

ENSURING A SAFE FOOD SUPPLY: A CONCISE GUIDE TO THE U.S. FOOD REGULATORY SYSTEM

COMPILED BY: IFIC

Your source for reliable, science-based food safety and nutrition information
and consumer insights

QUESTIONS? 202/296-6540 www.foodinsight.org

MAIN AGENCIES RESPONSIBLE FOR FOOD REGULATION



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE:

FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE

Contact: phone 202/720-9113
<http://www.fsis.usda.gov>

Mission:

- Ensure that the nation's commercial supply of meat, poultry, and processed egg products is safe, wholesome, and correctly labeled.

Food Regulatory Responsibilities:

- Enforces food safety laws governing domestic and imported raw and processed meat and poultry products, and processed egg products and establishes regulatory requirements to implement these laws.
- Inspects meat and poultry slaughter and processing plants and egg processing plants, and imports.
- Requires HACCP* systems at meat and poultry plants.
- Requires meat and poultry plants to conduct microbial testing and sets microbial criteria for certain foods.
- Develops labeling requirements for meat, poultry and processed egg products and verifies accuracy of labeling.
- Educates consumers about safe food handling, food labeling, and food defense. Operates meat and poultry hotline: 1-888-MPHotline
www.askkaren.gov



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (DHHS):
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION



Contact: phone 888/INFO-FDA (888/463-6332)
<http://www.fda.gov>

Food Safety Centers/Offices Missions:

- **Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN):** Ensures food supply is safe, sanitary, wholesome, and honestly labeled.
<http://www.foodsafety.gov/list.html> (800/723-3366)
- **Office of Regulatory Affairs:** Protects consumers and enhances public health by maximizing compliance of FDA regulated products and minimizing risk associated with those products <http://www.fda.gov/ora/>

Food Regulatory Responsibilities:

- Enforces food safety laws governing domestic and imported food, *except* meat, poultry, and processed egg products.
- Regulates about 80 percent of U.S. food supply, including produce, dairy products, seafood, processed foods, shell eggs, and animal feed and pet food.
- Develops policies and regulations for nutrition labeling and standards for foods, dietary supplements, infant formula and medical foods.
- Approves food and animal feed additives and affirms their Generally Recognized As Safe status.
 - Inspects food production establishments and food warehouses.
 - Requires HACCP* systems at processing plants for seafood and juice.
 - Sets microbial criteria for certain foods.
 - Develops Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) and Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and other production standards.
 - Educates consumers about safe food handling practices, cooking, food labeling and food defense systems.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances (OPPTS)
Contact: phone 703/305-7090 <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/>



Mission: To protect human health and the environment.

Food Safety Responsibilities:

- Ensures that pesticides used in food production are safe.
- Establishes tolerances, the maximum amount of pesticide residue that may remain on or in treated crops, animals and animal products.
- Ensures proper use of pest management techniques used on crops.
- Establishes regulations and standards for safe drinking water.

*Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) systems identify, evaluate and control food safety hazards.

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OTHER AGENCIES

Agency	Contact	Food Regulatory Responsibilities
<i>Department of Agriculture</i>		
Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)	202/720-8998 www.ams.usda.gov	Provides standardization, grading, certification, auditing, and inspection for six commodity programs. Administers the National Organic Program.
Agricultural Research Service (ARS)	202/720-3656 www.ars.usda.gov	Conducts research to ensure high quality, safe food and other agricultural products, and to assess the nutritional needs of Americans.
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)	202/720-2511 www.aphis.usda.gov	Determines and implements standards for the care and treatment of animals. Safeguards agriculture and natural resources from risks associated with the entry, establishment, or spread of animal and plant pests and noxious weeds.
Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP)	703/305-7600 www.cnpp.usda.gov	Develops and promotes dietary guidance that links scientific research to the nutrition needs of consumers. Administers the <i>Dietary Guidelines for Americans</i> , which include food safety recommendations.
Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)	703/305-2281 www.fns.usda.gov/fns/	Provides children and needy families better access to food and a more healthful diet through food assistance programs and comprehensive nutrition education efforts. Administers National School Lunch Program.
National Agricultural Library (NAL) USDA/FDA Food Safety Information Center	301/504-5719 www.nal.usda.gov/fnic	Maintains a database of computer software, audiovisuals, posters, games, teachers' guides and other educational materials on preventing foodborne illness. Helps educators, food service trainers, and consumers locate educational materials on preventing foodborne illness.
<i>Other Agencies</i>		
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) DHHS	404/639-3534 (800/311-3435) www.cdc.gov	Conducts surveillance of foodborne illness and investigates multi-state outbreaks in cooperation with FDA or USDA (depending on the product) and state agencies where the outbreaks have occurred. Conducts National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) on the health and nutrition of the U.S. population.
Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) FDA / DHHS	240/276-9300 www.fda.gov/cvm/	Regulates the manufacture and distribution of food additives and drugs that will be given to animals.
Department of Homeland Security	202/282-8000 www.dhs.gov/index.shtm	Coordinates partnerships among federal agencies, state and local leadership, and private industry to protect the nation's food and agriculture supply from terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies.
Federal Trade Commission	202/326-2222 www.ftc.gov	Enforces a variety of laws that protect consumers from unfair, deceptive, or fraudulent practices, including deceptive and unsubstantiated advertising.
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Department of Commerce	301/713-2334 www.nmfs.noaa.gov	Provides a voluntary Seafood Inspection Program that inspects and certifies fishing vessels, seafood processing plants, and retail facilities according to federal sanitation standards. Works cooperatively with FDA's Office of Seafood, and uses FDA criteria to evaluate seafood products and processes.



STATE REGULATORY AGENCIES

These entities – including state departments of health and agriculture – work with FDA, USDA, and other federal agencies to implement food safety standards for all foods produced within state borders. The laws and standards they enforce are encouraged to coincide with either federal laws or uniform model codes such as those created by the Association of Food and Drug Officials. State agencies inspect restaurants, grocery stores and other retail food establishments, as well as dairy farms and milk processing plants, grain mills, and food manufacturing plants within local jurisdictions. In addition, they can halt the sale (embargo) of unsafe food products made or distributed within state borders. Food products that cross state lines (interstate shipment) are subject to federal jurisdiction.

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ISSUE RESPONSIBILITY BY FEDERAL AGENCY

Issue	Agency
Animal and plant diseases/pests	APHIS
Animal feed additives	CVM
Fish and seafood products (except catfish)	CFSAN, NOAA/ NMFS
Biotechnology	APHIS, CFSAN, EPA
Eggs (processed): regulation and inspection	FSIS
Eggs (shell): regulation and inspection	CFSAN
Food and color additives, ingredients	CFSAN, FSIS
Food labeling	CFSAN, FSIS
Food recalls	CFSAN, FSIS
Food security/protection/defense	USDA, CFSAN, DHS
Foodborne illness education	FSIS, CFSAN, CDC
Foodborne illness outbreaks/ surveillance	CDC
HACCP	CFSAN, FSIS
Imported food	CFSAN, FSIS
Inspection of food animals	FSIS
Inspection of food processing plants (non meat)	CFSAN
Inspection of meat and poultry slaughter facilities and processing plants	FSIS
Irradiation	CFSAN
Microbial standards	FSIS, CFSAN
National Organic Program	AMS
Packaging requirements	CFSAN, FSIS
Pesticides (enforces tolerances established by EPA)	CFSAN, FSIS
Pesticides (establishes tolerances)	EPA
Pesticides (regulates development, distribution, promotion, handling, stor- age, use, disposal)	EPA
Safe food handling practices	CFSAN, FSIS, CDC
School meal programs	FNS
Veterinary (animal) drugs	CVM

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

CONTACT IFIC FOR MORE INFORMATION

International Food Information Council Foundation

Phone: 202/296-6540
<http://www.foodinsight.org/>

Gateway to Government Food Safety Information

<http://www.foodsafety.gov/>

Partnership for Food Safety Education

Phone: 202/220-0651
<http://www.fightbac.org/>

Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST)

Phone: 515/292-2125
<http://www.cast-science.org/>

Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (Better Business Bureau)

<http://www.bbb.org/us/childrens-food-beverage-initiative/>

Congressional Resources

Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry

Phone: 202/224-2035
<http://agriculture.senate.gov/>

Senate Committee on Appropriations

Phone: 202/224-7363
http://appropriations.senate.gov

Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

Phone: 202/224-5375
http://help.senate.gov

U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture

Phone: 202/225-2171
<http://agriculture.house.gov/index.shtml>

U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations

Phone: 202/225-2771
<http://appropriations.house.gov/>

U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Energy & Commerce

Phone: 202/225-2927
<http://energycommerce.house.gov/>

Industry Groups

Food Marketing Institute (FMI)

Phone: 202/452-8444
<http://www.fmi.org/>

Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA)

Phone 202/639-5900
<http://www.gmaonline.org/>

National Restaurant Association (NRA)

phone 202/331-5900
<http://www.restaurant.org/>

Consumer Advocates

Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI)

Phone 202/332-9110
<http://www.cspinet.org/>

Consumer Federation of America

Phone: 202/387-6121
<http://www.consumerfed.org>

National Consumers League

Phone: 202/835-3323
<http://www.nclnet.org/>

