

Clinton seeks to test hot dogs for listeria

By Arshad Mohammed

WASHINGTON, May 6 (Reuters) - President Bill Clinton said Saturday he planned to require food companies to test hot dogs, lunch meats and other prepared foods for the deadly listeria bug that kills about 500 Americans each year.

Listeria, which can cause high fever, nausea, stiff necks as well as miscarriages in pregnant women, has forced dozens of food recalls in recent years, including a late 1998 outbreak blamed for 21 deaths and more than 100 illnesses in 22 states.

While listeria contamination in processed meat products has received the most media attention, the bacteria have also prompted recalls of packaged salads, cheese, smoked fish, chocolate milk and other non-meat foods.

"Millions of Americans get sick from eating contaminated food each year," Clinton said in his weekly radio address. "A staggering 20 percent of listeria infections result in death."

"It's rarely the healthy adults who come down with listeria infections. Instead it's the most vulnerable among us: infants, the elderly, pregnant woman and those whose immune systems have been weakened by chemotherapy or AIDS," he added.

To combat the illness, known as listeriosis, the president ordered the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to develop proposed regulations requiring companies to make systematic checks for the bacteria at food plants.

The goal, he said, was to cut in half over five years the number of illnesses related to listeria, which sickens 2,500 Americans each year and kills one-fifth of them according to the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The rules, which U.S. officials hope could go into effect the end of the year, aim to prevent cross-contamination at processing plants, set appropriate standards for ready-to-eat products and ensure they are safe throughout their shelf life.

Clinton also ordered the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to study further steps, including publishing guidance to help food processors and retailers to avoid the bacteria that thrive in refrigerated temperatures, and to work with the USDA on studying whether enhanced food labeling would help protect consumers.

It has not been decided whether the rules, which have yet to be written up and would be subjected to a period for public comment before becoming final, would require testing of the packaged end product.

Consumer groups have urged the USDA for more than a year to require end-product testing, contending that is a key way to evaluate if plant food safety procedures are working properly.

The meat processing industry generally opposes mandatory end-product testing as expensive and inconclusive and argues that packages of hot dogs, sausages and other prepared meats could be contaminated at the store or in a home refrigerator.

The Clinton administration plans to hold a public meeting on May 15 to gather comments from consumer groups and the meat industry, and the USDA and HHS have 120 days to report to the president on their plans to meet his goal of cutting in half the number of listeria-related illnesses by 2005.

CONGRESS TAKES "STEP BACKWARD"

Consumer activists praised the administration's latest measures as evidence of a White House commitment to make the U.S. food supply safer.

"I strongly endorse their goals. They are taking some steps in the right direction," Carol Tucker Foreman, director of food policy for the Consumer Federation of America, said on Friday.

(112)
192

"What the industry is doing now obviously isn't working well because they keep having outbreaks of listeria."

Clinton also used his weekly radio address to criticize the Republican-led Congress for having failed this week to give the Democratic White House all of the \$68 million it is seeking for its effort to improve U.S. food safety.

"The Congress took a major step backward by refusing to fully fund our food safety initiative," Clinton said.

"In fact, they've now voted to block funding for our new efforts to protect millions of American families from the dangers of salmonella poisoning in eggs," he added. "We should be doing more, not less, to ensure the safety of our food."

REUTERS

Rtr 10:06 05-06-00

:SUBJECT: DOAG GRNS SOYB EMFS LIVE FDPR INSU MED USA GEN

Copyright (c) 2000 Reuters

Received by NewsEDGE/LAN: 05/06/2000 10:15 AM

John

Meat Safety, 3rd Ld-Writethru, a0610,770
Clinton announces steps to reduce listeria poisonings

sted meal

PHILIP BRASHER=

Farm Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) The government will require companies that churn out hot dogs and cold cuts to test their plants for the deadly listeria bacterium, President Clinton announced Saturday. The goal is to reduce listeria-caused illnesses by one-half over five years.

While poisoning fewer people than pathogens such as salmonella, *Listeria monocytogenes* is estimated to kill 500 Americans a year and sicken 2,000 more. A third of the cases involve pregnant women and their babies, experts say.

The plan is one of a series of food safety initiatives the administration has promoted recently, from eggs to genetically altered foods, as Clinton seeks to burnish his legacy as consumer protector. The proposals may not take effect until after Clinton leaves office in January and still could be blocked by Congress.

Chiding lawmakers for not going along so far with the egg safety plan, Clinton said, "We should be doing more, not less, to ensure the safety of our food."

Under the listeria rules the Agriculture Department expects to propose in four months, processors will have to test for *Listeria monocytogenes* and related bacteria on equipment, floors and other areas around their plants. The tests are designed to warn of sanitation problems that could lead to meat contamination.

Many companies already test on their own. They do not have to share the results with the government and have no government

delines for what must be done when listeria bacteria are found.

USDA officials say they do not plan to require systematic testing of meat products themselves, a measure consumer advocates contend would provide an extra check on plant processes. Department inspectors now test small numbers of samples for listeria.

In 1998, 2.5 percent of 3,547 samples checked nationwide tested positive for the bacterium.

"While our administration has already taken a number of important steps to reduce the threat of listeria, it's clear we must do more to protect Americans," Clinton said in Saturday's weekly radio address.

In addition to the testing requirement, the administration will consider requiring new labeling for packaged meats to warn consumers about listeria.

The administration's plan is a "great leap forward" for consumers, said Caroline Smith DeWaal of the Center for Science in the Public Interest. "It is the first time the processed meat industry has been required to check for bacteria."

An outbreak of listeria poisoning in 1998 killed 15 people and sickened at least 100 and was traced to meat processed at a Sara Lee Corp. plant in Michigan. The company recalled 15 million pounds of hot dogs and lunch meats, and the Agriculture Department ordered plants nationwide to revamp their processing methods to prevent listeria contamination.

Clinton's goal is realistic, but "there is a lot to be done between now and there in figuring out how we get there," said Dane Bernard, vice president of the National Food Processors Association.

"Government data show that (listeria) has declined in ready-to-eat meat and poultry products, proving that industry and government are taking the right steps to address this problem," Bernard said.

Seven food industry organizations said in a joint statement that a recent survey found that more than 90 percent of processed meat

112
1982

and poultry plants already use microbiological tests to help control listeria, complementing tests already performed by federal inspectors.

The industry also is researching new technologies to prevent maturation of listeria, including pasteurization and ingredients and packaging that retard pathogen growth, said Jim Hodges, president of the American Meat Institute Foundation.

"Testing for pathogens can be helpful," Hodges said. "But testing doesn't kill pathogens. Technology does."

Listeria can be found in hot dogs, delicatessen meats, soft cheeses like Brie or feta, unpasteurized milk products and undercooked meat, poultry or seafood.

Listeria causes flu-like symptoms in most healthy people, but it can be serious in the young, old or weak. In pregnant women, the bacterium can cause miscarriage or stillbirth even if the mother feels no symptoms. Pregnant women are advised to reheat ready-to-eat foods, including cold cuts, and avoid soft cheeses.

On the Net: USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service:

<http://www.fsis.usda.gov>

FDA: <http://www.fda.gov>

Partnership for Food Safety Education: <http://www.fightbac.org/>

AP-NY-05-06-00 2030EDT

Copyright (c) 2000 The Associated Press

Received by NewsEDGE/LAN: 05/06/2000 8:40 PM

Joe

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Clinton to require food firms to test for listeria

WASHINGTON—President Clinton announced steps Saturday to require food companies to test hot dogs, lunch meats and other prepared foods for the listeria bug, which kills about 500 Americans a year.

Listeria, which can cause high fever, nausea and stiff necks as well as miscarriages in pregnant women, has forced dozens of food recalls in recent years, including a late 1998 outbreak blamed for 21 deaths and more than 100 illnesses in 22 states.

While listeria contamination in processed meat products has received the most media attention, the bacteria have also prompted recalls of packaged salads, cheese, smoked fish, chocolate milk and other non-meat foods.

"Millions of Americans get sick from eating contaminated food each year," Clinton said in his weekly radio address. "A staggering 20 percent of listeria infections result in death.

"It's rarely the healthy adults who come down with listeria infections. Instead it's the most vulnerable among us: infants, the elderly, pregnant woman and those whose immune systems have been weakened by chemotherapy or AIDS," he added.

To combat the illness, known as listeriosis, the president ordered the Department of Agriculture to develop proposed regulations requiring companies to make systematic checks for the bacteria at food

plants.

The goal, he said, is to cut in half over five years the number of illnesses related to listeria, which sickens 2,500 Americans each year and kills one-fifth of them, according to the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The rules, which U.S. officials hope could go into effect by the end of the year, aim to prevent cross-contamination at processing plants, set appropriate standards for ready-to-eat products and ensure they are safe throughout their shelf life.

Clinton also ordered the Department of Health and Human Services to study further steps, including publishing guidance to help food processors and retailers to avoid the bacteria that thrive in refrigerated temperatures, and to work with the USDA on studying whether enhanced food labeling would help protect consumers.

Consumer groups have urged the USDA for more than a year to require end-product testing, contending that is a key way to evaluate if plant food safety procedures are working properly.

The meat processing industry generally opposes mandatory end-product testing as expensive and inconclusive and argues that packages of hot dogs, sausages and other prepared meats could be contaminated at the store or in a home refrigerator.

Washington Post 5-7-00 NY

(117)

USDA Rules to Target Deadly Food Bacteria

Clinton Proposes Testing for Listeria Contamination at Meat Processing Plants

By GUY GUGLIOTTA
Washington Post Staff Writer

President Clinton announced yesterday that for the first time the government will require meat processing plants to test for contamination by the listeria bacterium, blamed for about 500 deaths each year nationwide.

"It's clear we must do more to protect Americans from this deadly pathogen," Clinton said in his weekly radio address. The new regulations, he added, "will allow us to cut in half the number of listeria-related illnesses over the next five years, and save well over a thousand lives."

Agriculture Undersecretary Catherine Woteki said Clinton had asked the Agriculture Department to propose new listeria testing rules within four months and was soliciting opinions before holding a public meeting on the new rules 15.

Clinton's action came more than a year and a half after 100 people fell ill and 21 died from eating hot dogs and other processed meats contaminated with listeria from Sara Lee's Bil Mar Foods packing plant in Michigan.

The administration was criticized sharply for being slow to take action during a catastrophe that Clinton described yesterday as "the nation's most deadly food-safety epidemic in 15 years."

USDA officials have responded by saying they lacked the regulatory authority to move quickly in contamination cases, a problem the new rules will help alleviate by "preventing the occurrence of outbreaks," Woteki said. The regulations will not, however, allow the USDA to order mandatory recalls of contaminated foods or seek civil penalties against violators.

Still, consumer groups hailed Clinton's action yesterday "as a very significant step," according to Caroline Smith DeWaal, food safety director for the Center for Science in the Public Interest. "It signals for the industry that microbial testing in meat processing is here to stay."

The National Food Processors Association reacted more cautiously. Dane Bernard, the association's vice president for food safety programs, said in a statement that more than 90 percent of meat and poultry processing plants nationwide already use some form of microbiological testing for listeria.

"We'll want to see what the details are," said Tim Willard, the group's spokesman. "The questions we have are about how you do this so it really enhances food safety rather than simply promotes regulatory window dressing."

Listerium monocytogenes may

be less widely known than the microbes salmonella and *E. coli*, but it is much deadlier, killing about 20 percent of the 2,500 people it infects each year.

Most at risk are the very young, the very old and those weakened from illnesses, AIDS or other immune disorders. Listeria can cause miscarriage or still-birth, even though a mother-to-be may not even feel the flu-like symptoms caused by the microbe.

Listeria can infect hot dogs, sausages, cold cuts, undercooked fish, seafood and some products made from unpasteurized milk, including some soft cheeses. Woteki said contamination appeared more likely to spread through the plant "environment"—on pipes, equipment, machinery, drains or surfaces—rather than to be generated by the meat processing itself.

But listeria's most dangerous characteristic, Woteki suggested, is that it thrives under refrigeration. Thus, she continued, while advances in food preparation have slowed spoilage of processed meats, the prolonged shelf life may actually increase the chances of listeria contamination.

"Another contributor is the increasing concentration [of production] within the industry," Woteki continued. "All of this—fewer companies, quick distribution over a broad area and the longer

shelf life—is contributing to a broader scale of outbreaks."

Woteki said the USDA's new regulations could move in several directions. The department may require swab tests of the plant environment "to verify their sanitation standard operating procedures," she said.

Also, while the department's Food Safety and Inspection Service already tests hot dogs and deli meats on a spot basis, it may seek to expand its authority to include other product categories.

Finally, Woteki said, the USDA may require companies to reexamine the "sell by" and "use by" dates printed on their processed meat packages in light of listeria's vigor under refrigeration.

Woteki acknowledged, however, that an expanded regulatory regime did not carry an enforcement component. That would have to come with passage of pending legislation giving the USDA authority to impose mandatory recalls and impose civil penalties.

"We should be doing more, not less, to ensure the safety of our food," said Clinton, urging Congress to act. "After all, the [Agriculture] Department has the right to penalize a circus to protect animals from harm; it's about time we gave them the tools they need to protect human beings from harm, too."

Clinton Orders Testing To Reduce Bacteria

WASHINGTON, May 6 (AP) — President Clinton announced measures today to reduce outbreaks of listeriosis, caused by a food-borne bacterium, including a requirement that food processors systematically test their plants for it.

Mr. Clinton said in his weekly radio address that he wanted to cut the rate of listeria illnesses in half by 2005, five years earlier than the administration's current goal.

Listeria monocytogenes is estimated to sicken 2,500 Americans a year and kill 500. Experts estimate that one-third of those cases involve pregnant women and babies.

The Agriculture Department expects to propose rules requiring processors to test for the bacterium on equipment, floors and other areas around their plants.

NY Times
5-7-00
A28

AP 5-3 11A

THE NATION

Clinton Wants Listeria Testing for Meat

■ **Health:** Processing plants would have to check their environment for the bacterium, deadlier than *E. coli*.

By JUDY PASTERNAK
TIMES STAFF WRITER

WASHINGTON—A plan proposed by President Clinton on Saturday would require meat-product companies to test their factories for the deadly *Listeria* bacterium in an effort to cut the number of illnesses and deaths it causes in half by 2005.

Listeria sickens about 2,000 people a year, about the same as the *E. coli* bacterium. But *Listeria* results in death in about 25% of cases, as opposed to about 5% for *E. coli*. About 78 million Americans fall ill and 5,000 die annually from all types of tainted food, federal health officials estimate.

Listeria cases dipped in the late 1980s, but have increased again in recent years, according to Lester M. Crawford, director of Georgetown University's Center for Food and Nutrition Policy.

The Clinton proposal, which could be blocked by Congress, is one of a series of food-safety initiatives he has pushed as president. In his weekly radio address, which he used to promote the



Agence France-Press

President Clinton and First Lady Hillary Clinton arrive in Fort Smith, Ark., for the wedding of White House staffer Stephanie Street.

Listeria initiative. Clinton also said he was disappointed that Congress recently obstructed funding for an egg safety measure to reduce the incidence of *Salmonella* bacteria.

"We should be doing more, not less, to ensure the safety of our food," Clinton said.

U.S. Department of Agriculture officials expect to unveil specific *Listeria*-testing rules in about four months. Processors would have to test their equipment, floors and other areas for the bacteria, which can be found everywhere from water to human hair.

Vegetables, meat, poultry and dairy products can all carry *Listeria*.

Tim Willard, a spokesman for the National Food Processors Assn., said the industry intends to work with government officials to "put together rules that truly enhance food safety, rather than just food-safety window-dressing."

He added that many factories already do "some form of microbiological testing," including for *Listeria*. "A lot of what the president is talking about is already in place."

Government agencies, consumer groups and industry representatives will meet May 15 to discuss how to reduce the presence of *Listeria*, he said.

Systematic testing of the meat products themselves would not be required under Saturday's proposal. Government inspectors now do random exams.

Consumer groups have advocated mandatory product testing and warning labels on foods that have caused listeriosis. The industry has promoted irradiation of processed, ready-to-eat foods as an effective way to exterminate a range of bacteria, including *Listeria*.

"Testing for pathogens can be helpful," said Jim Hodges, president of the American Meat Institute Foundation. "But testing doesn't kill pathogens—technology does."

The industry asked the Food

and Drug Administration last year for permission to irradiate processed food, as is already allowed for fresh meat. The request is under review.

Listeria rarely harms healthy people but can be fatal to fetuses, newborns, the elderly and those with poor immune systems.

In March, Sara Lee Corp. recalled 34,500 pounds of Ball Park franks from stores in 15 Eastern and Midwest states after investigators found *Listeria* in the hot dogs. Sixteen months before that, 21 people died after eating processed meats contaminated with *Listeria* from a Sara Lee packing plant in Michigan.

In late 1999, at least 11 cases of listeria poisoning were linked to a New Jersey-based purveyor of specialty foods, which recalled 26 lines of pates, mousses and terrines. Another New Jersey company, a supermarket chain, recalled 900 pounds of assorted deli products because it suspected listeria contamination.

In January 1999, Thorn Apple Valley recalled 30 million pounds of hot dogs and luncheon meats produced at an Arkansas plant because of possible listeria contamination.

Over the past three years, Clinton has created a food safety council to coordinate the 12 agencies with responsibilities in that area, and also proposed warning labels on unpasteurized juices, a clampdown on imports of tainted food and the egg safety plan.

USA Today
5800

7D

112

Meatpackers must test for listeria soon

The government will require companies that churn out hot dogs and cold cuts to test their manufacturing plants for the deadly listeria bacterium. President Clinton announced Saturday. The goal is to reduce listeria-caused illnesses by half over five years. While poisoning fewer people than pathogens such as salmonella, *Listeria monocytogenes* kills about 500 Americans a year. About 2,000 people, a third of them pregnant women and their babies, get sick from the microbe. The plan is one of a series of food safety initiatives the administration has promoted recently, from eggs to genetically altered foods. The Agriculture Department expects to propose rules within four months detailing the requirements for food processors to test for *Listeria monocytogenes* and related bacteria on equipment, floors and other areas around their plants. Many companies already test on their own, but they do not have to share the results with the government. "While our administration has already taken a number of important steps to reduce the threat of listeria, it's clear we must do more to protect Americans," Clinton said during Saturday's weekly radio address. Clinton's goal is realistic, but "there is a lot to be done between now and there in figuring out how we get there," said Dane Bernard, vice president of the National Food Processors Association. "Government data show that (listeria) has declined in ready-to-eat meat and poultry products, proving that industry and government are taking the right steps to address this problem."

Clinton to Seek Mandatory Nutrition Labeling of All

Fresh Meats

By SALLY SQUIRES
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Clinton administration announced yesterday that it will seek mandatory nutrition labeling on all fresh meat and poultry, a move that for the first time would allow consumers to determine the fat content of burgers, chicken and other meat they cook at home.

The announcement, highlighted by President Clinton in his weekly radio address yesterday, came as the administration released updated dietary guidelines advising more exercise, moderated sugar consumption and safe handling of food.

The administration is preparing to kick off the first Nutrition Summit in more than three decades. The two-day conference on a wide range of nutrition issues begins here Tuesday.

The dietary guidelines urge Americans to eat less saturated fat, which is linked to obesity, heart disease and some types of cancer. For the past six years, consumers have been able to turn to required nutrition labels on most foods to determine how much saturated fat they are eating.

But there was a glaring omission: Meat and poultry, which can contain significant amounts of saturated

fat, were exempt

Consumer groups have lobbied for years to require nutrition labeling on both. Last year, the Department of Agriculture missed its June deadline to propose nutrition labeling for meat and poultry. In April, Rep. Nita M. Lowrey (D-N.Y.) and a dozen other members of Congress introduced a bill that would require the labels.

Details of the new labels will not be finalized until later this summer, but Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman said that they likely will list fat, cholesterol, saturated fat and calories in the same familiar format now found on most foods.

Consumer advocates hailed the move as a major victory. "It's heartening that the USDA is finally going to propose regulations," said Michael Jacobson, executive director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest. "It is especially important to get nutrition labels on ground beef and other red meat, because they are such major sources of saturated fat."

The new labels also won cautious approval from some industry groups. "We support nutrition labeling," said Mary K. Young, executive director of nutrition for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. "But we're not necessarily stating that we support the proposed

rule, because we need to see it first."

In addition to urging Americans to cut back on saturated fat, the latest dietary guidelines will recommend that consumers eat more fruits, vegetables and whole grains, maintain a healthy body weight in part through increased exercise, and go easy on salt and alcohol.

The guidelines play a key role in setting the standards for healthy diets for Americans aged 2 and older and affect school lunch programs and federal food programs for low-income families, among others.

Updates to the guidelines, made every five years by congressional mandate, are closely examined and often hotly debated by policymakers, consumer advocates and the food industry.

Five years ago, the guidelines broke new ground by including vegetarian diets. The latest revision, which was drafted by an 11-member expert panel headed by Cutberto Garza, vice provost of Cornell University, makes new distinctions about good and bad fat in the diet, underscores the importance of physical activity and for the first time includes a section on safe food handling for consumers.

Food-borne illnesses are a growing concern in the United States. On Friday, Clinton urged the food industry "to use its vast resources" to

maintain the safety of meat after a Texas judge's ruling threatened the authority of the government's nationwide inspection system.

The guidelines underscore the importance of keeping food at proper temperatures in the home, reducing contamination by separating raw and ready-to-eat food, and washing hands and food preparation surfaces frequently.

This year, the USDA and the Department of Health and Human Services, which jointly issue the guidelines, allowed public comment for the first time before finalizing the revisions. That led to sharp criticism from consumer advocates who accused the federal agencies of caving in to food industry influence and congressional pressure when the section on sugar was altered slightly.

In February, a draft of the guidelines advised Americans to "choose beverages and foods that limit your intake of sugars." The final guidelines altered that language to "choose foods to moderate your intake of sugars," but also include the original wording in a less prominent place.

The difference in words "is not huge," Garza said.

The full text of the proposed dietary guidelines is available on the Internet at www.usda.gov.

110

Facts on Fat

The Clinton administration's proposal that meat and poultry be labeled with nutrition information meshes with an emphasis in Agriculture Department guidelines on reducing saturated fat. Shoppers could more easily compare the nutritional content of different cuts. For example:

- A cooked 3-ounce patty of 80 percent lean ground beef has 6 grams of saturated fat, 30 percent of the recommended daily limit for an average person. By comparison, a 93 percent lean patty has half as much fat.
- A 4-ounce serving of chicken with skin has 3 grams of saturated fat. Without the skin, it has 1 gram.

— Associated Press

5-28-00

Clinton wants nutrition labels on meat, poultry

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Whether it's a box of cereal or a package of hamburger meat, consumers should have easy access to nutrition information, President Clinton said yesterday as he proposed that the government require labels on beef and poultry for the first time.

Nutrition labels, required for processed food since 1994, tell shoppers how much fat, cholesterol, calories and nutrients are in each serving.

"Providing citizens with accurate information that affects their lives is one of government's most vital responsibilities," Clinton said yesterday in his weekly radio address.

But information alone won't help, he said: "Citizens have a responsibility to use that information wisely."

About six in 10 supermarkets post nutrition information near their meat cases, and some major meatpackers and poultry companies voluntarily put nutrition labels on packages.

Now, Clinton said, "It's time we made it mandatory."

"We wholeheartedly believe in the consumers being informed," said Mary Young, a nutritionist with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. Nutrition information "not only helps them understand lean cuts of meat, but it also helps them understand that meat is packed with iron and zinc."

The Agriculture Department will gather comments about the proposal, which could take effect by the end of the year but may stretch into 2001.

It's the latest in a series of food safety and nutrition initiatives from the administration.

This month Clinton ordered new testing requirements for listeria, a pathogen in processed meats.

The Food and Drug Administration has proposed expanding nutrition labels on processed foods to include artery-clogging trans fatty acids, a common ingredient in baked goods.

The government's new dietary guidelines for Americans, also released yesterday, are revised every five years to reflect new scientific research.

110

get regulations.

So checks went out using a formula that does not take actual need into account. The same thing happened in 1999, except Congress doubled the "emergency" money this time, again without any consideration of a farmer's income or need.

Now, it's 2000, an election year, and while prices are improving, they are below standards of the last decade. You know what that means. It's time for even greater subsidies, twice as large as last year.

So, to repeat: When prices started going down, Congress caved in its commitment to a market economy for farmers. And in an election year, virtually everybody scrambles to give farmers more money, in addition to the \$5.5 billion a year extra mandated in 1996, under the suspect claim of yet another emergency.

The end result is that the total direct payments to American farmers this year will top \$23 billion, according to the Agriculture Department, including about \$10 billion in emergency aid (the new \$7.1 billion is added on to \$3 billion previously budgeted). And about 10 percent of farms (often very large businesses) get 60 percent of the money.

In fact, about the only qualms I heard voiced on either the House or Senate floor came in the Senate and involved the allocation formula. Democratic liberal Sens. Tom Harkin of Iowa and Paul Wellstone of Minnesota made fervent, if ineffectual pleas for sanity. Harkin noted that an individual (even a non-farming landowner who lives in New York City) could wind up with a \$240,000 check despite absolutely no need.

Wellstone did support the crop insurance part of the bill but gagged at how the \$7.1 billion in emergency aid was added, especially because it doesn't matter whether you are rich or poor. And if you're having troubles, it doesn't matter whether those are due to floods, hurricanes or incompetence.

It explains why he calls the 1996 bill the "Freedom to Fail Bill," leading to subsidies in inverse relationship to need. It was somewhat curious to see the left-leaning Minnesotan, who comes off as a bearded Marxist in this moderate-to-conservative club, among the precious few calling for more sensitivity to the actual workings of a free market.

"Without any public discussion," a frustrated Wellstone said, the \$7.1 billion was "just added on without debate. Pretty slick."

He's right.

It's why America's farmers need not read the General Supplication in the Book of Common Prayer used by the Anglican Church.

"From lightning and tempest," it says, "from plague, pestilence and famine; from battle and murder, and from sudden death, Good Lord, deliver us."

They're better off forgetting the Good Lord and just dialing their representative or senator.

2002

5-28-00

Clinton proposes labels for meat

Nutritional guidelines advise exercise

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Whether it's a box of Wheaties or a package of hamburger meat, consumers should have easy access to nutritional information, President Clinton said yesterday.

He proposed that the government require labels on meat and poultry for the first time.

Nutritional labels, required for processed food since 1994, tell shoppers just how much fat, cholesterol, calories and nutrients are in each serving.

"Providing citizens with accurate information that affects their lives is one of government's most vital responsibilities," Mr. Clinton said in his weekly radio address. But he added that "citizens have a responsibility to use that information wisely."

Mr. Clinton also released updated nutritional guidelines that advise more exercise, safe handling of food and moderated sugar consumption. They also suggest that Americans pay attention to nutritional labels.

About six in 10 supermarkets post nutrition information near their meat cases, and some major meatpackers and poultry companies voluntarily put nutrition labels on packages.

Mr. Clinton said, "It's time we made it mandatory."

"We wholeheartedly believe in the consumers being informed," said Mary Young, a nutritionist with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. Nutrition information "not only helps them understand lean cuts of meat but it also helps them understand that meat is packed with iron and zinc."

The Agriculture Department will gather comments about the proposal, which could take effect by the end of the year but may stretch into 2001.

The government's new dietary guidelines for Americans, also released yesterday, are revised every five years to reflect new research.

The 2000 version takes an upbeat approach — "Eating is one of life's greatest pleasures," it says — and adds sections emphasizing the importance of whole grains, exer-

cise and safe handling of food.

Today, Americans make better choices about healthy eating, Mr. Clinton said.

"Yet despite this progress, the vast majority of Americans don't have healthy diets," said the president, who has a notorious weakness for junk food. "We're eating more fast food because of our hectic schedules, and we're less physically active because of our growing reliance on modern conveniences, from cars to computers to remote controls."

The USDA guidelines, contained in a 39-page booklet, largely followed recommendations of an advisory panel of 11 nutritionists.

The administration bowed to criticism from the food and soft-drink industry, however, and weakened recommendations for the section on sugar that urged consumers to "limit" consumption of sugary foods and beverages.

The final version says consumers should "moderate" sugar intake and also deletes the panel's claim that Americans have been increasing sugar consumption.

Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman defended the change, saying it makes the recommendations parallel with those that encourage "moderate consumption" of alcohol and fat.

The food industry, pleased that the recommendations do not label "good foods" and "bad foods," backs the guidelines.

"The guidelines wisely avoid the blame game of unscientific accusations aimed at particular industries or foods," Lisa Katic of the Grocery Manufacturers of America said in a statement.

Margo Wootan, a nutritionist with the Center for Science in the Public Interest, which has released well-known reports on the fat content of movie popcorn and Chinese food, said the administration "totally caved" to the industry in altering the sugar section.

"But in general the guidelines are an improvement over what they currently are," she said. "It encourages people to eat a more plant-based diet."

110

lab

Welcome to the Brainerd Lakes Area No. 1 Online Information Source!

110



[Home](#)

Health & Wellness - Dispatch Online

1062



The latest news on our java
[AP News Ticker](#)
RealAudio news update
from
[AP News Network](#)



Dispatch Online

- [Area News](#)
- [Area Sports](#)
- [Auto](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Church](#)
- [Classified Ads](#)
- [Food](#)
- [FYI](#)
- [Golfing](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Living](#)
- [National News](#)
- [National Sports](#)
- [Neighbors](#)
- [News Archives](#)
- [North Country](#)
- [Obits](#)
- [Opinion](#)
- [People](#)
- [Technology](#)
- [Tempo](#)
- [Up North](#)
- [What's Doing?](#)
- [Weather](#)
- [The Best Comics](#)

Your "Hometown" on the Internet

Web posted Saturday, May 27, 2000

Clinton urges nutrition labels for meat packages

By PHILIP BRASHER
AP Farm Writer

WASHINGTON -- President Clinton proposed Saturday to require nutrition labels on packages of ground beef and other meat and poultry so consumers can tell how much fat, cholesterol and nutrients they contain.

The labels would be similar to those that have been required on processed food since 1994.

"This is just plain common sense. Shoppers value the fact that when they pick up a box of cereal or a frozen meal, they can check the nutrition labels and see how many calories or grams of saturated fat these foods contain," Clinton said in his weekly radio address. "That's the same kind of information that ought to be put on every package of ground beef."

About 60 percent of supermarkets currently post nutrition information near their meat cases, and some major meatpackers and poultry companies voluntarily put nutrition labels on the packages themselves.

The proposal is the latest in a series of food safety and nutrition



Features

- [Area Movie Schedule](#)
- [Area TV Listings](#)
- [Ultimate Yellow Pages](#)
- [Personal Connections](#)
- [Website of the Week](#)
- ["Fargo" - The Movie](#)



Information

- [Dispatch Web Cam!](#)
- [Not Quite Virtual Tour](#)
- [Subscribe](#)
- [Contact us](#)



initiatives that the administration has promoted recently to burnish a legacy for Clinton of consumer protection.

E-MAIL THIS STORY TO A FRIEND

E-mail this story to a friend!

2002

More Health and Wellness!

Links

- [Gamers Edge](#)
- [Moms News Network](#)
- [Cool Sites](#)
- [Minnesota Websites](#)
- [World Websites](#)
- [Kid Stuff](#)
- [Area Churches](#)
- [Area Schools](#)

[an error occurred while processing this directive]

What do you think about our site or articles? What would you like to see us do?

Let us know with this form or a quick E-mail note!

Your Websmythes for this section: [Slammer](#), [WildFlower](#), [VaNdA](#)

©Copyright The Brainerd Daily Dispatch

506 James Street, P.O. Box 974, Brainerd, Minnesota, U.S.A. 56401

The Brainerd Daily Dispatch, Central Minnesota's Daily Newspaper. Continuing The Weekly Dispatch founded in 1881. Published daily except six legal holidays in Brainerd, Minnesota by The Brainerd Daily Dispatch, a division of Morris Communications, Corp. The official newspaper of Crow Wing County. Offices located at 506 James Street, Brainerd, MN 56401. MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS.

USDA removes some food safety barriers to innovation

WASHINGTON, May 30 (Reuters) - The U.S. Agriculture Department said Tuesday it is eliminating certain food safety regulations in meat and poultry processing plants, allowing companies greater flexibility and innovation in their products.

The USDA said it is removing some federal programs which detect potential health and safety problems within meat and poultry processing and production.

"The elimination of these requirements will give plants greater flexibility to innovate and introduce new processes that will improve food safety," said Thomas Billy, USDA administrator, in a news release.

The eliminated programs fall under the USDA's partial quality control programs (PQC) which makes sure products have the same content, flavor, color and texture.

Some PQC programs control potential health and safety problems, such as time and temperature for a cooked beef product. Others control economic or quality factors, such as the number of pepperoni slices on a frozen pizza.

Among the many changes, the USDA is removing requirements for quality control programs overseeing certain ingredients used in products such as frankfurters, bologna and sausages for calcium, fat and protein content.

PQC programs for carcass defects at poultry slaughter plants operating under the New Line Speed or New Turkey Inspection Systems will also be eliminated. Additional changes affect meat and poultry canning regulations.

Most of these programs were superseded when the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points system operations (HACCP) was implemented. HACCP verifies that plants use science-based controls in their food production processes to prevent food safety hazards...

The rule is effective starting August 28.

((Randy Fabi, Washington Commodities, 202-898-8394, fax 202-863-1049))

REUTERS

Rtr 17:26 05-30-00

:SUBJECT: DOAG LIVE SOYB EMFS GRNS

Copyright (c) 2000 Reuters

Received by NewsEDGE/LAN: 05/30/2000 5:36 PM

110

WASHINGTON (AP) President Clinton proposed today to require nutrition labels on packages of ground beef and other meat and poultry so consumers can tell how much fat, cholesterol and nutrients they contain.

The labels would be similar to those that have been required on processed food since 1994.

"This is just plain common sense. Shoppers value the fact that when they pick up a box of cereal or a frozen meal, they can check the nutrition labels and see how many calories or grams of saturated fat these foods contain," Clinton said in his weekly radio address. "That's the same kind of information that ought to be put on every package of ground beef."

About 60 percent of supermarkets currently post nutrition information near their meat cases, and some major meatpackers and poultry companies voluntarily put nutrition labels on the packages themselves.

The proposal is the latest in a series of food safety and nutrition initiatives that the administration has promoted recently to burnish a legacy for Clinton of consumer protection.

Earlier this month, he called for new testing requirements for listeria, a pathogen in processed meats, and the Food and Drug Administration has proposed expanding the nutrition labels on processed foods to include artery-clogging trans fats, a common ingredient in baked goods.

Clinton also announced today the release of the government's new dietary guidelines for Americans, which are revised every five years to reflect the latest developments in scientific research. The 2000 version follows a more upbeat approach saying "eating is one of life's greatest pleasures" and includes new sections on whole grains, food safety and exercise.

The vast majority of Americans "don't have healthy diets, and some changes in our lifestyles are making matters worse," the president said. "We're eating more fast food because of our hectic schedules, and we're less physically active because of our growing reliance on modern conveniences, from cars to computers to remote controls."

The guidelines, contained in a 39-page booklet, largely follow the recommendations of an advisory panel of 11 nutrition experts, but the administration bowed to criticism from the food and soft drink industry and weakened the committee's suggested section on sugar intake.

The scientists' version had urged consumers to "limit" their consumption of sugary foods and beverages. The administration's final version says consumers should "moderate" their sugar intake and it also deletes the advisory panel's conclusion that Americans have been increasing their consumption of sugar.

Defending the change, Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman said it "makes the language about sugar consumption parallel with other guidelines that encourage moderate consumption of other things such as alcohol and total fat."

Federally funded nutrition programs are required to adhere to the dietary guidelines, which were first published in 1980, and they also are used widely by professionals and dietitians in advising consumers.

The meat-labeling requirement fits with the guidelines' emphasis on reducing consumption of saturated fat, which has been linked to heart disease. Requiring nutrition labels on fresh meat would make it easier for consumers to compare the nutritional content of different cuts.

A 3-ounce, cooked patty of ground beef that is 80 percent lean

110

1062

has 6 grams of saturated fat, 30 percent of the recommended daily limit for an average person. By comparison, a patty 93 percent lean had 3 grams of saturated fat.

A 4-ounce serving of chicken with skin has 3 grams of saturated fat. Without the skin, it has one gram.

"We wholeheartedly believe in the consumers being informed," said Mary Young, a nutritionist with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. Nutrition information not only helps them understand lean cuts of meat but it also helps them understand that meat is packed with iron and zinc."

The proposed labeling requirement wouldn't take effect before the end of the year at the earliest.

Besides targeting saturated fat, the new dietary guidelines provide more specific choices of foods and ways to prepare them.

"You can enjoy all foods as part of a healthy diet as long as you don't overdo it on fat (especially saturated fat), sugars, salt and alcohol," the introduction says.

The administration "totally caved" to the industry in altering the sugar section, said Margo Wootan, a nutritionist with the Center for Science in the Public Interest, a consumer advocacy group.

But in general the guidelines are an improvement over what they currently are," Wootan added. "It encourages people to eat a more plant-based diet and it puts more emphasis on fruits and vegetables

On the Net: <http://www.usda.gov>

(PROFILE

AT:Agriculture;)

AT:Political;)

SRC:AP; ST:US;)

AP-NY-05-27-00 1007EDT

:SUBJECT: AGRI POL

Copyright (c) 2000 The Associated Press

Received by NewsEDGE/LAN: 05/27/2000 10:17 AM

762

at Labeling, 0308

Clinton proposes nutritional labels for meat, poultry

WASHINGTON (AP) Whether it's a box of Wheaties or a package of hamburger meat, consumers should have easy access to nutritional information, President Clinton said Saturday. He proposed that the government require labels on beef and poultry for the first time.

Nutritional labels, required for processed food since 1994, tell shoppers just how much fat, cholesterol, calories and nutrients are in each serving.

Providing citizens with accurate information that affects their lives is one of government's most vital responsibilities," Clinton said Saturday in his weekly radio address.

But information alone won't help, he said: "Citizens have a responsibility to use that information wisely."

Clinton also released updated nutritional guidelines that advise more exercise, safe handling of food and moderated sugar consumption. They also suggest that Americans pay attention to nutritional labels.

About six in 10 supermarkets post nutrition information near their meat cases, and some major meatpackers and poultry companies voluntarily put nutrition labels on packages.

Now, Clinton said, "It's time we made it mandatory."

"We wholeheartedly believe in the consumers being informed," said Mary Young, a nutritionist with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. Nutrition information "not only helps them understand lean cuts of meat but it also helps them understand that meat is packed with iron and zinc."

The Agriculture Department will gather comments about the proposal, which could take effect by the end of the year but may stretch into 2001.

It's the latest in a series of food safety and nutrition initiatives from the administration. This month Clinton ordered new testing requirements for listeria, a pathogen in processed meats. The Food and Drug Administration has proposed expanding nutrition labels on processed foods to include artery-clogging trans fatty acids, a common ingredient in baked goods.

The government's new dietary guidelines for Americans, also released Saturday, are revised every five years to reflect new scientific research.

The 2000 version takes an upbeat approach "Eating is one of life's greatest pleasures," it says and adds sections emphasizing the importance of whole grains, exercise and safe handling of food.

Today, Americans make better choices about healthy eating, Clinton said.

Yet despite this progress, the vast majority of Americans don't have healthy diets," the president said. "We're eating more fast food because of our hectic schedules, and we're less physically active because of our growing reliance on modern conveniences, from cars to computers to remote controls."

The USDA guidelines, contained in a 39-page booklet, largely followed recommendations of an advisory panel of 11 nutrition experts.

The administration bowed to criticism from the food and soft drink industry, however, and weakened recommendations for the reduction on sugar that urged consumers to "limit" consumption of sugary foods and beverages. The final version says consumers should "moderate" sugar intake and also deletes the panel's conclusion that Americans have been increasing their consumption of sugar.

Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman defended the change, saying it makes the recommendations parallel with those that encourage "moderate consumption" of alcohol and fat.

NO

1 of 2

The food industry, pleased that they do not label "good foods" and "bad foods," welcomed the guidelines.

The guidelines wisely avoid the blame game of unscientific accusations aimed at particular industries or foods," Lisa Katic of the Grocery Manufacturers of America said in a statement.

Margo Wootan, a nutritionist with the Center for Science in the Public Interest, consumer advocates, said the administration "totally caved" to the industry in altering the sugar section.

"But in general the guidelines are an improvement over what they currently are," Wootan added. "It encourages people to eat a more plant-based diet, and it puts more emphasis on fruits and vegetables."

Federally funded nutrition programs have to adhere to the dietary guidelines, which were first published in 1980. They also are used widely by professionals and dietitians in advising consumers.

EDITOR'S NOTE AP Farm Writer Philip Brasher contributed to this report.

2 of 2

On the Net: Department of Agriculture site: <http://www.usda.gov>
USDA dietary Guidelines: <http://www.usda.gov/cnpp/DietGd.pdf>

(PROFILE
(CAT:Agriculture;)
(CAT:Political;)
(SRC:AP; ST:ND;)
)

AP-NY-05-27-00 1455EDT

SUBJECT: AGRI ND POL
Copyright (c) 2000 The Associated Press
Received by NewsEDGE/LAN: 05/27/2000 3:04 PM

Some meat plants trying to undermine food safety-Clinton

WASHINGTON, May 26 (Reuters) - President Bill Clinton said on Friday a small number of U.S. meat processing plants were trying to overturn the government's fledgling food safety program that has succeeded in reducing salmonella contamination.

Government lawyers are trying to decide how to fight a federal judge's ruling on Thursday that barred the U.S. Agriculture Department from closing a meat plant which flunks government salmonella tests.

The court decision, which found in favor of Supreme Beef Processing Inc., is viewed by many industry and consumer groups as a crucial test case of the USDA's revamped meat inspection program that relies more on scientific testing and safety checkpoints.

"Unfortunately, a small minority of meat plants are acting against the best interests of the American people," Clinton said in a statement.

"They threaten to undermine an inspection system that is clearly effective in reducing food poisoning, jeopardizing the confidence that consumers have in the safety of the food they eat," he added.

The administration made sweeping changes in meat and poultry inspection procedures in 1996 as part of a series of measures to make food safer for consumers.

The White House takes credit for reducing salmonella contamination on raw meat and poultry by as much as 50 percent during the past two years.

"The Justice Department has vigorously defended this vital program and will decide on an expedited basis what further legal action to take," Clinton said.

The USDA said that the ruling by U.S. Judge Joe Fish of Dallas affected the Supreme Beef plant, and that it would continue to use salmonella testing in other U.S. plants.

Supreme Beef and other members of the National Meat Association maintain that the USDA salmonella tests do not fairly measure a plant's cleanliness and sanitary conditions.

Salmonella is a foodborne bacteria that can cause diarrhea in healthy adults, and much more severe illnesses in young children, cancer patients, the elderly and others with weak immune systems.

((Julie Vorman, 202 898 8467

washington.commodsenergy.newsroom@reuters.com))

REUTERS

Rtr 18:46 05-26-00

:SUBJECT: DOAG GRNS SOYB EMFS LIVE FDPR MED

Copyright (c) 2000 Reuters.

Received by NewsEDGE/LAN: 05/26/2000 6:56 PM

Clinton-Meat Safety

Clinton criticizes meat industry for challenging safety standards

WASHINGTON (AP) President Clinton urged the food industry Friday "to use its vast resources" to maintain the safety of meat following a Texas judge's decision striking down a testing program to detect salmonella contamination in ground beef processing plants.

Unfortunately, a small minority of meat plants are acting against the best interests of the American people," Clinton said in a statement issued by the White House.

In a ruling Thursday, U.S. District Judge Joe Fish said that the Agriculture Department exceeded its authority by pulling inspectors from a Dallas plant effectively shutting it down after the facility failed the department's salmonella inspection standards.

The judge said the tests are not a fair measure of sanitary conditions in a plant. His ruling applies to plants in the northern district of Texas.

USDA officials said that the testing program ensures raw ground beef is safe for consumers.

The Justice Department has vigorously defended this vital program and will decide on an expedited basis what further legal action to take," Clinton said.

The legal battle threatens to "undermine an inspection system that is clearly effective in reducing food poisoning, jeopardizing the confidence that consumers have in the safety of the food they eat."

The salmonella standards are part of a new inspection system that requires companies to prevent pathogens from reaching food products rather than leaving it to USDA inspectors to find contaminants.

USDA withdrew its inspectors from the Supreme Beef Inc. plant Nov. 30, 1999, but was forced to send them back later in the day when Fish granted a temporary restraining order. The plant had failed three salmonella tests.

Supreme Beef, a supplier of meat to the federal school lunch program, said the rules were arbitrary.

On the Net: USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service:
<http://www.fsis.usda.gov>

(PROFILE
(CAT:Agriculture;)
(CAT:Political;)
(SRC:AP; ST:US;)

AP-NY-05-26-00 1956EDT

:SUBJECT: AGRI POL
Copyright (c) 2000 The Associated Press
Received by NewsEDGE/LAN: 05/26/2000 8:05 PM

USDA removes some food safety barriers to innovation

WASHINGTON, May 30 (Reuters) - The U.S. Agriculture Department said Tuesday it is eliminating certain food safety regulations in meat and poultry processing plants, allowing companies greater flexibility and innovation in their products.

The USDA said it is removing some federal programs which protect potential health and safety problems within meat and poultry processing and production.

"The elimination of these requirements will give plants greater flexibility to innovate and introduce new processes that will improve food safety," said Thomas Billy, USDA administrator, in a news release.

The eliminated programs fall under the USDA's partial quality control programs (PQC) which makes sure products have the same content, flavor, color and texture.

Some PQC programs control potential health and safety problems, such as time and temperature for a cooked beef product. Others control economic or quality factors, such as the number of pepperoni slices on a frozen pizza.

Among the many changes, the USDA is removing requirements for quality control programs overseeing certain ingredients used in products such as frankfurters, bologna and sausages for calcium, fat and protein content.

PQC programs for carcass defects at poultry slaughter plants operating under the New Line Speed or New Turkey Inspection Systems will also be eliminated. Additional changes affect meat and poultry canning regulations.

Most of these programs were superseded when the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points system operations (HACCP) was implemented. HACCP verifies that plants use science-based controls in their food production processes to prevent food safety hazards.

The rule is effective starting August 28.

((Randy Fabi, Washington Commodities, 202-898-8394, fax 202-863-1049))

110

REUTERS
Rtr 17:26 05-30-00

:SUBJECT: DOAG LIVE SOYB EMFS GRNS
Copyright (c) 2000 Reuters
Received by NewsEDGE/LAN: 05/30/2000 5:36 PM



N.Y. TIMES

A 21

6-16-00

U.S. Sets New Standards for Ground Beef in School Lunches

By MARIAN BURROS

WASHINGTON, June 15 — Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman has ordered new health standards for the ground beef that the federal government buys for the school lunch program.

For the first time, department officials said, the government will require testing for disease-causing bacteria and set limits for permissible levels. McDonald's and other large fast-food companies already impose similar standards.

Several consumer groups called attention to the lack of government

bacteria standards after one former school lunch provider, Supreme Beef Processors of Dallas, won a court ruling that allowed it to stay open despite failing several Agriculture Department inspections since April 1999. The department announced this week that the plant had failed a fourth inspection.

Under new regulations that use scientific testing at meat processing plants, the Agriculture Department should have been able to withhold inspection service, tantamount to suspending operations at a meat plant, from Supreme Beef when it

failed its third inspection for salmonella contamination. But a permanent injunction prevents the Agriculture Department from suspending inspection services on the basis of the failed salmonella tests.

The order applies to ground beef in the Northern District of Texas.

Supreme Beef Processing has asked the judge to prevent the department from using the salmonella standards "as a basis to harm Supreme Beef in any way, including the school lunch program."

Because of the appeal, the department says it does not know if its new

purchasing standards, which take effect for the next buying season scheduled to begin shortly, will apply to the company.

"The agency is completely re-vamping our purchase specifications and raising the bar for the next round of buying," said Ken Clayton, associate administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service at the department. "Our objective is to mimic what major commercial users of ground beef are doing these days." That includes testing for e-coli, salmonella and staphylococcus.

The new specifications for school

lunch purchases announced this week by the Agriculture Department apply only to ground beef purchased by the federal government, not to ground beef bought by local school districts where the majority of ground beef is bought.

When Supreme Beef failed its third salmonella test, the Agriculture Department canceled its contract to buy ground beef for school lunches, but it resumed purchases when it came to an agreement with the company on what steps should be taken to comply with the law. Now the government must recall all that is left of the 2.3 million pounds of beef bought since February.

In the meantime the department has sent a review team to the Su-

preme Beef plant to look for other infractions like mouse droppings, exposure to unclean surfaces or improper temperatures. Under ordinary circumstances when the agency suspends inspection, as it tried to do last year, it sends in a review team.

If the review of the plant uncovers serious health risks, the department will be able to shut the plant down because the judge's final order does not prevent it from closing Supreme Beef if other unsanitary conditions are found.

109

USDA Urges Meatpacker To Stop Grinding Beef

Associated Press

A Texas beef processor at the center of a dispute over government meat safety standards was asked by the Agriculture Department yesterday to voluntarily suspend making ground beef.

Supreme Beef Processors Inc., which supplies ground beef to the national school lunch program, flunked a set of microbial tests for the fourth

straight time, the department said.

A federal judge recently barred USDA from using such test results to force the closing of the facility, agreeing with the meatpacking industry that testing for salmonella bacteria is not a fair measure of whether a plant was sanitary.

The department tried to close the Dallas plant last fall after it flunked the first three rounds of testing. The latest failure came after the company

made improvements in February to its sanitation procedures, said Thomas Billy, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service.

"As a result of the court decision, FSIS has asked Supreme Beef to voluntarily suspend its ground beef operations and to determine what further corrective actions should be taken to bring the plant into compliance," Billy said in a statement released by the department last evening.

Telephone calls to Supreme Beef for comment on USDA's request were not returned.

"It's too early to tell" what the department will do if the plant refuses to close, said Carol Blake, a spokeswoman for the food safety agency.

USDA proposes to discontinue grading of imported beef

108

WASHINGTON, July 21 (Reuters) - The U.S. Agriculture Department said Friday that a proposed rule restricting federal grading of imported beef, lamb, veal and calf products would be issued later this summer.

"The proposed rule will assure U.S. consumers that the USDA grade shield only appears on meat products from livestock processed in the United States," said Kathleen Merrigan, USDA administrator.

Some farm groups, including the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, have been lobbying the USDA to halt grading imported carcasses, saying the grades, such as "USDA Prime," were initially started in the 1950s to promote U.S. meat.

The NCBA and other groups argue that grocery shoppers who see the USDA seal assume the meat was produced in the United States. The groups argue that consumers will choose U.S. meat over foreign meat if given the choice.

Some also said USDA's grading practice for imports was illegal. According to the NCBA, U.S. law says the grading has to happen when the animals are slaughtered, a guideline that is not being followed.

((Randy Fabi, Washington Commodities, 202-898-8394, fax 202-863-1049))

REUTERS

Rtr 18:33 07-21-00

:SUBJECT: DOAG LIVE SOYB EMFS GRNS USA

Copyright (c) 2000 Reuters

Received by NewsEDGE/LAN: 07/21/2000 6:44 PM

7-16-00

THE WASHINGTON POST

**'Mad Cow' Diagnoses Prompt
USDA Order to Destroy Sheep**

EAST WARREN, Vt.—The Agriculture Department on Friday ordered 376 imported sheep destroyed after tests showed that they might be infected with the sheep equivalent of mad cow disease.

Tests of four slaughtered sheep in Vermont found evidence of a version of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, the scientific name for the always-fatal mad cow disease, officials said.

The test results mean the animals could have the same disease that killed 53 people and devastated the beef industry in Britain in 1995.

Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman signed an order Friday to destroy two flocks of sheep in Greensboro and East Warren. The owners of a smaller flock in Lyndonville agreed to sell their 21 sheep to the government for destruction.

The sheep—quarantined since 1998—came from an area of Belgium where mad cow disease was found.

117

INTERVIEW-USDA touts less feces, disease in raw chicken

By Julie Vorman

WASHINGTON, July 17 (Reuters) - A pilot program giving U.S. poultry plants more responsibility for overseeing food safety has dramatically cut the incidence of bird carcasses contaminated with feces, disease and sores by as much as 92 percent, the U.S. Agriculture Department said on Monday.

The preliminary results were released by the USDA at a time when the department has lost two back-to-back court battles this summer involving food safety regulations.

The new data proves that the USDA's food safety regulations -- which use more science-based tests and less "poke and sniff" inspections -- are headed in the right direction to protect consumers, said Tom Billy, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service.

"We're not going to walk away from these kinds of improvements," Billy told Reuters in an interview. "Clearly we're on the right track. It's a matter of, if necessary, making some adjustments to the design to meet legal requirements."

A pilot program at seven U.S. poultry plants showed a 92 percent drop in fecal contamination on bird carcasses leaving the slaughter plant. Declines of 43 percent to 60 percent were logged for various animal diseases, sores and digestive tract tissue.

The program, launched last October, set food safety performance standards for poultry slaughter plants and redeployed some federal inspectors to check plant records and verify that the standards were met. The pilot program has been at the center of a bitter fight with some 5,300 unionized meat inspectors, who contend it weakens food safety regulation by giving the meat and poultry industry too much authority.

One consumer group, the Government Accountability Project, has also criticized the pilot program for giving plants too much freedom in meeting food safety standards.

Three weeks ago, a federal appeals court agreed with the inspectors and ruled that the USDA could not delegate the task of physically inspecting meat and poultry carcasses to plant employees. A century-old federal law requires that government employees inspect carcasses at slaughter plants to make sure they are safe to eat.

Billy said the USDA had no plans to halt the pilot program, and if anything, might seek to expand the program based on the encouraging new data from seven of the 30 plants involved in the program.

As the USDA considers its legal options in the court case, the solution may lie in "tweaking the design" of the pilot program so that meat inspectors oversee slaughter procedures in a way to meet the law, he said.

"These numbers show you what can slip by our inspectors under traditional inspections," Billy said "What this project is about is getting closer to perfection."

The data from the seven pilot plants showed an increase only in one category -- feathers and similar material found on carcasses. That increase is a temporary one and due to stricter USDA standards that now count each feather individually, Billy said.

Billy also said the USDA had "strongly recommended" an appeal of an unrelated food safety ruling by a Texas court in May. The landmark ruling found USDA tests to detect salmonella contamination in a hamburger processing plant were not a fair way to determine if a plant was clean.

110

112

The U.S. Justice Department will decide what action to take in that case, he said.

"We're not deterred at all," Billy said. "As we set higher standards for safety and raise expectations, we're seeing some reaction to that."

USDA PILOT PROGRAM FOR INSPECTIONS AT 7 POULTRY PLANTS
(in percent)

2/2

Category of Defect	Traditional Slaughter	Pilot Program Slaughter	Pct Change
Infectious disease	0.3	0.0	-100
Fecal contamination	2.4	0.2	-92
Animal disease	2.0	1.1	-45
Bruises, sores	70.0	39.8	-43
Digestive contamination	21.5	18.8	-13
Feathers, dressing	78.5	98.6	+26
Digestive issue	23.0	9.0	-60

((washington.commodsenenergy.newsroom@reuters.com))

REUTERS

07/17/2000 19:21

SUBJECT: GRNS SOYB EMFS LIVE DOAG MED

Copyright (c) 2000 Reuters

Received by NewsEDGE/LAN: 07/17/2000 7:32 PM

- [HOME](#)
- [NORTHWEST](#)
- [SPORTS](#)
- [BUSINESS](#)
- [NATION/WORLD](#)
- [ART & LIFE](#)
- [COMICS & GAMES](#)
- [OPINION](#)
- [David Horsey](#)
- [COLUMNISTS](#)
- [GETAWAYS](#)
- [NEIGHBORS](#)

[CLASSIFIEDS](#) [NWSOURCE](#) [MONEY](#) [TRAFFIC](#) [WEATHER](#)

seattle **PI**.com Opinion

(123)
1002

USDA not lowering safety standards

Wednesday, July 26, 2000

By **DAN GLICKMAN**
U.S. SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

Few issues are more important to the American people than food safety. And I have no higher priority as secretary of agriculture than ensuring Americans' continued confidence in the safety of their food supply.

With its July 18 editorial, the Seattle Post-Intelligencer grossly misrepresented the USDA's work. We are not lowering our safety standards in any way, and we are not issuing new rules permitting defective or diseased animal carcasses to enter the food supply.

The Clinton administration has, in fact, shown tremendous leadership on food safety issues. We took on the challenge of reforming an archaic, century-old system that did not incorporate modern scientific principles or take on the most serious threat to public health from meat and poultry -- microbiological contaminants. Our new science-based food safety system has proven a huge success.

The most recent tests show that, since adoption of the new inspection system, the prevalence of Salmonella has been cut dramatically -- a decrease of nearly 50 percent for chicken carcasses and swine; nearly 30 percent for ground turkey; nearly 20 percent for ground beef.

At issue now is a new pilot project, currently being tested in 30 plants, which will help us determine whether new government slaughter inspection procedures can further improve food safety and increase consumer protection. It represents the first-ever attempt to measure the effectiveness of the slaughter inspection system that has been in place since 1906.

The new pilot raises the bar for meat and poultry plants. It is as stringent -- if not more so -- than traditional slaughter inspection. For example, it calls for four times more checks for fecal contamination than the traditional system. Contrary to many news reports, nothing that's unacceptable under traditional slaughter inspection is acceptable under this pilot project.

It is true that the new system asks the plants themselves to assume greater

SEARCH **FIND**

Sort: date rank
[Query Help](#)
[Browse by date](#)

T
more
[icon]

[HEA](#)
[USDA n](#)
[safety st](#)

[Mom an](#)
[get resp](#)

[Mike Lo](#)
[to politic](#)
[come a](#)

[The trut](#)
[Cuban i](#)

[Bush re](#)
[quality](#)

[Hope fo](#)
[courage](#)
[Camp D](#)

[Letters t](#)

responsibilities. But government inspectors have the final word. They still inspect, still verify and still decide which products earn the government mark of inspection by demonstrating that the meat and poultry are safe and wholesome for consumers.

Just

Most important, of course, is whether this new system produces better results, and the preliminary verdict is that it does. Early data on young chicken slaughter at seven plants -- data collected by an independent consulting firm -- conclude that the pilot totally eliminated one category of food safety defects and cut the other type of defect by 92 percent.

It is important to remember that this project is still in the pilot testing stages and involves only 30 of the more than 6,500 plants we regulate. We have made no permanent changes, nor have we even proposed any. We have pursued this new policy through a thoroughly open process, with four public meetings held so far and a fifth scheduled for September. Consumers may weigh in at any time on these proposed revisions in inspection procedures. We have been soliciting public comments, in fact, since June 1997.

The bottom line is that consumers will continue to receive safe, wholesome products. USDA may change its methods, but never its mission: to ensure the safety of the food Americans eat. The pilot project is nothing more than an effort to more fully integrate the principles of a science-based food safety system into slaughter operations. This is just one example of USDA's continued vigilance on food safety. We are doing everything we can under our current authority, and we are pursuing additional authority when necessary. For example, we have requested enhanced enforcement powers that would allow us to further protect the public from food-borne illness.

USDA repeatedly has asked Congress for authority to impose civil monetary penalties on meat and poultry plants for food safety violations. We have also asked for the authority to order the recall of adulterated or misbranded meat and poultry in situations that pose a reasonable probability of threat to public health. To date, Congress has not responded to these requests.

In the United States, we have a strong and sophisticated food safety system, one that combines thorough physical inspection with state-of-the-art science, one that ensures that American food remains the safest in the world.

Dan Glickman has been U.S. secretary of agriculture since 1995.

TOOLS

[Find related articles](#)

 
email politicians...

Powered by



postnet.com

News
Commentary
NEWS

> Editorial Page

115



Good morning, St. Louis | Tuesday, July 25, 2000

Sections | [A&E](#) | [Business](#) | [Communities](#) | [Lifestyle](#) | [News](#) | [Shopping](#) | [Sports](#) | [Help](#) | [MY.postnet.com](#)

Path | [Home](#) >> [News](#) >> [Editorial](#)

[Index](#) | [Archives](#) | [Calendar](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Contact](#) | [Extras](#) | [Forums](#) | [Guides](#) | [News Links](#) | [Register](#) | [Search](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Special Reports](#) | [Today's Post](#) | [Weather](#) | [Wires](#) | [Yellow Pages](#)

Posted: Tuesday, July 25, 2000 | 5:22 a.m.
E-mail this Story to a friend

Multimedia
You can download the free RealPlayer app here.

Counterpoint : Changes in meat inspection will not compromise food safety

By Dan Glickman



COUNTERPOINT

Few issues are more important to the American people than food safety. And I have no higher priority as secretary of agriculture than ensuring Americans' continued confidence in the safety of their food supply. With its July 18 editorial and cartoon, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch grossly misrepresented USDA's work. We are not lowering our safety standards in any way, and we are not issuing new rules permitting defective or diseased animal carcasses to enter the food supply.

The Clinton administration has, in fact, shown tremendous leadership on food safety issues. We took on the challenge of reforming an archaic, century-old system that did not incorporate modern scientific principles or take on the most serious threat to public health from meat and poultry -- microbiological contaminants. Our new science-based food safety system has proven a huge success. The most recent tests show that, since adoption of the new inspection system, the prevalence of Salmonella has been cut dramatically -- a decrease of nearly 50 percent for chicken carcasses and swine; nearly 30 percent for ground turkey; and nearly 20 percent for ground beef.

At issue now is a new pilot project, being tested in 30 plants, that will help us determine whether new government slaughter inspection procedures can further improve food safety and increase consumer protection. It represents the first-ever attempt to measure the effectiveness of the slaughter inspection system that has been in place since 1906.

Related links

- Join the discussion in the [Editorial Page Forum](#).
- Care to comment? Write a [Letter to the Editor](#).

News forums

- [Bill McClellan](#)
- [Chalkboard](#)
- [Current Affairs](#)
- [DC Connection](#)
- [Editorial Page](#)
- [Letters from the Editor](#)
- [Voice Your Choice](#)

Local businesses

- [Apparel](#)
- [Attorneys](#)
- [Auto](#)
- [Community](#)
- [Computers-Internet](#)
- [Dining & Entertainment](#)
- [Health -- General](#)
- [Home & Real Estate](#)
- [Hotels & Travel](#)
- [Money & Law](#)
- [Shops & Services](#)
- [Sports &](#)

- In News
- [Editorial](#)
 - [Education](#)
 - [Headlines](#)
 - [Imagine St. Louis](#)
 - [P-D Columnists](#)
 - [Science and Environment](#)
 - [Current features](#)
 - [Sherffius Stadium](#)
 - [Election 2000](#)
 - [Waco](#)
 - [Nanjing](#)
 - [Weatherbird](#)
 - [Education News](#)
 - [Letters to the Editor](#)

Search section

GO

[Advanced Search](#)

TODAY'S
ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

CLASSIFIEDS

YELLOW PAGES

Featured advertiser

Restaurant Guide

postnet.com

Featured advertiser

BLANQUART
JEWELERS

*Click here to
shop now*

Recreation

The new pilot raises the bar for meat and poultry plants. It is as stringent -- if not more so -- as traditional slaughter inspection. For example, it calls for four times more checks for fecal contamination than the traditional system. Contrary to many news reports, nothing that's unacceptable under traditional slaughter inspection is acceptable under this pilot project.

It is true that the new system asks the plants themselves to assume greater responsibilities. But government inspectors have the final word. They still inspect, still verify and still decide which products earn the government mark of inspection by demonstrating that the meat and poultry are safe and wholesome for consumers.

Most important, of course, is whether this new system produces better results, and the preliminary verdict is that it does. Early data on young chicken slaughter at seven plants -- data collected by an independent consulting firm -- conclude that the pilot totally eliminated one category of food safety defects and cut the other type of defect by 92 percent.

It is important to remember that this project is still in the pilot testing stages and involves only 30 of the more than 6,500 plants we regulate. We have made no permanent changes, nor have we even proposed any. We have pursued this new policy through a thoroughly open process, with four public meetings held so far and a fifth scheduled for September. Consumers may weigh in at any time on these proposed revisions in inspection procedures. We have been soliciting public comments since June 1997.

The bottom line is that consumers will continue to receive safe, wholesome products. USDA may change its methods, but never its mission: to ensure the safety of the food Americans eat. The pilot project is nothing more than an effort to more fully integrate the principles of a science-based food safety system into slaughter operations.

This is just one example of USDA's continued vigilance on food safety. We are doing everything we can under our current authority, and we are pursuing additional authority. For example, we have requested enhanced enforcement powers that would allow us to further protect the public from foodborne illness. USDA has repeatedly asked Congress for authority to impose civil monetary penalties on meat and poultry plants for food-safety violations. We have also asked for the authority to order the recall of adulterated or misbranded meat and poultry in situations that pose a reasonable probability of threat to public health. To

date, Congress has not responded to these requests.

Damning us with faint praise, the Post-Dispatch says "USDA officials may have good intentions." But we have a lot more than that. We have a strong and sophisticated food safety system, one that combines thorough physical inspection with state-of-the-art science, one that ensures that American food remains the safest in the world.

COMMENTARY Dan Glickman, Washington, is U.S. secretary of agriculture.

All postnet.com sections...

[Top of the page](#) | [Back to postnet.com home](#)
[E-mail the News editor](#) | [About the News section](#) | [Toolbox](#)
[postnet.com's Privacy Policy](#)

[Subscribe to the Post-Dispatch](#) | [Get Internet access from postnet.com](#)
[E-mail this URL to a friend](#) | [Advertising information](#)

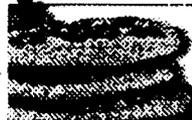
© 2000 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, [postnet.com](#)



[Sections](#) | [A&E](#) | [Business](#) | [Communities](#) | [Lifestyle](#) | [News](#) | [Shopping](#) | [Sports](#) | [Help](#) | [My postnet.com](#)

[Path](#) | [Home](#) >> [News](#) >> [Editorial](#)

[Index](#) | [Archives](#) | [Calendar](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Contact](#) | [Extras](#) | [Forums](#) | [Guides](#) | [News Links](#) | [Register](#) | [Search](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Special Reports](#) | [Today's Post](#) | [Weather](#) | [Wires](#) | [Yellow Pages](#)

 **You were NOT supposed to see this ad!**
We need to talk about Cookies [CLICK HERE!](#) 

Glickman sticking with experimental meat inspection program

(110)

WASHINGTON (AP) — Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman expressed confidence Tuesday in an experimental meat inspection system despite an appellate court's ruling that it illegally gave too much responsibility to processors.

"We certainly don't want to give up on it. We think it has a great opportunity to improve food safety," Glickman said.

Under the new system, USDA inspectors are leaving it to plant employees to do the traditional poke-and-sniff method of inspecting animal carcasses and are instead doing more testing for microbes and sampling for fecal contamination.

The inspectors union sued to stop the project, and a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia agreed last month that USDA inspectors are required by law to do hands-on checks of animal carcasses.

USDA officials say that's a waste of their inspectors' time because harmful microbes can't be detected by sight.

Glickman said the administration had not decided how to respond to the ruling.

"The fact of the matter is that the seeing, smelling, sniffing and poking system is not the exclusive way that we ought to do food safety in the future ... You can't catch E. coli, listeria or salmonella by doing that alone," he said.

The union says USDA is allowing the industry to police itself.

Glickman said the department needed to "do a better job of communicating" with its inspectors.

Test results from seven poultry plants now using the system indicated that rates of disease, fecal contamination and salmonella are down on average, USDA says. Results from nine additional plants are due later this year.

"There's no way we would take USDA's word for it until we looked behind the data," said Felicia Nestor of the Government Accountability Project, an advocacy group that supports the union.

On the Net: <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>

National Joint Committee of Food Inspection Locals:

<http://www.the-inspector.com>

AP-NY-07-25-00 2030EDT

USDA proposes to discontinue grading of imported beef

108

WASHINGTON, July 21 (Reuters) - The U.S. Agriculture Department said Friday that a proposed rule restricting federal grading of imported beef, lamb, veal and calf products would be issued later this summer.

"The proposed rule will assure U.S. consumers that the USDA grade shield only appears on meat products from livestock processed in the United States," said Kathleen Merrigan, USDA administrator.

Some farm groups, including the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, have been lobbying the USDA to halt grading imported carcasses, saying the grades, such as "USDA Prime," were initially started in the 1950s to promote U.S. meat.

The NCBA and other groups argue that grocery shoppers who see the USDA seal assume the meat was produced in the United States. The groups argue that consumers will choose U.S. meat over foreign meat if given the choice.

Some also said USDA's grading practice for imports was illegal. According to the NCBA, U.S. law says the grading has to happen when the animals are slaughtered, a guideline that is not being followed.

((Randy Fabi, Washington Commodities, 202-898-8394, fax 202-863-1049))

REUTERS

Rtr 18:33 07-21-00

:SUBJECT: DOAG LIVE SOYB EMFS GRNS USA

Copyright (c) 2000 Reuters

Received by NewsEDGE/LAN: 07/21/2000 6:44 PM

LTH

9-21-00

BJ

Salmonella Levels In Meat Decline; Seafood Is Concern

By BRUCE INGERSOLL

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

WASHINGTON—The latest word for consumers on food safety is sort of half a loaf: Salmonella levels in meat and poultry are falling, but efforts to modernize seafood-safety systems are faltering badly.

Public-health and consumer groups will rely heavily on the new findings next year as they step up their push for legislation that would consolidate the food-safety responsibilities of the Agriculture Department and the Food and Drug Administration into a single independent agency. Failing that, the groups want Congress to empower the Agriculture Department to recall unsafe products and levy civil fines, and they want much stronger FDA oversight of seafood safety. Tainted fish and shellfish have caused 237 major food-poisoning outbreaks since 1990, more than any other type of food.

At a Senate Agriculture Committee hearing yesterday, Agriculture Secretary

Dan Glickman attributed across-the-board declines in salmonella contamination rates to Agriculture Department performance standards that a Texas meatpacker is challenging in federal court.

The department's new science-based system for preventing contamination at critical points in meat and poultry processing—known as HACCP for Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points—is "working," Mr. Glickman said. "Salmonella is way down."

The incidence of salmonella in ground beef dropped to 5% this year from 7.5% in 1996, before the meat and poultry industry began phasing in the new HACCP system. Salmonella fell to 9.9% in broilers from 20%, to 7.7% in hogs from 8.7% and to 30% in ground turkey from 50%.

While the nation's 6,200 meat and poultry plants all have adequate HACCP plans in place, the latest data from the FDA show that the seafood industry continues to lag far behind, says the Washington-based Center for Science in the Public Interest, a consumer-advocacy group.

Only 24% of 2,800 fish and shellfish processors inspected last year had fully implemented HACCP plans that passed FDA muster, Caroline Smith DeWaal, the group's food-safety director, told lawmakers. Thirty percent of those plants were found to have inadequate or only partially implemented plans, while 16% were found to have no plan at all. Inexplicably, she added, another 30% were exempted from the FDA's HACCP program.

Unlike the Agriculture Department, which inspects slaughterhouses around the clock and processing plants at least once a day, the FDA inspects the nation's 4,700 seafood plants only once every year or two. In 1999, 71% of the fish smokehouses inspected lacked adequate controls for bacteria and other health hazards, while 69% of fish vacuum packers also lacked such controls, according to the FDA.

Joe J

"The challenge is going to be for small and medium manufacturers, companies with less than 500 employees," Coleman said. "It's hard enough to deal with Mexico. It's going to be even harder to deal with China."

Buddy Klotz, owner of Electromatics Inc. in Ashland, has visited China five times on business trips. Despite political tensions, Klotz said, he has seen an openness among the Chinese for American ideas. Permanent normal trade relations, he said, will give U.S. businesses some assurance of stability in their relationships with China and may improve business prospects with other Asian countries, such as Vietnam.

"Continuing relationships is the cornerstone of any successful business operation," Klotz said.

Virginia farmers, too, are hoping that permanent trade relations with China will open a new market for the state's top export: tobacco.

China, which has about 320 million smokers, agreed this year to drop an 11-year ban on U.S.-grown tobacco leaf and recently sent a delegation of scientists to the U.S. to inspect American tobacco crops, which the Chinese had claimed could spread a fungus to their domestic crops.

"Without permanent normal trade relations, China wouldn't follow through on the next step, which is to buy some U.S. tobacco," said Jim Starkey, vice president of Richmond-based Universal Leaf Tobacco Corp., the world's largest tobacco leaf company. "This is a historic vote, and we're very much in favor of it."

Howard Brindle, president and owner of Piedmont Metal Fabricators in Louisa County, sees permanent trade relations as nothing but good. His company, which makes equipment for tobacco processing plants, is now working on a plant in Kunming, China. Over the past five years, about 20 percent of the company's business has come from China, Brindle said.

"The tobacco industry in the U.S. is under quite a bit of fire, so most of the business is being done offshore," he said.

Brindle said he hopes permanent trade relations with China will help ease some of the restrictions placed on foreign companies by China's state-owned tobacco monopoly. "With permanent normal trade relations, I think some of the monopolies will fade out and ~~it will~~ become more privatized," he said.

• Contact John Reid Blackwell at (804) 775-8123 or jblackwell@timesdispatch.com

Meat Safety, 1st Ld-Writethru, f0180,0620
Glickman defends testing requirements for meat plants

salmonella rates started dropping, INSERTS penultimate graf with USDA having told GAO there have been no delayed recalls; Also moved in general news lines.

By PHILIP BRASHER=
Associated Press Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) Bacterial contamination of meat and poultry products has fallen because of salmonella limits the meatpacking industry is fighting in court, Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman said Wednesday.

"These standards are reasonable and reachable, and most importantly, the standards are working," Glickman told the Senate Agriculture Committee.

A federal judge in Texas blocked the Agriculture Department from closing down a Dallas beef processor that has failed at least four sets of tests for the bacteria.

The department says that the prevalence of salmonella in a plant is a good measure of its overall cleanliness, a position that the judge and the industry disputed. Industry officials say they don't mind testing for the bacteria but don't believe there is a scientific basis for using test failures to close a plant.

Salmonella rates have dropped on all types of meat and poultry since USDA first imposed the bacterial limits, starting in 1998 for the largest plants.

The incidence of salmonella in ground beef has dropped from 7.5 percent to 5 percent in 2000, from 20 percent to 9.9 percent in broiler chickens, 8.7 percent to 7.7 percent in hogs, and 50 percent to 30 percent in ground turkeys.

Industry officials attribute the decline to measures that plants have taken to sanitize animal carcasses, meat and equipment. They say USDA's salmonella limits were arbitrarily set and don't taken into account regional and seasonal differences in the incidence of the bacteria.

The limits were based on a survey of the average incidence of salmonella in plants nationwide. For ground beef, no more than 7.5 percent of the samples taken in one testing can be positive for salmonella.

"Such standards do not measure whether a product is safe or whether the operation that produced the product is sanitary," said Dane Bernard, vice president of the National Food Processors Association.

USDA, which is appealing the judge's decision, plans to issue additional testing standards for campylobacter, a bacterium commonly found in chicken, Glickman said.

Such standards force plants to make improvements, he said.

"Without some kind of benchmark, we have no way of measuring success and progress in reducing contamination and foodborne illness," Glickman said. "Without performance standards, we would be relying on little more than an industry honor code."

Glickman, who will leave office in January, also said USDA needs more legal authority to regulate meat processors, including the right to order them to recall contaminated products. Recalls are now done voluntarily.

He did not offer any examples of where companies had refused to issue recalls. USDA officials recently told the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of Congress, that they knew of no cases where a processor had delayed making one.

The agency also should be allowed to fine processors who violate safety standards, Glickman said. The department's only options now are to close a plant or to ask the Justice Department to file criminal charges.

Copyright (c) 2000 The Associated Press 9/20/2000 6:23 PM-

108

SEP 21 2000 10:19

101

Glickman: New inspection system has reduced contamination rates

The system shifts more duties to company employees so federal inspectors can focus on meat-plant problems.

By KENNETH PINS
REGISTER WASHINGTON BUREAU

Washington, D.C. — The reduction of salmonella linked to meat and poultry is evidence that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's new inspection system is working, Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman said Wednesday.

"The evidence is clear," Glickman said at a Senate Agriculture Committee hearing on the issue. "Our science-based, prevention-oriented food safety system is working."

The new system shifts more

inspection duties to company employees so federal inspectors can look for systemic problems in packing plants. The federal inspectors union has said the new system breaks a sacred trust with consumers who believe an independent person has inspected meat before they purchased it at grocery stores.

Glickman said the system has led to reductions in salmonella rates involving chickens, turkeys, hogs and cattle.

Sen. Bob Kerrey, D-Neb., said he agrees some contamination rates have dropped, but he said it is not clear what caused the changes.

"That could just be people cooking meat longer," Kerrey said, noting that the Department of Agriculture, supermarkets and consumer advocates have urged people to take more care in



Harkin Kerrey

preparing meat.

Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Ia., agreed. Foodborne illness, Harkin warned, "continues to be a major public threat."

The U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals here ruled in July that the system violates federal law, and the USDA's inspector general has also pointed out flaws in the new system.

"People are saying (the system) doesn't work," Kerrey said. He said debate over abandoning the traditional inspection method, in

which federal inspectors charged with examining carcasses, continues unabate among federal inspectors general public.

The USDA's Washington officials, he said, must do job of convincing the inspectors that the new system ensure safe and wholesome products.

Caroline Smith DeWaal, safety director for the Center for Science in the Public Interest, a nonprofit public health group, says gaps remain.

For example, 30 percent of food firms that were inspected in 1999 either had inadequate or no HACCP plans fully implemented them.

Reporter Kenneth Pins can be reached at (515) 281-5296, or kpins@times-register.com

5153311483

PAGE 03

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — The U.S. Department of Agriculture is taking steps to curb anticompetitive practices in the livestock, meatpacking and poultry industries, top officials say.

Michael Dunn, undersecretary for marketing and regulatory programs, testified Monday at a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing led by Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa. Dunn was responding to a General Accounting Office report that said the USDA has the authority to stop anticompetitive activity but has not fully used it.

Farmers complain the USDA has not done enough to curb the power of large meatpackers. They say low livestock prices last year didn't translate into low prices at the supermarket because a few corporations in the industry exerted control.

The department's Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, is responsible for investigating anticompetitive practices.

The GAO reported that the Packers and Stockyards Administration has a staff of 18 economists that investigate complaints about cattle and hog markets. The department has some lawyers who investigate cases, but the number of attorneys has been cut from eight to five because of budget constraints.

The department already is moving to better coordinate the work of its economists and lawyers and to increase the number of lawyers working on investigations of anticompetitive practices, Dunn said.

He said Congress in recent years has cut money available for regulating the poultry, livestock and meatpacking industries. The department has developed "rapid response teams" to conduct high-priority investigations when necessary, Dunn said.

Grassley, however, said he was surprised to learn from the recent GAO report how little work the USDA has done despite repeated complaints about the USDA's regulatory shortcomings.

Lawrence Dykman of the GAO headed the inquiry. He said the USDA completed 57 investigations by March out of 74 cases it had opened between October 1997 and the end of 1999. Of those, the department "identified alleged anticompetitive practices in only five cases," he said.

The National Farmers Organization in Ames commended action by the GAO and Grassley.

"With all the mergers, consolidations and anticompetitive practices that have taken place in the last 10 years, it's certainly time to exercise some regulatory authority and restore equitability and profitability to family farming," said Paul Olson, NFO president.

(PROFILE
(CAT:Agriculture;)
(SRC:AP; ST:IA;)
)

AP-NY-09-26-00 1921EDT

:SUBJECT: IA AGRI
Copyright (c) 2000 The Associated Press
Received by NewsEDGE/LAN: 09/26/2000 7:32 PM

105

R&I Interface

121
1062

Dan Glickman

Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman has dodged cream pies tossed by animal rights activists, been pelted with nongenetically modified soybeans flung by a group of bare-naked organic-food advocates and narrowly escaped rotting buffalo entrails hurled by a save-the-bison supporter.

No one said running the federal government's fifth largest agency would be easy. But just as Glickman has deftly sidestepped flying food, so has he navigated the U.S. Department of Agriculture's monstrous bureaucracy, which he acknowledges is "big and brutal, but not impossible." Despite the unwieldy task of managing a \$68 billion annual budget, 95,000 employees and enough policy statements to bury the most seasoned politician, Glickman has been able to implement a number of programs that directly impact the foodservice industry, while maintaining a consistent stand on controversial issues.

Take bioengineered foods. Glickman has long been viewed as a kind of biotech warrior, espousing the benefits of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) from the day he entered office as a Clinton appointee in 1995. So passionately committed to what critics have called "Frankenfood," he has declared that the United States will aggressively push the World Trade Organization to encourage European countries—many of which vehemently oppose genetically altered edibles—to accept this American-bred technology.

Public outcry over bioengineered products has forced Glickman to soften his position somewhat, a process that began when anti-GMO soybean throwers attacked him at the WTO's World Food Summit in Rome several years ago. "I came back and asked, 'What the hell is going on?' At the time, the word was that this was the technology of the future. This was the moral thing to do, the only way we were going to be able to feed the world. I thought, what is wrong with these people?"

Protest groups have made allegations, later picked up by the media, that Glickman has acted more in the interest of the biotech industry than in that of the American people. "I believe biotechnology is a powerful tool in ensuring global food security and human health," he says. "That doesn't make me an industry lackey."

He still has confidence that biotechnology will eventually produce an agriculture that will feed the world safely and reliably. But he now concedes that, although all the questions may have been asked, all the answers are not yet in. Toward that end, he has set up a 23-person Advisory Committee on Biotechnology, which includes scientists, consumers and farmers. "You can't force-feed genetically modified organisms down people's throats," he says. "You have to build confidence first, and, to do that, you need scientifically based judgments."

Immediate solutions may not be on the horizon for bioengineered foods but, in Glickman's opinion, they're all in place as far as food safety is concerned. On that topic, he takes a hard-line stand: ensuring safety of the food supply is not only essential, it is achievable today. But first, the proper authority (read: USDA) must be given the green light to move forward in some critical areas.

He is adamant in his belief that the agency should have the power to levy civil fines against meat and poultry plants and to recall products when neces- ▶ 26

**On food safety,
bioengineering and
restaurants' health
responsibilities.**

DAN

206 J

425 Early. Presently, the USDA can shut down a plant, a tool Glickman describes as "the atomic bomb of powers," but has no other enforcement-muscle at its disposal. Even if the agency does opt to close a facility, local courts can overrule. This recently happened in Texas when a U.S. district court ruled that the USDA had overstepped its boundaries in attempting to close a meatpacking plant that had tested positive several times for salmonella. "I'm concerned that some meat producers will use this case to avoid their obligation to produce safe products," he says. "Right now we're totally dependent on the industry's willingness to recall adulterated product in a timely manner."

Certainly much has been done to promote food safety during Glickman's tenure. Key among the accomplishments is an experimental meat inspection program which has USDA inspectors doing more testing for microbes and sampling for contamination, leaving plant employees to the traditional poke-and-sniff method of inspecting animal carcasses. He also credits the efforts of the current administration with cutting in half the presence of salmonella on raw meat and poultry. "Americans enjoy one of the safest food supplies in the world, and that's due in no small part to the fact that the Clinton-Gore presidency has made it a national priority," he says. "This administration has put sound science at the heart of our modern food-safety system."

He speaks like a true politician, which is, after all, what Glickman has been for the past two decades. Although he chaired the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence for two years, presiding over the Aldrich Ames spy case, most of his political career has been focused on agriculture. Prior to his post as USDA leader, Glickman represented Kansas's 4th congressional district in the U.S. House of Representatives for 18 years. During that time, he served on the House Agriculture Committee and chaired the subcommittees on General Farm Commodities and on Wheat, Soybeans and Feed Grains.

He may never have been a farmer (he has a law degree), but he considers himself a kindred spirit. During his tenure, marked by a turbulent

farm economy of commodity prices and agricultural exports that reached record highs, then plunged to historic lows, Glickman has used virtually every tool at his disposal to help farmers cope: direct cash assistance, increased purchases for federal food programs, crop insurance discounts, exports credits and more. With the family farm a dwindling part of the rural landscape and global corporate giants setting prices, he concedes that farm policy is not often the talk of the Beltway.

Glickman fondly recalls the days when making farm policy was a big deal in the nation's capital, and he expresses uneasiness over the future of the American farm. Just how that concern will play out in Glickman's post-agriculture-secretary career is anybody's guess. On that subject, he has decided to remain mute until after Election Day. As long as he remains in office, he prefers to discuss only food-related topics.

However, Glickman won't admit to preferring one type of cuisine to another. "Like most Americans, I eat everything," he says, in an effort to be all-inclusive. But he is willing to commit to the fact that the American diet is unhealthy and obesity in this country is a major health threat. In an uncharacteristically nonpolitical moment, he blames the restaurant industry in part for the problem. "I believe in freedom of choice and the free-market system," he says. "I don't want the government telling industry or the American people what to do. But I do think restaurants need to reduce their portion sizes. Bigger is certainly not better in this instance."

He admits that other factors also share the blame for the country's weight problem: a sedentary lifestyle, aggravated by a tendency to sit in front of the television and the computer screen; lack of education about nutrition; the popularity of fad diets; and a food industry that insists on infusing products with excessive amounts of sugar and fat.

"I admit that my waistline has expanded along with many others," he says. "I don't believe there are right and wrong foods. I eat everything. It's eating too much of everything that's become a problem in this country."

—Deborah Silver

Contact: deborah@silver.com

(128)

Wall St. Journal

11-6-00

A35

**Our Tests Reduce
Meat Contamination**

Without citing a single piece of data, your Oct. 30 editorial "Clean, Green and Secret" calls the Department of Agriculture's new safety tests for meat and poultry "no good." The truth is that USDA's new science-based inspection system - which replaced an archaic system that had failed to keep up with a century's worth of progress - has dramatically reduced the rate of salmonella contamination of meat and poultry. And the Centers for Disease Control have attributed a decline in food-borne illnesses to this new system. Why you think this important public health benefit is "no good" escapes me, but perhaps it should not be so surprising given that the majority in Congress opposed the new system when it was first proposed.

You also mischaracterize USDA's intent in settling a recent lawsuit concerning treatment of rats, mice and birds in laboratory research. Our choice was between a court-imposed settlement and a resolution via the rule-making process. We chose the latter because it would have involved the full participation of the public. USDA has no interest in doing anything that will impede biomedical research. And in any event, this question is now moot, as a recent act by Congress prevents us from making any regulatory changes for one year.

DAN GLICKMAN
Secretary of Agriculture

Washington

WSJ A35

108

Hotline Hums Well After the Thanksgiving Turkey's Done

Home Ec Teacher at Heart Runs Lifeline for Cooks

By BEN WHITE
Washington Post Staff Writer



Bessie Berry directs Agriculture's "Meat and Poultry Hotline," which dispenses information on food-borne pathogens year-round but at Thanksgiving is often called the "Turkey Hotline."

Bessie Berry wants you to have a happy Thanksgiving. She wants you to dig in, strap on the feed bag, chow down, spurge, gobble and scarf. She also wants to make sure you don't die.

From her command center in the Department of Agriculture's South Building, (5th Wing, second floor, down the back corridor) Berry and her staff at the agency's Meat and Poultry Hotline save lives.

Okay. The "Turkey Hotline" story is a holiday chestnut, dusted off and updated each year with a few fresh oddball questions from callers bent on defrosting their birds in the toilet and such.

But this is the story behind the story, the story of Bessie Berry, the sweet natured but no-nonsense woman who runs the show. About how Berry, 70, a 14-year veteran and three-year manager of the Meat and Poultry Hotline, developed an obsession with meat and the various ways it can inflict pain, suffering and sometimes death.

Berry says it all began with Mrs. Thompson's middle school home economics class in Guthrie, Okla., 38 miles north of Oklahoma City.

Mrs. Thompson taught sewing and cooking and when it came to getting the details just right, she took a back seat to no one. Stitches were straight and tight. Meals were not just prepared correctly, but presented in a visually appealing way on an immaculate plate.

"I wanted to be just like her. Boy was she tough," Berry said from behind her tidy desk, explaining that she extrapolated her teacher's attention to detail into a focus on the microbes that can undermine good food presentation. "It's just another detail you have to take care of to make sure that the final product is just what you want it be."

When taking hotline calls from her office (each staffer has a private cubicle), Berry's Mrs. Thompson-inspired persona springs quickly to the fore. She begins with a few friendly words but cuts quickly to business, favoring short declarative sentences, occasion-

Players

Bessie Berry

Title: Manager, U.S. Department of Agriculture's Meat and Poultry Hotline.

Age: 70.

Education: Bachelor's degree in home economics, University of Maryland; master's degree in consumer affairs, Howard University.

Family: Divorced; two children, one grandchild.

Previous job: Home economics teacher, McKinley High School, Washington D.C.

Pastimes: Painting, tennis.

ally stabbing the air with her index finger.

"What do you mean there is 'stuff' in the cavity? What kind of 'stuff'?" Berry asked a caller.

But she just as quickly lets a warm smile spread across her face when a particularly good question is asked or a kind word offered. And she will often roll out an elongated "ABSOLUTE-LY" to reassure someone that it's okay to do something, such as thaw out and cook a turkey that has been in the freezer for months (it is okay, but it won't taste as good).

Berry will even chat. But not for long, because the light on her phone is blinking faster, meaning the calls are starting to stack up.

Berry is clearly a woman in command of her job, running a 10-person staff that handles several hundred calls a day, over a thousand every day during Thanksgiving week. But when she first moved to Washington in 1963, she was not at all sure she wanted to stay, particularly after having lived for several years with her former husband in Minnesota, a clean and well-ordered state (one Mrs. Thompson would have approved of), particularly compared with the rough-and-tumble of the nation's capital.

But D.C.'s charms eventually won Berry over, and she went on to teach home economics for a year at McKinley High School before joining the Meat and Poultry Hotline in 1986, one year after its creation.

She has seen many changes in the nature of hotline calls over the years, particularly after a blockbuster "60 Minutes" report opened the floodgates of concern over salmonella. More recent scares over E. coli and "mad cow" disease have lit up the phones.

Keeping up to speed on dangerous food-borne pathogens and providing information that can protect health and save lives clearly gives Berry a deep sense of satisfaction. But she is not all about meat safety.

She takes a painting class Wednesday nights; she plays tennis on weekends.

And this year, after closing up the hotline at 2 p.m. today, she will have Thanksgiving dinner with her daughters and grandchild in Rockville. She won't have to cook a thing, but if questions arise, chances are they will get a sure answer.

INTERVIEW-U.S. safe from mad cow disease--Glickman

By Randy Fabi

WASHINGTON, Nov 27 (Reuters) - Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman said on Monday that USDA officials were monitoring the mad cow disease scare in Europe and reiterated that the U.S. food supply was safe and would not be affected by the outbreak.

Glickman told Reuters in an interview that the department was closely monitoring the mad cow outbreak in Europe, but has not sent any USDA officials to assess the situation.

"We've already taken regulatory steps in terms of feed use for animals," Glickman said.

The European Union has been shaken by fresh outbreaks of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) -- better known as mad cow disease -- in Germany and Spain over the weekend.

Beef sales in France have dropped almost in half since major supermarkets said last month they might have sold potentially tainted meat.

BSE's human form, known as new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, has killed more than 80 people in Britain and two in France. There is no known cure for the deadly disease that wastes away the brain.

In response to the mad cow outbreak in Britain during the early 1990s, the U.S. government in 1997 closed its borders to all European meat imports, successfully keeping BSE from infiltrating the U.S. food supply, USDA officials said.

"Our actions indicate that we felt the situation was coming a few years ago," said Linda Detwiler, senior staff veterinarian for USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

Meat and bonemeal made from ground-up carcasses and recycled into animal feed are widely believed to be the source of BSE.

On Friday, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder called for an EU-wide ban on bonemeal after government officials reported two German cattle died from the disease. German officials plan to begin a ban on bonemeal in animal feed on Saturday, immediately after the German parliament passes a law allowing the action.

Germany had long insisted that mad cow disease was not a threat inside its borders because of superior feedstuff standards and strict regulations.

Although no cases of mad cow disease have ever been found in the United States, four Vermont sheep in July tested positive for a disease distantly related to BSE. The USDA is seeking legal authority to seize about 350 Vermont sheep suspected of having transmissible spongiform encephalopathy.

((Washington Commodities, 202-898-8394, fax 202-863-1049))

REUTERS

Rtr 16:55 11-27-00

SUBJECT: DOAG LIVE SOYB EMFS GRNS FRAN SPAN EC CLAW ENGL TRAD GEN

Copyright (c) 2000 Reuters

Received by NewsEDGE/LAN: 11/27/2000 5:07 PM

106

Washington Post 11-24-66 A41

IN THE LOOP

Al Kamen

Representing the IRS, Tacks

106

People watching the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade yesterday might have been lucky enough to spot the Department of Agriculture's new "educational messengers": **Thermy**, **BAC** and **Power Panther**. They joined the U.S. Forest Service's **Woodsy Owl** and venerable **Smokey Bear** on the 2 1/4-mile route.

The Thermy character is designed to encourage people to use thermometers to ensure food is cooked to safe temperatures. BAC is an ugly green bacteria to remind people about safe food handling, and the panther wants kids to eat good foods and exercise.

And why were they marching? The consensus was the publicity couldn't hurt. But as one official said: "If I were a kid and a giant thermometer came towards me, I'd run as fast as I could in the other direction."



Interagency rivalry? Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service is promoting "educational messenger" Thermy, for safe cooking, and two others. Haul them to a cookout in the pines and meet Forest Service old-timers Woodsy Owl and Smokey Bear.

1174A41

U.S. does not share EU's mad cow fears - Glickman

WASHINGTON, Nov 22 (Reuters) - U.S. consumers do not share Europe's "hysteria" over mad cow disease because of an effective U.S. regulatory system, said U.S. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman on Wednesday.

The European Union is struggling to rebuild consumer confidence in Europe's beef after fresh outbreaks of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), or mad cow disease in France and Spain.

"There seems to be a hysteria over there," Glickman told reporters after attending a food bank event with President Clinton.

Mad cow disease was "something that we have avoided in our country through having an effective regulatory system," he added.

BSE's human form, known as new variant Creutzfeld-Jakob Disease, has killed more than 80 people in Britain and two in France. There is no known cure for the deadly disease that wastes away the brain. Spain reported its first case of the disease on Wednesday.

Although no cases of BSE or mad cow disease have ever been found in the United States, four Vermont sheep in July tested positive for a disease related to BSE. The USDA is seeking legal authority to seize about 350 Vermont sheep suspected of having TSE, or transmissible spongiform encephalopathy.

((Randy Fabi, Washington Commodities, 202-898-8394, fax 202-863-1049))

REUTERS

Rtr 18:42 11-22-00

:SUBJECT: DOAG LIVE SOYB EMFS GRNS SPAN ENGL FRAN FDPR MED TRAD USA GEN

Copyright (c) 2000 Reuters

Received by NewsEDGE/LAN: 11/22/2000 6:55 PM

116

2/9/1 (Item 1 from file: 145)
DIALOG(R)File 145 (Tacoma) The News Tribune
(c) 1998 The News Tribune. All rts. reserv.

00255900 (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)

GLICKMAN: FOOD SAFETY A PRIORITY / AGRICULTURE SECRETARY SAYS A \$101
MILLION INCREASE IS PLANNED IN FISCAL 1999

George Tibbits; The Associated Press
News Tribune (Tacoma), P B3
January 29, 1998

JOURNAL CODE: TN LANGUAGE: English RECORD TYPE: FULLTEXT

SECTION HEADING: Local/State

Word Count: 371

MEMO:

ARTICLE DID NOT APPEAR IN THURSTON COUNTY EDITION.

TEXT:

President Clinton will propose spending \$101 million more on food inspection and safety during the next fiscal year, Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman said Wednesday.

Glickman made the announcement during a speech at the University of Washington in Seattle after meeting with victims of the 1993 outbreak of E. coli meat contamination in the Pacific Northwest.

Glickman also made a pitch for expanding his powers to regulate food processors. "I don't want another family to go through what the families I met with this afternoon have been through," he said.

Clinton called for improving food safety in his State of the Union address Tuesday. And on Monday, the Agriculture Department began a new system it hopes will prevent contamination in processing plants.

But Glickman said he is handicapped by law, which only permits him to shut down processors, but not fine them for lesser violations or force them to recall products.

"We should not treat unsafe food any differently from any other threat to public health," he said.

For the current fiscal year, the Agriculture Department's budget for food safety inspection is \$690 million, up \$48 million from the year before. Glickman said that government complaints aside, this is one area where people want the government to do more.

"The health interests of consumers and the economic interests of the food industry are coming together and that's because safe food sells," he said.

Diana Nole of Gig Harbor, whose firstborn son died on Jan. 22, 1993, after eating a Jack In The Box hamburger tainted by E. coli O157:H7, said she's pleased some progress has been made toward cleaning up the nation's meat supply.

That includes faster tests to identify the presence of the pathogen in meat. Previously, it was a laborious process to test meat for it.

"And it pleases me to see the safe-food-handling labels still on meat," she said.

COMPANY NAMES (Dialog Generated): Agriculture Department ; University of Washington

DESCRIPTORS: Government; Department/Agency; Employee/Official; Federal; Speech; Food; Safety

LEVEL 1 - 21 OF 61 STORIES

Copyright 1998 The News Tribune
News Tribune

January 29, 1998, Thursday

SECTION: Local/State; Pg. B3

LENGTH: 319 words

HEADLINE: GLICKMAN: FOOD SAFETY A PRIORITY ;
AGRICULTURE SECRETARY SAYS A \$101 MILLION INCREASE IS PLANNED IN FISCAL 1999

BYLINE: George Tibbits; The Associated Press

BODY:

President Clinton will propose spending \$ 101 million more on food inspection and safety during the next fiscal year, Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman said Wednesday.

Glickman made the announcement during a speech at the University of Washington in Seattle after meeting with victims of the 1993 outbreak of E. coli meat contamination in the Pacific Northwest.

Glickman also made a pitch for expanding his powers to regulate food processors. "I don't want another family to go through what the families I met with this afternoon have been through," he said.

Clinton called for improving food safety in his State of the Union address Tuesday. And on Monday, the Agriculture Department began a new system it hopes will prevent contamination in processing plants.

But Glickman said he is handicapped by law, which only permits him to shut down processors, but not fine them for lesser violations or force them to recall products.

"We should not treat unsafe food any differently from any other threat to public health," he said.

For the current fiscal year, the Agriculture Department's budget for food safety inspection is \$ 690 million, up \$ 48 million from the year before. Glickman said that government complaints aside, this is one area where people want the government to do more.

"The health interests of consumers and the economic interests of the food industry are coming together and that's because safe food sells," he said.

Diana Nole of Gig Harbor, whose firstborn son died on Jan. 22, 1993, after eating a Jack In The Box hamburger tainted by E. coli 0157:H7, said she's pleased some progress has been made toward cleaning up the nation's meat supply.

That includes faster tests to identify the presence of the pathogen in meat. Previously, it was a laborious process to test meat for it.

"And it pleases me to see the safe-food-handling labels still on meat," she said.

Copyright 1998 The Columbian Publishing Co.
The Columbian (Vancouver, WA.)

January 29, 1998, Thursday

SECTION: B; Pg. 7

LENGTH: 252 words

HEADLINE: CLINTON SEEKS \$10.1 MILLION MORE FOR FOOD SAFETY

BYLINE: By GEORGE TIBBITS ; Associated Press writer

BODY:

SEATTLE Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman says his office should be given more power to regulate food processors and help prevent food contamination.

Glickman made his pitch Wednesday during a speech at the University of Washington. He met earlier with victims of the 1993 outbreak of E. coli meat contamination in the Pacific Northwest.

I dont want another family to go through what the families I met with this afternoon have been through, he said.

President Clinton will propose spending \$ 101 million more on food inspection and safety during the next fiscal year, the agriculture secretary said.

Clinton called for improving food safety in his State of the Union address Tuesday night. And on Monday, the Department of Agriculture began a new system it hopes will prevent contamination in processing plants.

But Glickman said he is handicapped by current law, which only permits him to shut down processors, but not fine them for lesser violations or force them to recall products.

We should not treat unsafe food any differently from any other threat to public health, he said.

For fiscal year 1998, the USDAs budget for food safety inspection is \$ 690 million, up \$ 48 million from the year before.

Glickman said that while many people complain about the government, this is one area where people want the government to do more.

The health interests of consumers and the economic interests of the food industry are coming together and thats because safe food sells, he said.

LOAD-DATE: January 29, 1998

2/9/2 (Item 1 from file: 147)
DIALOG(R)File 147: The Kansas City Star
(c) 1998 Kansas City Star. All rts. reserv.

00722963 (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)

Protecting the consumer New meat inspection system is only part of food safety.

LAURA SCOTT ; Special to the Los Angeles Times

Kansas City Star, METROPOLITAN ED, P L2

Sunday, February 01, 1998

DOCUMENT TYPE: NEWSPAPER JOURNAL CODE: KC LANGUAGE: English

RECORD TYPE: FULLTEXT SECTION HEADING: OPINION

Word Count: 454

TEXT:

The Agriculture Department's new meat and poultry inspection system, launched last week, is an attempt to stop deadly pathogens from entering the food supply.

The new system is warranted, but it is only part of the changes that need to occur to boost consumer protection from tainted food.

The agriculture secretary also should have authority to withdraw federal inspectors from any meat-packing or processing plant found out of compliance with the new inspection rules. Without federal inspections, a plant cannot sell its meat. That authority would get the industry attention necessary for reform.

Congress also should give the agriculture secretary authority to order recalls of tainted meat and to impose civil fines against companies. The lack of this authority is one of the major inadequacies in the government's regulatory role over food safety.

The Clinton administration has led on this issue with several initiatives, including the new Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points system that was launched last week in the largest meat and poultry plants.

Some inspectors have raised questions that the new HACCP system too heavily depends on the industry to police itself.

However, Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman is convincing in his statements that this is a better system than the government - and consumers - relied on previously. Given the number of foodborne