Operations Officer and the VP of Technical Operations & Capability Development. Prior to that she worked for Cott Beverages, Bath & Body Works, Unilever, and Tate & Lyle.

Ooton received dual Bachelor of Science degrees in Biological Sciences and Chemistry, and a Master of Science degree in Microbiology from Southern Illinois University.
Dr. Betsy Booren currently serves as Senior Vice President of regulatory and technical affairs at the Consumer Brands Association. Dr. Booren provides strategic leadership to the technical and regulatory platforms on behalf of the CPG industry. She also works with industry experts to ensure regulatory compliance and provides informed analyses on a variety of issues including product safety, new technologies and public health initiatives.

Before joining the Consumer Brands Association in 2018, Dr. Booren was the Senior Policy Advisor for Olsson Frank Weeda Terman and Matz, assisting food industry clients with FDA and USDA regulatory compliance issues. Prior to her time at OFW Law, she spent seven years at the Meat Institute and its affiliated organizations in a variety of roles, including Vice president of Scientific Affairs, as well as President for the Foundation of Meat and Poultry Research and Education. In these positions, she executed the scientific policy platform for the meat and poultry industry and leveraged the industry’s scientific needs, leading to better understanding of pathogens of concern for the industry. Powering every day.

Dr. Booren is an active member of the International Association for Food Protection, Institute of Food Technologists and American Meat Science Association, where she served on the board of directors. She spent two terms as a member of the USDA’s National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection and is a lead instructor for Preventive Controls for Human Foods, Preventive Controls for Animal Foods, and Foreign Supplier Verification Programs FSVP courses.

Dr. Booren earned a bachelor of science from Michigan State University, a master of science from University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a Ph.D. from Texas A&M University. She resides in McLean, VA. She's fascinated by the CPG industry’s most innovative and new products, with a penchant for trying the latest skincare tech, snack flavor combinations and other cutting-edge inventions that companies create every day.
Beth Breeding is Vice President of Communications and Marketing at the National Turkey Federation. Prior to joining NTF in 2018, she served on Capitol Hill, most recently as Deputy Chief of Staff for Congressman Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.). She earned her undergraduate degree in Communication from Virginia Tech and her master’s degree in Political Management from George Washington University.